

ramp has increased to such an extent that the abuses are far more severe than in the case of ordinary dwellings. The Government has asked for the provisions embodied in this clause to apply only to lodgings. There seems to be a doubt as to the definition of "lodgings." In view of that I ask that progress be reported to enable me to obtain some clear definition to satisfy members of the intention of the clause.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.4 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 13th September, 1955.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Presentation.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I desire to announce that, accompanied by the member for Murchison (Mr. O'Brien) and the member for Boulder (Mr. Moir), I waited upon His Excellency the Governor and presented the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech at the opening of Parliament. His Excellency was pleased to reply in the following terms:—

Mr. Speaker and members of the Legislative Assembly: I thank you, for your expressions of loyalty to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen and for your Address-in-reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament.

QUESTIONS.

BETTING.

(a) *Rejection of W. J. Bowden's Application for Licence.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Police:

For what reasons was the application of Mr. W. J. Bowden for a bookmaker's licence at Merredin rejected?

The MINISTER replied:

It is not proposed to give reasons in individual cases as to why a person did not receive a licence, but if any member presents a written authority from the person concerned to see the file, he can do so either in my office or the Betting Control Board's office.

In this instance the member for Mt. Marshall should be able to form an accurate estimate as to why the person in question did not get a licence because he saw the file of applications lodged in Merredin.

(b) *Application for Licence by J. D. Fortune.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Was the application for a bookmaker's licence in respect of premises at Bates-st., Merredin, from Mr. D. J. Fortune the only application submitted by him or did he previously apply for a licence elsewhere?

(2) Was it suggested to Mr. Fortune by any member or officer of the Betting Control Board that he should apply for a licence for premises in Merredin?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Only the one application for a bookmaker's licence was received from Mr. D. J. Fortune—that for the premises at Bates-st., Merredin.

(2) No.

(c) *Inspection of Premises, Merredin.*

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Police:

(1) When were the various premises inspected at Merredin by members of the Betting Control Board?

(2) What premises were inspected?

(3) Did the board members meet any of the applicants for bookmaker's licences?

(4) If so, which applicants?

(5) Were any of these applicants informed at the time of the inspection, that any of the premises were unsuitable for use as licensed betting shops?

(6) If so, which applicants?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Premises at Merredin were inspected on the 18th April, 1955.

(2) The premises inspected were those of Walter James Bowden, Florence Mary Teasdale and George Dixon.

(3) and (4) The board, as such, did not meet any of the applicants for bookmakers' licences at Merredin. On the 18th April, 1955, Messrs. Andersen and Miller, chairman and deputy chairman of the board, respectively, met Mr. W. J. Bowden at Merredin. On the 23rd April, 1955, the same members met Miss F. M. Teasdale at Merredin. She did not apply for a bookmaker's licence.

(5) No.

(6) Answered by No. (5).

(d) Midland and Wongan Hills Areas, Licences Granted.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Police:

(1) For what towns on the Wongan Hills and Midland lines have s.p. licences been granted?

(2) What are the costs in respect to the applications for licences in these centres?

The MINISTER replied:

Name of Town.	No. of Licences.	Annual License Fee for each Licence.
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MIDLAND LINE.

Moora	1	£ 300
Watheroo	1	50
Carnamah	1	50
Three Springs	1	50
Geraldton	2	300

WONGAN HILLS LINE.

Northam	2	300
Goomalling	1	50
Wongan Hills	1	150
Dalwallinu	1	150
Perenjori	1	50
Morawa	1	50
Mullewa	1	50

Other costs incurred in respect of each application for a licence or registration of premises—application bookmaker's premises licence £2; application registration premises £2; registration of premises (annual) £10.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

(a) Land Resumptions Not Finalised.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Of the resumptions made since he became Minister, how many are still not finalised?

(2) Of those completed, how many were in respect of blocks of which part has been handed back?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There are 318, but of these 186 claims have not yet been lodged.

(2) They total 32.

(b) Rental of House, Wagin.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the weekly rent paid for the State Housing Commission rental house in Wagin occupied until recently by the Government stock inspector, Mr. N. Froome?

(2) What is the rent being paid for the same house by the present tenant?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £2 10s. 6d. per week.

(2) £3 14s. per week. This increase in rent is in conformity with the provisions of the Commonwealth-State housing agreement. The rent payable on vacated houses is reassessed to provide for increased rates and maintenance costs and to offset the excessive cost of imported houses. It is also an endeavour to bring about an equalisation of rents for comparable houses. These rent increases apply only to vacated houses.

(c) Erection of Homes, Harvey.

Mr. MANNING asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it the intention of the State Housing Commission to erect homes on reserves 16030 and 17805 adjoining South-Western Highway at Harvey?

(2) If so, when is it intended to proceed with this building project?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

COLLIE COAL.

Conversion to Furnace Coke, etc.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Have successful tests been made of the conversion of Collie coal to furnace coke?

(2) If so, how much of the cost of the experiments was met by the State and how much by private interests?

(3) What steps have been taken towards the establishment of an integrated iron and steel industry since completion of these tests?

(4) Are there any agreements covering the establishment of the iron and steel industry in Western Australia?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Industrial Development) replied:

(1) From tests made, there is little doubt that a satisfactory coke for various purposes can be made from Collie coal. However, it is not thought at this stage that such coke could be produced cheaply enough to supply fuel for blast furnaces. It could be a source of supply to the foundry trade and to chemical industry.

(2) The whole cost of necessary research into coking Collie coal has been borne by the State.

(3) As explained in No. (1), the local research is not directed to supplying a fuel for the iron and steel industry. Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd. is also conducting research on parallel lines, but there is as yet no indication that this work will influence the establishment of a steel industry in Western Australia.

(4) None, other than the Broken Hill Proprietary Steel Industry Agreement Act, No. 46, of 1952.

STEEL.

Price Increase and Royalty.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Can he confirm that the price of steel has been increased?

(2) If so, on what date and by what percentage?

(3) Has a corresponding rise in royalty on Western Australian iron ore been made.

(4) If so, on what date and by what amount?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Mines) replied:

(1) and (2) There was a general rise in regard to steel items in November, 1954, and again in August, 1955. While such rise varied with different classes of material, the average increase would, in regard to Government purchases, be in the vicinity of 9 per cent. in November and 8 per cent. in August.

(3) and (4) Royalty on iron ore increased as from the 1st December, 1954, to 1s. 6d. per ton, this being an increase of 1s. per ton.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE.

Compositors and Operators, Comparative Margin Rates.

Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) What are the minimum and maximum margins paid to Government Printing Office compositors and operators in—

- Tasmania;
- South Australia;
- Victoria;
- New South Wales;
- Canberra;
- Western Australia?

(2) Which State Government Printing Office employees have received marginal increases since the implementation of the Kelly formula?

(3) What was the value of Commonwealth Government printing performed in the Western Australian Government Printing Office for the year ended the 30th June, 1955?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) This information is available to the hon. member by reference to the appropriate publications in the various States and territories mentioned.

(2) After conferences with the union, recommendations have been made in regard to a storeman, two assistant storemen and the relieving operator in charge.

(3) £65,312 7s. 8d.

MOOLA BULLA STATION.

(a) Tenders Received for Purchase.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Premier:

(1) How many tenders were received for the purchase of Moola Bulla station?

(2) What was the amount tendered by the owner, Mr. Goldman?

(3) Was this the highest tender?

(4) If not—

(a) What other tenders were higher?

(b) What were the amounts tendered?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Moola Bulla was advertised in two sections. One tender only was received for No. 1 section, seven tenders for No. 2 section, and three for the whole station.

(2) Mrs. M. W. Goldman tendered £92,500 for section 1. Mr. A. Goldman tendered £7,500 for section 2.

(3) Yes, for the separate sections.

(4) (a) One, for the whole station. However, the tenderer was unable to lodge the required cash deposit, and this tender was therefore inadmissible.

(b) No. 1 section—

(i) The accepted tender, £92,500.

No. 2 section—

(i)—£7,500.

(ii)—£5,000.

(iii)—£5,000.

(iv)—£2,150.

(v)—£2,000.

(vi)—£1,000.

(vii)—£500.

The whole station, i.e., both Nos. 1 and 2 sections—

(i) £120,000—inadmissible as no cash deposit lodged.

(ii) £20,000 plus £5,000 per annum for 20 years.

(iii) £64,000.

(b) Natives and Conditions at Fitzroy Crossing.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Native Welfare:

(1) Did he read the Press statement in "The West Australian" of the 30th August, headed "Natives at Fitzroy Live in Squalor"?

(2) Is it a fact that already several native children have died from a virus influenza, brought on by the shocking conditions, since their arrival at Fitzroy Crossing from Moola Bulla station?

(3) Is it a fact that the owner of Moola Bulla did not want the natives to leave his station, but desired them to stay, as reported by Mr. Gill, the teacher?

(4) Why were the natives moved to Fitzroy Crossing?

(5) Has the department transferred any of the natives back to Moola Bulla; and if so, how many?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. Of the five children who recently died at Fitzroy Crossing, two were brought in from Go Go, two from Christmas Creek, and one from Bohemia Downs. Not one of the ex-Moola Bulla children has died at Fitzroy Crossing.

(3) No. The new owner demanded that all the natives be removed from the property. Mr. Gill was not present when these demands were made and is not in a position to comment.

(4) The natives were removed to Fitzroy Crossing at their own request.

(5) No. The department does not transfer natives unless requested to do so by the natives. None of the natives have requested the department to return them to Moola Bulla.

GENERATING STATION, BUNBURY.

Number of Tenders Received, etc.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) How many tenders were received for the lighting and small power installation for the Bunbury generating station?

(2) What were the names of the tenderers and the individual amounts that each tendered?

(3) Which of the tenders was accepted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Five.

(2) L. H. Deague and Co. Pty. Ltd., Perth	£ 4,377
Industrial Installations Pty. Ltd., Perth	4,925
P. D. Valentine, Busselton	5,950
R. W. Ryder, Bunbury	5,665
J. L. Mattinson Pty. Ltd., Perth	6,100

(3) Industrial Installations Pty. Ltd., Perth.

IMPORTED INDUSTRIAL SUPPLIES.

Duty Rebates and Australian Manufacturers.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In view of the fact that the Government obtains a rebate or remission of customs duties on items of imported origin, can it not be said that this tends to discriminate against the Australian manufacturer for whose sake in the main the duty is imposed?

(2) In considering tenders, is preference given to tenderers who quote items of Australian origin as against imported goods, even when, taking into account the remission of duty, the tenders containing imported items are the lower?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Remission of duty is a rare occurrence and is allowed only under exceptional circumstances, due regard being given by the Department of Trade and Customs to the effect on any Australian manufacturer of such remission of duty. Remission of duty is not allowed if the Australian manufacturer can supply a comparable article at a suitable price within a reasonable time. Tenders are accepted irrespective of possible remission of duty, and any application for remission would be made after acceptance.

(2) A discretionary preference up to 10 per cent. is allowable to articles of Western Australian manufacture in order to encourage local industry, but no special preference is given to other Australian articles, it being considered that the duties imposed by the Department of Trade and Customs are the measure of protection required by Australian manufacturers.

BEACH EROSION.

Investigations in New South Wales.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is he aware that the Public Works Department in New South Wales began in 1949 to investigate by a scale model the problems of wave action and erosion in Port Kembla and that the Newcastle College of the University of Technology is also carrying out a model study of erosion of Stockton Beach, New South Wales?

(2) As reports of these investigations may be of considerable use in comparative analyses with the foreshadowed experiments of a similar nature by the University of Western Australia regarding the Cottesloe beaches, will he request the above-named authorities to forward the results of their investigations for this purpose?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The investigations at Port Kembla have no points of comparison with Cottesloe beach problems, and the proposed

model analysis at the Newcastle College of the University of Technology is only in the process of being developed. Mr. Silvester, of the University of Western Australia, who is carrying out the experiments at the university, has visited both places and is closely in touch with their activities.

ROYAL AGRICULTURAL SHOW GROUNDS.

Supervision of Health Requirements.

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

Following the recent deputation to him from the Claremont Municipal Council, will he state to what extent he will meet the difficulty of the local health officer to supervise the agricultural show activities (before, during and after)?

The MINISTER replied:

To assist the Claremont Municipal Council, the Public Health Department is prepared to make available the services of three inspectors for inspection work during show week. The department is prepared to make an inspector available before show week to advise and assist the council inspector in the inspection of the facilities for the preparation of food and the general sanitation of the show grounds. Departmental officers will also be prepared to attend a meeting between the Claremont Municipal Council and the Royal Agricultural Society to discuss any difficulties which may have arisen during the show and assist in planning future improvements and any additional facilities considered necessary.

DAIRYING INDUSTRY.

Departmental Officers and Duties.

Mr. MANNING asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many persons are engaged in the dairy branch of the department?

(2) How many of these are engaged in—

- (a) administration;
- (b) technical;
- (c) general work?

(3) How many are engaged in extension work—

- (a) full time;
- (b) part time in conjunction with other duties?

(4) Where are these extension officers stationed, and in what districts do they operate?

(5) Is it considered that the dairying districts are adequately catered for?

(6) If not, is it proposed to increase the number of officers engaged in this work?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There are 60, plus research station wages staffs.

(2) (a) Six part time.

(b) 26.

(c) 34.

(3) (a) 38.

(b) 16.

(4) District agricultural advisers are stationed at Manjimup, Bridgetown, Denmark and Bunbury.

Dairy instructors are stationed at—Bunbury—Three officers covering the following districts—

(a) Yarloop, Greenbushes.

(b) Capel, Augusta.

(c) Factory supervision.

Manjimup—One officer.

Bridgetown, Manjimup, Northcliffe,

Albany, Denmark.

Perth—One officer.

Perth, Yarloop, factory supervision.

Herd recorders operate the following units:—Albany, Mt. Barker, Denmark, Scotsdale, Walpole, Northcliffe, Pemberton, Manjimup, Bridgetown, Donnybrook, Nannup, Warner Glen, Karridale, Forest Grove, Margaret River, Metricup, Vasse, Capel, Brunswick, Harvey, Waroona, Pinjarra, Armadale and Wilga.

Research stations are at Wokalup and Denmark.

(5) No. Vacancies exist at Busselton, Margaret River and Harvey.

(6) Yes. Staff will be increased as personnel becomes available.

BILL—SWAN LANDS REVESTMENT.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

BILL—PRICES CONTROL.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.52] in moving the second reading said: With the object of preventing any business section of the community from exploiting the public on the outbreak of war in 1939, the then Labour Government introduced the Profiteering Prevention Act. It passed all stages within a few weeks of the declaration of war. Shortly afterwards, however, the Commonwealth Government, under its defence powers, imposed price controls by way of National Security Regulations, and in each State a prices control administration was established under Federal jurisdiction. Consequently the Profiteering Prevention Act lay dormant because of the

administration of the National Security Regulations and the general measure of control under Federal jurisdiction.

During the war years—and up till 1948—the administration had the effect of holding prices at comparatively stable figures. Wages, of course, during that period were also to a large extent pegged. When the Commonwealth held the referendum in 1948 on the question as to whether the people desired to give the Commonwealth power to continue control, it was defeated. It was apparently considered by all the States that price control should continue, and consequently practically uniform legislation was passed in all States which carried on control. The present member for Mt. Lawley was the Attorney General of the day, and he participated in a series of conferences dealing with this matter with other appropriate Ministers from the various States of the Commonwealth.

In this State, the then Liberal Government introduced a measure having a limited period of about a year. It was to cease at the end of 1949. The present Bill is a much more voluminous document than the Prices Control Act which was introduced in 1948, but members need not be alarmed, because whilst the 1948 legislation had comparatively few sections, all the Commonwealth regulations which operated during the period that the Commonwealth had control over prices were, as it were, used in conjunction with the State Act for the implementation of price control in Western Australia. Now, instead of the regulations being introduced as such, they have been incorporated in the present measure; and members, if they will compare the provisions of the Bill with the Commonwealth regulations, will find that practically all those regulations have been included in the Bill.

From 1949 to 1952, inclusive, the then Liberal or coalition Government passed a continuance measure each year. In 1952, however, the Government included in such a Bill a provision for the repeal of the Profiteering Prevention Act of 1939. The then Opposition was faced with either having to defeat the continuance Bill, or accept the repeal of the Profiteering Prevention Act. The present Government took office in February, 1953, and price control carried on until the end of that year. During the 1953 session I was deputed by the Government to introduce a continuance Bill, and it was defeated in the Legislative Council. Since the 31st December, 1953, there has been neither a Profiteering Prevention Act, on which we could fall back to protect the people, nor a Prices Control Act.

Queensland has continued price control, and South Australia, which has a government of the same political complexion as that of members opposite, has considered it necessary to continue a measure of price control. In New South Wales, where a

Labour Government has been in existence for some years, the Government decided some time ago that it would more or less relinquish controls although the Act was still on the statute book; but it was found that prices, owing to their upward trend, were causing the Government some concern, so there has been a reimposition of price control in that State.

It is the considered view of this Government that the present measure is necessary because of the upward trend of the prices of essential goods and services. We make no apology for indicating that the Government considers it has a clear obligation to give the general public all possible protection against any industry or trade which may be tempted to charge unduly high prices for, and take large profits from, the sale of essential goods because of the prevailing circumstances. When the agitation by vested interests to abolish controls was noticeable, publicity was given to statements by trade associations that if controls were abolished there would be free competition, and prices would be reduced.

Mr. Wild: Do you not think they have in groceries?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am not going to be side-tracked at this stage.

Mr. Wild: You will not answer that.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I will deal with the second reading in my own way, and with any matter as it crops up. Some associations, however, adopted a different attitude. As examples of this the following extracts are quoted from the grocers and storekeepers' journals of March and September, 1952. The first is headed "The Evils of Price-Cutting" and reads—and this may, to a certain extent, answer the member for Dale—

Price-cutting is a poor means of education of the public. Once a store sets a price-cutting policy, the customers expect a continuance.

Price-cutting shows disloyalty to trade associations and manufacturers who endeavour to give the retailers a worth-while margin.

Price-cutting gives price authorities the impression that margins are sufficient, and hinders applications by manufacturers and associations for better controlled margins for the retailer.

The council desires to draw the attention of members to a very vital subject which it feels they should consider most seriously. The subject is percentage margins.

As members are aware, their association has, since 1948, been responsible for establishing the retail prices of decontrolled grocery lines.

I want members to note particularly that last paragraph. The price control administration and the Arbitration Court were not responsible; the association itself was responsible.

Mr. Wild: Are all the grocers in that association?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: This extract continues—

It is most important that members should realise that their association has been largely responsible for the profit margins which they have been trading on.

The association has fixed the margin on decontrolled goods and done all in its power to secure reasonable margins on controlled goods.

Having set for the trade what the council considers to be fair and adequate margins on which the trade can reasonably operate, the council now looks to every individual grocer for his unreserved co-operation. If the trade is to retain the margins now operating, every member must set his face against any recommended prices which come from any source but the association.

Subject to the incidence of price control, it is considered that the organised retail trade has an undoubted right to fix the retail prices of decontrolled lines.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Yes, but they took the same margins as they had under price control.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You just stick to your notes.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: To continue—

Perhaps it would be better to say that nobody has the right to ask the retailer to sell goods at an inadequate margin.

Views such as those expressed above are not confined to the grocery trade.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But they took the same margins as they had under price control.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I propose now to deal with the position that has arisen since the pegging of wages under the State Industrial Arbitration Court.

Mr. Wild: The old, old story!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Since the State Arbitration Court pegged the basic wage in 1953—

Mr. Bovell: You are a little late. It is unpegged now.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I thought the hon. member might have been pegged until after I had made my speech. I find that since the State Arbitration Court pegged the basic wage in 1953, the

net increase in such wage, as disclosed by the statistician's figures relating to variations in price levels, should have been no less than 30s. a week. I have had itemised figures taken out and I find that rent has been responsible for 15s. 10d. per week, food and groceries 12s. 2d., clothing 11d., and miscellaneous 1s. Although the member for Dale might lightly interject and say that it is the old, old story, nevertheless the people who are subject to determinations of the State Arbitration Court—which determinations include the basic wage—have secured 24s. 1d. per week less than they should have been receiving over quite a long period.

There is no guarantee that the court will, unless determined by Parliament, grant further increases automatically, or vary the basic wage in any way in the future. I anticipate that some members may raise the question of the cost to the State of prices administration. In the last year that price control operated in Western Australia it cost the State approximately £55,000. I went to the trouble of working that out in decimal points and I found that it was about 41d. per head of the population per week, or approximately 1s. 9½d. per annum.

Mr. Bovell: But that was not the total cost under price control.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The resultant benefit to the people of the State would far outweigh the cost.

Mr. Bovell: But that was not all the cost under price control. That was only for registration.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The following points may be emphasised:—Present conditions make it essential that price control should continue to be an instrument of national economic policy. Whilst it is not the policy of the State Government to control prices or essential services for the sake of control, experience clearly shows the danger of indiscriminate action in this sense as well as the very doubtful benefits, under present conditions, of so-called free competition in many industries. The Government has a clear obligation to continue to protect the public against an unwarranted exploitation of trading conditions by unscrupulous traders. The infinitesimal expenditure upon price control is amply justified by the results achieved.

While I was speaking, the member for Dale interjected in regard to groceries. It is true that some of the big stores sell cheaper than others. It is also true that only a limited number can visit those stores and there are many people in various parts of the State who have not the advantage of being able to go to the self-service shops.

Mr. Wild: You get them all over the State.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Let me give an illustration. I understand that the increase in the price of tea in the States which have price control, will be about 10½d., whereas in Western Australia there is a strong possibility that the increase will be 1s. A difference of 1½d. is quite considerable.

Mr. Wild: You do not know that that will be the increase; you are only guessing.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The same applies to petrol and other commodities. The Government feels that it should have the authority and the right to protect the people of this State. There should be some competent authority to determine what is a fair margin rather than leave the whole question to the Retail Traders' Association.

I might for a moment borrow some phrases of the member for Stirling, the Leader of the Country Party. A few days ago he was speaking on another measure and referring to the restriction imposed, or likely to be imposed by certain traders, he said—

There has been only a comparatively short intervening period in which such practices could have grown up—

He was referring to the period since the Profiteering Prevention Act was repealed.

—but to me it does not matter whether they are here now or not. If they are here, then I think there is sufficient reason to make them illegal in order that they may, as far as possible, be brought to a stop. . . .

He goes on—

If they are not here, then I suggest that legislation should be passed to prevent them coming here.

The question is: Were prices stabilised from the time that price control ceased in Western Australia? I have shown members, from the statistician's figures, that the price of food has increased by approximately 12s. per week, and the question of rent is another matter altogether. I repeat that the State Government does not wish to have this power simply for the purpose of having it; it wants the power and is entitled to it, so that that power can be used if necessary to protect the people from unfair traders.

Mr. Bovell: Does not this measure make it permanent?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am glad of that interjection. I believe that if the Bill is passed it will be used not for the purpose of harassing traders but to ensure that they receive reasonable margins for the services they perform, and at the same time give a measure of justice and fair dealing to the great consuming public. In reply to the member for Vasse, I might say that no time limit has been put in the Bill because we do not wish

the measure to be continued year by year. We believe that the Act should be placed on the statute book and used at any time by any Government for the purpose of ensuring that a reasonable margin of profit is taken by industries and at the same time that the traders themselves shall not determine what their margins shall be. Rather does the Government believe that a competent authority should be set up to investigate the whole of the circumstances and fix prices accordingly.

Mr. Bovell: You believe in socialistic control?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—COMMONWEALTH AND STATE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY AGREEMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [5.11] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to confirm and ratify an agreement entered into between the States and the Commonwealth in relation to the sale of houses, erected under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement, to occupants of those premises.

In Western Australia a total of 10,719 homes have been built under the scheme up to the 31st August this year. Some 1,600 of that number were sold without this legislation and there is no need for me to go into the circumstances or conditions under which those houses were made available. Suffice to say that over recent years sales have been exceedingly slow and spasmodic because the purchasers have been required to provide the whole of the purchase price in order to satisfy the Commonwealth. Of course, very few people have been in a position, either from their own funds or with such moneys as they could raise through the bank or any other lending authority, to provide the full payment for the homes that they were occupying.

Perhaps it might be thought that State Housing Act funds should have been made available for that purpose. But the Government, in my opinion very wisely, decided that it was far better to use such State moneys as were available for housing for the erection of new homes rather than to provide easy terms for those who were occupying premises and who could subsequently take advantage of the opportunity to buy. It should be pointed

out that for several years the States have been pressing the Commonwealth to agree to the sale of homes on terms. In New South Wales and Victoria, where many homes under this scheme have been erected, the authorities were appalled at the developments. They shirked the responsibility of making adjustments to rentals. Because of that, many people were occupying these homes and paying only a nominal amount of, say, 20s. or 25s. weekly. That, incidentally, is a problem that those States still have because, even under this scheme, if any of the tenants desire to purchase their homes, it will probably cost them between £2 and £3 a week in the instalments they will be called upon to pay.

As a result, from an arithmetical or economic point of view, tenants prefer to remain in the houses with the State as their landlord or, in other words, they prefer to have perfect security of tenure and do not wish to embark upon a scheme of purchase. Because of the system that was adopted in Western Australia when the homes were first made available for purchase, tenants in many cases acquired houses in the vicinity of £2,000 and sold them the following week for £3,000 or £4,000 each, which indicated that they had an equity or an asset far in excess of the amount they were being charged.

Under those circumstances, of course, the tenants had no difficulty in raising the money from a bank, or some other source, to effect the purchases. However, after that period passed, the number of houses sold and the rate of sales fell considerably. Nevertheless, the number of houses sold in Western Australia is, I think, second in the aggregate compared with the results in other States of the Commonwealth.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What is the number?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: In the vicinity of 1,600.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Over what period?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Since the inauguration of the scheme.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Up till now, what deposit was required?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The full amount of the purchase price had to be paid. I well remember having within the first few weeks of becoming a Minister, approached the Commonwealth, in association with representatives of Victoria and other States, with a request, submitted through the Premier to the Prime Minister, for these homes to be sold on a terms basis. I think it can be said that all governments, irrespective of political complexion, are anxious that people should be living in their own homes and purchasing them over a period, when they have not the resources to pay cash. Further, because

of the increase in costs, the question of maintenance—while it is not so in Western Australia—could become a very definite problem, as indeed it has in Victoria. I think it is generally appreciated that people take a greater pride and interest in their own home than they would in one which they are renting.

Mr. Yates: Generally speaking, rental homes in this State are well looked after by the tenants, are they not?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Generally speaking, that is so. I should say that we have been extremely fortunate in the manner in which tenants protect their dwellings and also in the attention they give to their gardens.

Mr. Court: In the few years of State housing experience, has any figure been established which is considered to be the average cost of maintenance to keep the average house in order?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There is a maintenance charge of 1½ per cent. on the capital cost of the building. This money which is part of the weekly rental is placed in a maintenance fund and from time to time moneys are drawn to meet repairs and, at intervals of approximately five years, the complete renovation or repainting of the home is done. The fund in Western Australia is considerably in credit and, in addition, the amount in that fund is increasing. However, it must be borne in mind that so many of the houses have been built only recently that the full impact of maintenance costs will not be felt for about three to five years from now, when all the buildings will have reached at least a full term for general maintenance.

Mr. Court: Do you think that if you do not have a credit balance at the end of ten years, in the following ten years you will have a great deficit?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is something that could occur, but I do not think it is likely because, as homes are disposed of, so they remove a real liability from the fund, and, in addition, as I intimated in a reply to a question this afternoon, while rentals are not being increased to present occupants, where there is a change of tenancy an adjustment of rental is made to bring it up to a figure sufficient to meet modern costs and requirements.

It will be appreciated that a house erected, say, eight years ago costing £1,000 will now be carrying a maintenance cost of £15 per year, at 1½ per cent., which is not sufficient to maintain that house in proper order. If it went on for ever and a day, with a house, say, 30 years old, and perhaps some attention was required to the fence and other parts of the property, the fund could not meet the liability. So advantage is taken of a change of tenant to make an adjustment in such

matters as increased cost of maintenance. However, I do not think anyone need be perturbed at the trend of events in Western Australia.

Mr. Court: Assuming you had to meet all the maintenance costs in one year, have you any idea what it could cost to bring the houses into first-class condition?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I think it is wellnigh impossible to answer that question. To do so would require a physical inspection of each home to determine how much life was left in each one of the bath-heaters, for a start.

Mr. Court: There are approximately 8,000 homes, are there not?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Approximately 9,000.

Mr. Court: Therefore, it would cost about £500,000.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is if they required full maintenance now, but some of these places were completed only a month or six months ago, as the case may be, so it is logical to assume that the call for maintenance will be slight for several years, at any rate. Meanwhile, a return is being made by the tenants, which is going into the maintenance fund.

Under the agreement arrived at between the States—with the exception of Tasmania, which bought itself out of it—and the Commonwealth, it is proposed that tenants shall pay a deposit of 5 per cent. of the first £2,000 of the sale price and 10 per cent. of the cost in excess of £2,000. To illustrate more clearly what I mean, if the sale price of the property was £3,000, the tenant would be required to find 5 per cent. of the initial £2,000, which would be £100, and 10 per cent. of the remaining £1,000, which would be another £100; in other words, a total deposit of £200.

But the tenant is allowed a credit in respect of the amortisation of the weekly rental which he pays. That can be used as part of the deposit, provided the tenant finds, in cash, not less than 5 per cent. of the total cost of the property. Payment of the full purchase price is spread over 45 years and this runs parallel with the war service homes scheme. The maximum amount of assistance or, to put it another way, the greatest amount that any occupier can receive by way of credit or financial assistance, is £2,750. Again, this requirement runs square with the provisions of the War Service Homes Act. The interest rate is $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent., which is very reasonable.

Money is made available for erection of these homes at the low interest rate of 3 per cent., which, of course, is subsidised by the Commonwealth to enable that small charge to be levied on tenants. The difference between the 3 per cent., which the States are charged when the money is made available to them for the erection

of the home, and the subsequent funding of the debt in respect of the home built and the $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. which will be charged to the purchaser, is to pay for the administration of the housing authority to meet defaults, to attend to maintenance where such is required when the purchaser has fallen down on the job, so that the housing authority can keep the house in a reasonable state of repair, and thus will not lose the value of its asset. In any event, that was the final determination by departmental officers in conference with representatives of the Commonwealth and finally agreed to by the Premiers of the several States, their Ministers and the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What about valuations?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, I am coming to that. Houses will be offered to tenants on the basis of present values, less 10 per cent., provided the resultant figure is not less than the cost of construction. Perhaps it should be said now that there are certain types of houses as, for instance, the imported units, of which the State Housing Commission has more than 1,000, to which it will be impossible to apply that formula because, while I am unaware of the exact figure, I do not think many people would be likely to pay £3,500 or more for an Austrian prefabricated home. If tenants are occupying such a home and they desire to purchase, it will be necessary to offer them a discount and final figures in that respect are yet to be determined.

The cost of land on which a dwelling or building is standing will be based on the current value as determined by the Taxation Department, or in certain cases by qualified officers of the State Housing Commission. Valuations which have been so made have been exceedingly conservative. As a general rule, it can be said that the value of land, in conjunction with the homes sold by the Housing Commission, is between £100 and £200 below the true market value.

Mr. Court: You refer to valuations made by the Taxation Department and those by officers of the State Housing Commission. Is there any reason for this variation?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is a matter of convenience. It can be stressed that officers of the State Housing Commission, who are qualified by examination, are constantly in touch with the Taxation Department and are aware of the general level of values in particular localities, and of the factors responsible for adjustments either way. From my own experience where officers have assessed the tentative value of a particular lot, I can say that it has been found after reference to the Taxation Department that there was no disparity. Because of the very many

transactions which take place between them, each understands the language of the other. The rental homes are also available to tenants who are ex-servicemen and who are eligible under the war service homes scheme. In cases where they desire to purchase these homes, the War Service Homes Commission will effect a transfer of the property from the State Housing Commission; then all of the terms and benefits which are applicable to ex-servicemen will apply to them.

Mr. Yates: Will ex-servicemen have the right to a rebate of rental already paid?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Nobody will.

Mr. Yates: At present it is credited to the person who purchases a rental home. If a home is taken over by the War Service Homes Commission, will the ex-serviceman concerned have the same treatment as non-ex-servicemen?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: We should understand that as soon as a sale is effected, there is no question of rental. Therefore there cannot be any rental rebate. It will be a straight-out purchase in respect of which the new owner, indebted to the tune of £2,750 or some lesser figure, will pay small instalments.

Mr. Yates: He might have already paid £200 in rent.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The amortisation portion of his rent will go to his credit, but the amount of £200 paid in rent will show a very small balance because in the initial years the great bulk of the rent is credited to interest commitments, and very little of it is used in reducing the capital charge. The credit established by the tenant will be credited to him whether he be a civilian or an ex-serviceman.

Mr. Yates: They are both given the same treatment?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is so, but the ex-serviceman has the additional advantages which accrue under the war service homes scheme. In anticipation of the passing of this legislation, the State Housing Commission in Western Australia has already commenced to sell homes in the terms of the agreement which is now before us. All other States have acted similarly, because this, surely, is a Bill which ought to be readily accepted. It is one which does not lend itself to amendment because it is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the States. In Western Australia we started to sell such houses in May of this year, and up to date some 70 houses have been sold in accordance with the terms of this agreement. I have not the exact figures for the other States, but I do not think that any great number has yet been disposed of.

I am unable to hazard a guess as to why there should be reluctance to take advantage of the scheme. It is appreciated that very many tenants cannot find an amount in excess of £100 which is generally required, but at the same time there must be many hundreds of others who have no great difficulty in finding such an amount. Of course, we have to subtract from the number of potential purchasers, those people who are subject to transfer owing to the nature of their employment. Very many people do not desire to place millstones around their necks, or to purchase a home in any particular locality because within a very short space of time they might be transferred elsewhere.

Mr. Brady: Can prospective purchasers obtain a firm figure before they sign a contract?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes. By paying two guineas for a valuation to be made, they can get a firm figure of the cost. The State Housing Commission will then advise the inquirer as to the price and at that stage he can make up his mind whether he wants to purchase it or not.

Mr. Ackland: Referring to the point raised by the member for South Perth, is it a fact that under the purchase agreement of the Tasmanian Government, the whole of the rent which has been paid during the initial stages is treated as a first instalment when a tenant decides to purchase a house?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am unable to answer that query. As I indicated earlier, the position in Tasmania is that the Government there has bought itself out of the agreement with the Commonwealth; in other words, it has discharged all of its liabilities, or repaid the loan moneys made available to it for the erection of houses under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement. The Tasmanian Government is either letting or selling houses built under that agreement to residents in that State, but under what terms I know not. I think it would be totally impracticable and basically wrong to allow the full rental money—

Mr. Ackland: I am not suggesting we should follow suit. I am merely asking whether it was done in Tasmania.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: —to be counted as part of the purchase price, because if we study the original agreement passed by the Parliament of this State in 1945, it will be seen that there is a liability in respect of interest. This has to be met by somebody, if not by the tenant, then by the general taxpayers. There is the matter of maintenance of the home. There is the question of rates and taxes payable to local authorities and the Water Supply Department. There is insurance

on the houses. There is provision for defaults in cases of bad tenants, and so forth.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There is also the matter of administration costs.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, the administration costs of the housing authorities. It will be seen that a very small proportion of the amount that is actually paid in rent goes towards liquidating the indebtedness on such a home. It should be emphasised that Commonwealth-State rental homes are available for purchase by occupiers only. Nobody else can take a fancy to a house, and, by agreement with the tenant, purchase it. It is a privilege extended to occupiers of homes only. Of course, if there is a change of tenant then the new occupant has the right to make application in accordance with the general conditions which I have outlined.

Mr. O'Brien: That is very fair.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I feel that the agreement is very fair and generous. It must not be confused with the State Housing Act of this State. In Western Australia many hundreds of homes have been sold on a deposit as low as £5. I am informed that many of them in what can be described as one of the best middle-class suburbs, namely, Daglish, were sold on such an insignificant deposit. I understand that not one of the purchasers of those homes has fallen down on his commitment; they have all met their obligations. At present the State Housing Commission is selling houses for deposits as low as £50 and in certain cases, because of the circumstances, for as low as £25. Under such circumstances there is, one might say, no valid excuse whatsoever—

Mr. Brady: Are they freehold or leasehold properties?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is only a description of the system. Whatever it is called, the fact remains that there are several ways under which such a house can be purchased under the State Housing Act. It is a system under which a house can be purchased for a modest deposit and the purchaser is given a period of 40 odd years to complete payment.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: In the event of a purchaser not having enough money to pay over and above the sum of £2,750, he can utilise the advantages of the State Housing Act.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No. That would be a separate matter altogether. We should not confuse the two; each is subject to a different Act of Parliament. There are many other factors I could mention. For instance, under the State Housing Act there is a definition of "worker"—one whose income is not in excess, roughly, of £1,050. No financial

assistance can be given under the State Housing Act to anyone whose income is in excess of that amount, but under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement, houses are made available to people on the basis of needs and on priority according to the date of lodging of applications, with no reference to their income whatsoever, although there have been isolated cases where a departure has been made. The State Housing Commission can advance a maximum of £2,500, whereas there is an amount of £2,750 allowable under the proposals in this agreement. Therefore the State Housing Act would not be of any avail. There are so many different factors involved in arriving at an agreement between one Government and another that I doubt whether the two schemes could be brought down to a common basis.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: A person might not be able to find the extra money in order to finance the purchase, and I should like to know whether a second mortgage could be arranged.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The purpose of the second mortgage is not to enable people to purchase homes but to enable them to build homes. I indicated earlier that the commission has been using its money since the end of the war, at any rate, specifically for the purpose of having new dwellings built rather than for financing purchasing operations. When the commission, under its own Act, erects a home, it simultaneously finances the purchase of that home. The rate of interest of 4½ per cent. is to obtain, subject to a variation which could be made at any time after the agreement between the Commonwealth and the State, but I do not think there would be any or much need to make a change.

I think I have outlined in general the proposals embodied in the Bill which, I repeat, have already been implemented in anticipation of the measure being passed by Parliament. The Premier of South Australia, Mr. Playford, apparently obtained prior knowledge of the exact wording and form of the agreement and introduced legislation before Christmas of last year. I point out that that State has come into the Commonwealth-State housing agreement only within the last couple of years, and it has commenced the sale of these homes, with what degree of success I do not know. Only on the 16th April of this year was the agreement finally signed between the Commonwealth and this State. I commend the measure to the consideration of members and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

BILL—HONEY POOL.*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [5.48] in moving the second reading said: The proposal now before the House to give legal status to the Honey Pool that has been in existence for quite a number of years is not in the strict sense of the word a Government measure, although the Government has examined the contents of the Bill closely and fully agrees with everything it contains. It is really being introduced by me on behalf of the Honey Pool because of a special request that it should be brought forward in this way.

The purpose of the Bill is to enable the Honey Pool of Western Australia to become a corporate body. The pool will then be legally constituted and may seek finance to buy land, erect buildings and undertake the general functions of such an important business as the processing and marketing of honey on behalf of the growers which at present, because of its having no legal status, it is unable to do.

The industry is undoubtedly growing. I believe that the production of honey is approximately doubling every 10 years, and the pool has opened up markets overseas which, although not comparable with other primary products, nevertheless are important enough to give the industry some standing abroad. Even though the income from such a source is not as great as the returns to other primary industries, it is a valuable ambassador in other countries because it is entering markets in Europe and elsewhere that are not normally exploited by our larger agricultural industries.

The pool was begun in 1924 by a group of beekeepers, who were not only ambitious to achieve some security for the industry, but who also wished to express themselves by adopting an ideal that would enable beekeepers in the future to engage in this ever expanding industry with a good deal of confidence and a certain amount of security. In 1925, an attempt was made to form a beekeepers' trading company, but it failed, and then Westralian Farmers Co-operative Ltd. offered to form and finance a voluntary pool. After their disappointment in the attempt to form a trading company, the offer of Westralian Farmers, was gladly accepted and the pool commenced operations in 1926.

For the sake of record, I shall give the names of the original founders who, in the early days of the industry, did so much at their own expense to establish what has become one of the most efficient organisations for the disposal of an important primary product. The original founders were the late Mr. W. Arnott, assistant manager of Westralian Farmers and chairman of the original trustees; the late Mr. Charles Cook, commercial apiarist.

of Toodyay; the late Mr. C. G. Rees, commercial apiarist of Harvey; and the sole living founder Mr. L. J. Skipper, commercial apiarist of Perth. The records of the pool indicate clearly that these men suffered losses in the early stages in the hope that their efforts would bear fruit in the years ahead.

The years of 1927 to 1931 proved to be very difficult for the beekeepers as well as for everyone else, due to the depression, but conditions began to improve in 1932. Although the early figures are not available, I have been able to obtain for the information of members figures covering two five-year periods which will give some indication of the growth and wealth of this industry to the State—

Annual poolings

Year	lb.	£
1945	723,131	21,968
1949	3,449,722	75,863
Total for the five years	7,769,790	232,949

In the next five years, production increased by 60 per cent. and value by approximately 173 per cent.; in other words, production increased to 12,369,113 lb. and the value to £638,018.

Mr. Bovell: How many beekeepers are there in the State?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not certain of the number; it fluctuates.

Mr. Bovell: Are they generally in agreement with this measure?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; from 60 to 80 per cent. of the beekeepers are in the pool and have been for a considerable time. There is no intention to bring any form of compulsion to bear on the other 20 per cent. to market their honey through the pool; rather is the position the reverse. If the Bill becomes law, I repeat, no compulsion will be brought to bear on the beekeepers outside the pool.

Mr. Yates: The formation of the Honey Pool was responsible for the success that has been experienced up to the present.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Though the exports of honey are small as compared with the exports of other primary products, they are none the less important to our national economy. In the year 1947-1948, we exported 422½ tons of honey in bulk and in 1953-1954 the total was 2,181 tons. Members will appreciate how the industry has spread to the flora districts to the advantage of quite a number of people. Through the activities of the pool and the marketing ability that the management has displayed, it has established this year an important market

in Germany of all places, which has contracts with Australian suppliers for the delivery of 4,898 tons to the end of September, and it is expected that a further allocation will be made by the German Board of Trade for the three remaining months of 1955.

The voluntary pool has worked smoothly for many years, but a stage has been reached where producers are not content to operate under factory conditions that are not adequate for current activities. The equipment is no longer efficient to meet the needs of modern marketing requirements, and I think those responsible quite rightly decided to launch out by purchasing a block of land and erecting headquarters which will be the centre of marketing operations from now on. Still independent in thought, and making no claim on the Government of the day, for the past two years the participants in the pool have struck a levy of 1d. in the £. and this enabled the pool, not long ago, to purchase a block of land in Stuart-st., adjacent to the present factory and it is now the intention to spend some £20,000 in erecting there a packing plant of considerable proportions.

Naturally, with a body of this nature, there arose a difficulty as to who should hold the title to the land, buildings, and assets generally of the pool. This problem is one which only an Act of Parliament can overcome, and that is the reason for the bringing down of this Bill. This measure will not only allow members to know what is happening in the honey industry in this State, but will also give them an opportunity of assisting a most worth-while organisation which has sought no financial aid from anyone, but which now wishes to put itself on a proper footing.

I wish to make it quite clear that this is a voluntary honey pool although the Bill contains provision making it obligatory for the pool to receive honey which is offered to it. There is, however, no compulsion in respect of the producer of honey, who remains completely free to market his honey as he has in the past; but should he decide to offer it to the pool, the Bill makes it compulsory for the pool and the trustees to accept that honey.

There is little more I have to say in regard to this measure except to repeat that no government money is involved and yet, in spite of that, the relevant accounts, to be drawn up from time to time by the pool, will be subject to the scrutiny of this House each year, just as they would be if the Government were financially interested in the pool. There is a gesture which indicates that at all times the honey pool is desirous of receiving the support of this House and Parliament generally, in regard to its future activities.

The measure provides for an appointed trustee who shall be chairman, and who shall be Mr. R. E. Moyle of Westralian

Farmers Ltd. He is the present chairman and has an excellent knowledge of both local and export honey markets. The measure provides that the appointed trustee shall be chosen by Westralian Farmers by resolution of the directors of that particular company. The remaining three members of the trust will be elective trustees, but, for convenience in administration, those at present in office will continue to act.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Does Westralian Farmers Ltd. hold a monopoly of the handling of honey?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think it has a monopoly, but throughout the years it has given the industry financial and other help to keep it on its feet and I might mention that the pool itself, at its congresses from time to time and bearing in mind its complete approval of the work done and the assistance given by Westralian Farmers Ltd., has asked for the incorporation of some specific reference to Westralian Farmers Ltd. in this measure—

Mr. Nalder: It is a voluntary pool.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. The elective trustees will be appointed for three years and so the pool itself will be responsible for the election of members three years after the introduction of this Bill.

Mr. Bovell: Will they be elected by the beekeepers?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. Provision is also made that one of the originally elected trustees shall retire each year in order to rotate the appointment in such a way as always to have experienced men at the service of the industry. The need for this legislation is urgent as the present pool has actually commenced its building operations and requires the legal status to which I think it is justly entitled in view of the splendid efforts that these people have made over the years, and particularly in more recent times, when from their own income they have created a fund for the purpose of establishing a new headquarters. This is an innocuous measure, containing little other than the power to establish a corporate body in place of the organisation which is now operating without legal background. In view of the splendid service that these people have given to the State through their organisation, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Yates, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [6.7] in moving the second reading said: This is a most important and progressive Bill which I feel sure will receive the support of members opposite—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Not at first glance, at all events.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: —because I know they realise that the educational facilities and opportunities available to our young people today are much greater than those existing 50 years ago—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Are the young people of today more emotionally stable than those of 20 years ago?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Members opposite are already asking questions, but when they have had time to read the measure, they will understand it more fully. The Bill has been introduced to meet the desire of the Labour Government for steps to be taken to reduce the age for enrolments for the Legislative Assembly, eventually to 18 years of age, by reducing the age one year in every three-year period until the 18-year mark has been reached.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Why make so many bites at the cherry?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We desire to be progressive, but would like to lighten the burden of those who are not as progressive as we are. This measure would give them time to consider the question. Surely if a person of 21 years of age was entitled to vote 50 years ago, we should ultimately be able to reduce the age to 18 years and in that way we would become more progressive than we are now and might eventually find many younger men in our Parliament—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do not reflect on yourself.

Hon. L. Thorn: You should have included a retiring age.

The Premier: The electors have power to retire members every three years.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Members can retire at any time, if they wish to do so.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I think you should have a retiring age, in order to get younger men into Parliament.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: We are now listening to the voice of progress. That demonstrates faith in the inherent ability of our youth to shoulder successfully the responsibilities of citizenship. The Labour Government and the Labour Party are progressive and wish to move with the times. People are more enlightened now than they were many years ago.

Hon. L. Thorn: They are not.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There are now more opportunities and greater facilities for education.

Hon. L. Thorn: Yes, but the people of 50 years ago had as much sense as those of today.

The Minister for Housing: How do you know?

Hon. L. Thorn: I just know.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: A youth of 18 years of age today has far more worldly and political knowledge than his counterpart had 20 years ago.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What authority have you for that statement?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The fact that we have progressed. Fifty years ago man could not fly at 800 miles an hour and in those days we did not send away to fight for us youths of 18 as pilots in charge of extremely intricate machines. Today many youths matriculate and enter our universities at 18 years of age.

The Premier: The member for Mt. Lawley is still looking backwards.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: There are more opportunities for the young people now than existed in the past.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That applies to the whole community.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Of course.

Mr. Bovell: Have any of the people in the age groups you referred to made any move to become enrolled?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, and I notice that people of 30 or 40 do not bother to become enrolled unless they are persuaded to do so. I believe if youths of 18 could become enrolled, we would have more progress than we have at present.

The Premier: This Bill will be a winner for the member for Maylands in Mt. Lawley.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Facilities for education have spread over the whole State these days and children can receive education in places no matter how remote. There are far more boys and girls qualifying to enter universities now than there were 40 or 50 years ago because in those days the young people had not the same opportunities. Today even the child of the working man has an equal chance. I can recall that just before the Russian revolution only 2 per cent. of the people of Russia received an education, but today the figure is 98 per cent. and I believe that applies all over the world. I am convinced that in Australia the percentage would be more than 98 nowadays, whereas 50 years ago—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I do not think you know much about Russia.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, but I know a good bit about Australia and the conditions here. One cannot escape the fact that Russia began to progress only after she had got away from the old type of financial domination, following the taking of control by the workers. I do not say I approve of everything that has been done in Russia, but since there has been a move from the bottom of the ladder, they have progressed and their standard of education is now higher than ever before.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Extreme legislation—

Mr. Bovell: Is there any other State in the British Commonwealth with a franchise at 18 years?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not think so, but why should we not lead? Members opposite are too orthodox, desiring to remain as they were 100 years ago. Progress has always come from this side.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Before the tea suspension a few interjections were made, but since having tea members opposite look better tempered and they may agree to make progress. We have boys and girls fighting for the protection of our country and serving in our forces at the age of 18 years.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: There are those who serve their country while under the age of 18 years.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I agree. The hon. member has been an educationist, and he knows the quality of some of those people, especially those who have reached the age of 18 years and have become schoolteachers. It is they who are moulding the destiny of Western Australia.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Why not just grant those people the right to vote?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Why discriminate?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do not you think a father—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: What better qualifications can they have to entitle them to a say in the affairs of the country in which they are born? We say, give them a vote at 18 years of age. Time marches on and we should be progressive. If it is approved, this Bill will by progressive steps give young men and women a vote in Legislative Assembly elections; a vote in the election of their members. I hope the House will agree to this, and I hope the vote will be unanimous.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I hope it will not.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is very strange that whenever anything new or progressive is introduced, it is introduced from this side of the House.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Oh no!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is always done by this Government. Why is it that the Opposition is so traditional in its outlook?

Mr. Perkins: Who introduced child endowment?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: And who introduced workers' compensation?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And who introduced old-age pensions?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Those were on the books for a long time and they were initiated by Labour. After Labour had initiated the moves, the other side took advantage and got in first.

The Minister for Housing: That was the price they paid for Labour's support.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What was?

The Minister for Housing: Pensions.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They were not reckless, like your leader.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: A person must be over the age of 21 before he can vote. If a person is learned and an intellectual, and with all the opportunities available today as compared with 50 years ago, he should have the right to vote. Surely we have made progress in so far as the youth of the country is concerned!

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is not progress.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is. If the Bill becomes an Act, then in 1962 young people of the country will have the right to vote at 18 years of age. That is progress. The Opposition, however, says, "Let us stand still and make no alterations. Let us go on as we have been doing in the past."

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do you require a constitutional majority for this Bill?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I do not think we do.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: How old—

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I suggest the Minister address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Fifty years ago the provision was made that a person had to be 21 years of age before he could vote for the Legislative Assembly elections. The age is still 21 years. I feel sure, however, that members will agree that we have made progress in every other direction. Why, we have Rhodes scholars at 18 years of age! And they must attain a fairly high standard. We have accountants and schoolteachers at 18 years of age, and they are required to shoulder great responsibilities. They have had the opportunity and are worldly in their political experience. If they are good citizens, I see no reason why they should not be entitled to a vote.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: They will only do as their fathers tell them.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is not so today. It may have been the case 50 years ago.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: More's the pity.
Hon. L. Thorn: Now they tell their fathers what to do.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They are now able to take advantage of the radio.

Hon. A. F. Watts: And listen to jive most of the day.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: They are able to gain much information from it.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It is not information.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is. I have heard some very good lectures and talks over the radio.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Not from jive

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No, but nevertheless I have still heard some good talks and lectures. These young people also have the opportunity of educational advancement through the medium of films and picture-shows. Today we have boys of 18 years of age manipulating the most complicated aeroplanes and flying them at over 800 miles an hour.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbot: But you have not got men over 50 doing it.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Quite a number of people who are aged 24 or 25 years could not manipulate these planes unless they were trained to do so. During the war, the R.A.A.F. was constituted of young men of 18 years of age, and they did an extremely good job.

The Minister for Housing: If you are old enough to lose your life for your country, you are old enough to vote.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Rot!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Most of our best tennis players and cricketers are about 18 years of age; and the same can be said about our footballers and swimmers and riflemen. Another game which requires a very high intellectual standard is chess, and members will find that some of our best chess players are about 18 years of age.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Would you allow them to marry at 18 without the permission of their parents?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I would. I do not see any reason why they should not. The Leader of the Opposition wants to go back to the time of William the Conqueror; to the year 1016.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: No, 1066! You ask the Minister for Education.

The Minister for Education: He was just trying you out to see if you knew.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This is a progressive measure and it will be interesting to hear the reply to it. We must march with the times. If we do not make progress, what will we do? This measure will not reduce the age to 18 years straight away. It will do it progressively. It will be reduced from 21 to 20 years, then to 19 and then to 18 years, and it will be tried for six years. So by trial and error we will find whether these people are qualified to vote for the Assembly or not. If they are not, then a Bill can be introduced to disallow any further voting at the age of 18 years. To my mind that would stop progress.

I have given a good deal of consideration to this matter. I am more than 21 years of age, as members know, but I still feel progressive. I know the Leader of the Opposition is progressive, but he is a little traditional and does not like changes. If we did not have changes how could we get on? We would not be living in the advancement we are if there were no wars. Research into the construction and flying of aeroplanes would not have made such progress nor would the atom have been split. There may be a time when we will not have to worry about coal or oil.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is the member for Collie listening?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It does not matter whether he is or not.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: He does not want the elimination of coal.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, he does, if we can find something better. I am using the subjunctive and saying, if we can find something better.

Mr. May: We cannot get anything better.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I commend the Bill to the House and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

[Mr. Hill took the Chair.]

BILL—JUNIOR FARMERS' MOVEMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [7.43] in moving the second reading said: Before referring to the provisions of the Bill, I may mention that the Junior Farmers'

Movement has been in existence since 1935. It was reorganised with a full-time organiser as far back as 1946.

The main purpose of the measure is the sponsoring and encouraging of youth, male and female, to study agriculture and farming, and to give them an appreciation of rural life, of education and the ethics of good citizenship. In brief, this is directed towards keeping the youth of the rural areas in those rural areas. It may be of interest to members to know that at present the Junior Farmers' Movement has a total membership of approximately 2,000, made up of 1,200 youths and 800 girls; and there are some 80 clubs functioning in various parts of the country. The clubs cater for young folk up to the age of 25.

Until 1949, the assistance rendered by the Education Department consisted of the seconding of one teacher as State organiser; and by 1951 he had the assistance of two other teachers as district organisers. When the present Director of Education assumed office in 1951, it was represented to him that an additional four organisers should be engaged. He agreed to two additional teachers being provided, and said that the position would be reviewed at the end of two years when he had a chance to knowing whether the appointments were justified or not.

Following complaints from the Farmers' Union, the Royal Agricultural Society, the Institute of Agriculture, and some members of Parliament, the director caused an investigation to be made, as a result of which it was evident that neither the Junior Farmers' Movement nor the State was obtaining full value for the money which the Government was spending in furthering the objects of the movement, and providing five school teachers as organisers. The inquiry disclosed that the emphasis was on social and debating activities rather than on the advancement of agriculture, though it is not suggested that the two former objects should be ignored or placed in the background altogether.

In view of the circumstances, the director recommended to the then Minister for Education, the Leader of the Country Party, that a State advisory committee be established, representing the bodies enumerated in the Bill. I think it will be agreed that that council is a fairly representative body. The then Minister signified his general approval of the proposal. That was early in February, 1953. When a change of Government took place and my immediate predecessor, the Deputy Premier and Minister for Works, took office as Minister for Education, he gave the scheme his complete endorsement.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I do not want to make the council unwieldy, but would you consider appointing a representative of children's homes, such as the Fairbridge Farm School?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: As the Leader of the Opposition knows, I am always amenable to reason; and if he puts up a reasonable proposition, it will have the consideration it deserves.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You can rest assured it will be reasonable.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: At present there are two full-time and nine part-time organisers. The State organiser receives £1,495 per annum; the assistant State organiser received £1,225, and the part-time organisers £65 per annum. Two of the organisers, the State organiser and one part-time organiser, are teachers; the others are not. The Education Department has been involved financially since 1935. The present cost of the movement to the Education Department, including salaries, travelling allowances and transport expenses and office accommodation, approximates £6,000.

The Bill provides for the creation of a corporate body as a co-ordinating entity to give effect to the objects set out in the Bill. The advisory council consists of ten persons: two ex-officio members—namely, an officer of the Department of Agriculture and an officer of the Education Department—and eight others, including representatives of the Royal Agricultural Society, the Institute of Agriculture, the Farmers' Union, and the junior farmers' clubs. Discretion is conferred on the Minister to issue to the council directions relating to the purposes of the Act, as, although the measure does not expressly appropriate public money for these purposes, it is to be indicated that the movement has in the past been assisted by the Government, and that is likely to continue in the immediate future.

Members will see from the Bill that the council is not to be an agency or instrumentality of the Crown. The insertion of this provision is due to the fact that, although the Government is prepared to assist in furthering the objects of the movement, it is not to undertake the whole responsibility of furthering the objects enumerated. The council is authorised to hold, acquire and dispose of property and to enter into contracts, and to employ staff and formulate its own proceedings. Reference is made to the establishment of a fund from which the project will be financed, and the council will be required to keep proper accounts, which will be subject to audit by the Auditor General.

The Junior Farmers' Movement is essentially a rural one, though a few clubs have been established in the metropolis. Two members of the movement will be directly represented on the advisory council. I think members will agree that the advisory council contains a majority of members representing prominent agricultural and rural organisations. The principles contained in the Bill have received

the endorsement of the advisory council; and at this stage I would like to express—and I think previous Ministers for Education will join with me in expressing—thanks to the members of the advisory council for their very fine interest in the movement and their general activity in trying to further its objects, to foster in youth in rural districts a love of agriculture, to develop an interest in the obligations of citizenship and to make profitable use of their leisure time.

Records on the file go back for a fair period. I have taken the trouble to look right through the file, and the notes I have were taken from the records covering the developments that have taken place since the movement was first established in 1935. I doubt whether there are any contentious clauses in the Bill. The object is a worthy one and should receive the blessing of all members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [7.55] in moving the second reading said: This measure is not new to this Chamber. Members will recollect that on two previous occasions a similar Bill has been submitted for the consideration of Parliament, and the one now being introduced is practically identical with that brought down last year. In fact, the only difference is that it is proposed that the taxation which would be payable by the State Government Insurance Office to the Treasury if that office were a company, in respect of business conducted for the Local Government Insurance Pool will not be payable. I am not entitled to mention clauses, but that is referred to in No. 9.

This is the third occasion on which such a Bill has been submitted to Parliament and it may be of interest to refresh the memory of members as to what has occurred. In 1953, the Bill was very well received in this Chamber. A fair amount of debate took place. Amendments were suggested in the Legislative Council, and the Bill passed that Chamber by 16 votes to 9 at the second reading. The Government accepted the amendments in all good faith; but on the third reading the Bill was defeated. Believing that the obligation was on it to try to extend the activities of the State Government Insurance Office, the Government reintroduced the Bill last year.

It met a similar fate. However, there is nothing like perseverance, and accordingly this Bill is before members for their consideration.

The Government feels that it must continue its efforts to have the office authorised to undertake all forms of fire and general accident insurance business in open and fair competition with insurance companies. The public request for such an extension is so persistent that the Government would be doing less than its duty if it failed to make further attempts to extend the scope and activities of the office.

Mr. Court: Have you details of the nature of the requests received?

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I can supply some. I know that a number have approached the State Government Insurance Office for ordinary fire insurance. If the member for Toodyay were in his seat, he would probably be able to substantiate my statement with regard to viticulturists, to whom I will refer in a few moments.

I referred to the Local Government Insurance Pool. It is hoped that that part of the business will be exempt from taxation. It is not my intention to quote from balance sheets or extracts from the accounts of private companies. Suffice it to say that many have made, and are making, handsome profits, and I would invite any member opposite to give information of any private insurance company that is verging on bankruptcy. That would be a hard proposition to submit. In regard to the business transacted by the office, the service it has been able to render has been very creditable. The local authorities pool was started on the 1st July, 1946, with 70 participants. By 1954-55, the number had increased to 122. The annual premiums increased from £2,158 to £21,986, and the annual cash rebates have fluctuated between 10 per cent. and 23 per cent. of the gross premiums, the average being 20 per cent., and the amount involved over £19,000.

Mr. Perkins: There has been dissatisfaction with the administration of that part of the business.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I think the hon. member will find that, on the average, local authorities have expressed keen satisfaction with the work of the office in regard to the pool. I invite the member for Roe, if he has any concrete examples or complaints, to submit them direct to the office, or refer to them in this House, and they will be given attention.

Mr. Perkins: I understand that representations were made and refused by the office.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR: What representations?

Mr. Perkins: Regarding the large amount that the State Government Insurance Office was taking for the administration of the fund.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I have just mentioned the amount that has been rebated.

Mr. Perkins: It should have been more.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The initial premiums were 20 per cent. below those charged by other companies. Last year a Bill was submitted to extend the activities of the State Government Insurance Office to enable it to effect insurance on schoolchildren. The premiums payable were 3s. 6d. per child per annum with a maximum of 10s. 6d. per family, and the aggregate benefit was £50. As time went by it was found that the benefits could be increased, and the office has now increased them to £85. I suggest that any member who contacts any one of the parents and citizens' associations in Western Australia or the secretary of the federation of parents and citizens' organisations, will be told that the State Government Insurance Office is doing a very fine job in the administration of that section of its business.

A few moments ago I mentioned that if the member for Toodyay were here he might substantiate what I am now going to say. Early this year, the State office was requested by the viticulturists to introduce an insurance scheme to protect the growers from loss due to flood damage, which was estimated at that time to be £75,000. As far as I am aware, the outside insurance companies would not accept the risk. The manager of the State office advised that his office did not have the statutory power to accept the business. Even if it did have the statutory power, it could not be expected to accept hazardous risks only while other companies received the premiums on goods risks.

Mr. Court: Did the State office make a decision as to whether it would have taken that business in the normal way?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: We do not do those things.

Mr. Court: Yes, you do.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The point is, that had the State Government Insurance Office had the authority to accept that form of insurance, doubtless it would have done so. Just the same, the conditions and circumstances which brought about the establishment—illegally, it is true—of the State Government Insurance Office in the first place, were that the private insurance companies would not accept risks in regard to the mining industry. The State Government Insurance Office was established in 1926 by the then Labour Government because the private companies would not accept risks in regard to mining and mining diseases, and the office operated illegally for some 12 years, until 1938, when it was given legal status by Act of Parliament. Since that year it has continued to progress despite

opposition from some quarters and I suggest it has rendered a distinct service to the community.

As I indicated on a previous occasion, from the general manager to the office boy, there is a definite desire to perform a good public service. I have not heard—I am not saying this in a derogatory sense about the outside companies—a word of complaint about the attitude adopted by any of the officers of the State Government Insurance Office. On the contrary, I have heard many people laud the attitude and general demeanour of its officers. I do not want to paint the lily. If members care to look up the debates which ensued in 1953 and again in 1954, in both Houses of Parliament, they will find the reasons—which I have just enumerated briefly—for the introduction of this measure.

With these few remarks, I feel that members have a grip of what the Government is aiming at, and I hope that the Bill on this third try will pass through both Houses of Parliament so that the State Government Insurance Office will be put on a sounder basis, and will have the right to engage in all forms of general insurance, and be able to compete with the outside companies. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Court, debate adjourned.

BILL—JURY ACT AMENDMENT

(No 1).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [8.10]: The main object of the Bill is to enable women to sit on juries, should they so desire. It is not to be compulsory, but optional, and with that principle I entirely agree. I think I was the first member in this House to advance that policy, some time ago.

Mr. Brady: The Labour Government has advocated it for years.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It may have, but it did not introduce it in this House. I think that the Bill has not been given proper thought; and in many respects it is ill-conceived. The Jury Act, as I have pointed out previously, is one that needs careful consideration and bringing up to date. If the Minister for Justice would give a little more attention to the Jury Act instead of to a Bill to allow people to vote at the age of 18, it would be a good idea.

After all, the Jury Act is one of the principal safeguards of our system of justice. Considerable progress has been made with respect to the matter of juries, and our attitude has changed somewhat since the Act was last dealt with fully by Parliament. I think the last time it was fully considered was in the year 1898. I

have on the notice paper, notice of intention to introduce a Bill to give women the right to sit on juries, and naturally, as I have said previously, this object has my full support. My own view is that those women who desire to sit on juries should have the right to apply to do so. That policy, as was stated by the Minister, applies in New Zealand, Queensland and New South Wales.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: How many do you think you would get to apply?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That does not matter. After all, no one in this House says that a woman should sit on a jury if she does not desire to. Not one member, unless it is the hon. member now interjecting, will get up and say that women shall be compellable. It seems somewhat strange that the Minister did not adopt that attitude. The Bill does not propose to make them compellable, and I do not think we want to exercise any pressure on them to serve on juries; at least, I do not. It is not my desire to force them into it, directly or indirectly. I want them to have the right and the privilege to serve on juries should they wish to do so; I do not want to go further than that. Apparently this is the point of view of the majority of the States of Australia. In South Australia, women do not serve on juries.

Mr. Oldfield: Do you think they should have property qualifications the same as men have?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not. I do not think that women want favours, but justice. They want to be treated with equality as between man and woman. In my experience they have never asked for more than that.

Mr. Brady: Would you give them a vote for the Upper House?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes; they have it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are trying to make it so that if they write in, you will grant them a favour.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Not at all. I do not suggest that there is any favour about it. They should have the right to serve on juries if they so wish, and apply to do so. That, I know, is not the point of view of the majority of the members of this House, sitting on both sides, because when I introduced a Bill dealing with that point of view last session it was not agreed to and members on both sides voted against the principle. Therefore, on this occasion, the amendment I have on the notice paper will mean that men and women will be treated with equality. The list will be made reasonably large but not so cumbersome that it will make it impossible to administer. My suggestion is that those

men and women who are eligible to vote at Legislative Council elections shall be eligible for the jury list.

Let us look at the position now. I asked some questions in regard to the matter and at present, in the metropolitan area where juries sit most frequently, there are only 5,591 jurors on the list. I think that number is far too small. Yet there are 200,802 electors on the Legislative Assembly roll of which half are estimated to be men and only 5,591 of that number serve on juries. I think that is wrong.

The ACTING SPEAKER: A little less conversation please!

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Some day, perhaps, when we have progressed, my suggestion can be taken further but still allow the list to be a feasible one. I think the men and women on the Legislative Council electoral roll would be a fair sprinkling of all interests in the community. That is my proposition and yet the Minister says, "We have 5,591 men on the jury list and we intend to make 105,422 women available to serve." I think that is wrong, because we want a fair balance. Assuming the number is divided by ten—which would mean that only one woman in ten was prepared to serve—there would still be approximately 10,000 women and only approximately 5,000 men on the list. I do not think any woman in the community wants that; she wants only a fair proportion. There is no suggestion by the Minister that the property qualification required for men shall be altered. He could have done that quite easily.

The Minister for Justice: That does not come within the purview of the Bill.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know, but did not the Minister give instructions for the Bill to be drafted.

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Then could not the Minister have included something else in it? Of course he could.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: According to you, he has too much in it now.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister could have put a lot more into the Bill and brought the Act up to date. Under the existing Jury Act apparently only 5,591 men qualify and yet, under this measure, the Minister wants to place 105,422 women on the list as well.

The Minister for Justice: This Bill is what the women have asked for.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not know what they have asked for. They did not ask me for it when I was Minister; all they asked me for was equality.

The Minister for Justice: They were afraid of you.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I have been afraid of women all my life, so I do not see how they could be afraid of me.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You were not prepared to give them equality.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes I was.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You were prepared to give them inequality.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I was prepared to give them equality.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: No you were not.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Where it was compellable for a man to sit on a jury, I wanted to give the same right to a woman without it being compellable.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Your idea was that if they wrote in they might sit on a jury.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: One can see how absurd the Bill is. I venture to suggest that it is pure propaganda.

The Minister for Justice: No.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister knows—

The Minister for Justice: It is what the women have asked for.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: —that this Bill has no possible chance of reaching the statute book because it would be absurd.

The Minister for Justice: It will be passed in this Chamber and probably voted out in another place.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Why not give men and women equality?

The Minister for Justice: We are giving them equality.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No the Minister is not because he will have something like 105,000 women who will qualify and yet he has only 5,591 men on the jury list. That is not giving proper consideration to the situation, which is a most serious one.

The Minister for Justice: Your amendment will penalise women and allow only a few to be placed on the jury list.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, it will not.

The Minister for Justice: Do you want them to have the property qualification?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The amendment will not mean that.

Mr. Johnson: Why are there so few men on the roll?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not know. Those are the figures I have been given.

Mr. Johnson: Why did not you find out?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Those are the figures given to me in answer to questions I asked the Minister, so I am accepting that they are right. He should know, even if I do not.

Mr. Johnson: You were the Minister in charge of that department.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so.

Mr. Johnson: What were the numbers then?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I used to be the Minister but unfortunately for the department I am not the Minister now.

The Premier: Fortunately for the State you are not the Minister now.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is the Premier's opinion, but I do not agree with it. My amendment will at least try to make a workable proposition of the Bill. In its present form, what chance has it of ever coming into operation? The Minister would not proclaim it. All the Minister has said is that when it is proclaimed it will operate. What chance has it of operating if 105,000 women are placed on the jury list?

The Minister for Justice: It does not make any difference so far as its operation is concerned.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, it does. The Minister is not trying to be practical.

The Minister for Justice: Yes I am.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: He is just throwing a sop. I gave notice of a Bill to amend the Jury Act the first day of this session. That measure could have been passed through this House, been accepted by Parliament and have operated immediately. This Bill could not operate and it is apparent that it is only a sop. My personal view is that if they so desire, every man and woman of good reputation should be permitted to serve on a jury. I do not want any distinction.

The Minister for Justice: Without any property qualification?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, without any property qualification.

The Minister for Justice: There is a property qualification for the Legislative Council electoral roll and you have suggested the use of that roll.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Because it is, in my opinion, the only system that will work under the existing Act. I cannot amend the whole Act because that is a Government matter. As the position is now, the proposition in the Bill before us will never work.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The real fact is that you do not want women on juries.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do. I have been the one to urge it in this House and I think women should be given every chance of equal citizenship with men. But the Minister is not trying to give it to them. He is only trying to bluff, because he knows that this Bill will not work.

Mr. Brady: I think you are playing to the gallery.

The Premier: Just playing.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, I am not. I think I have made my point very clear. The Minister cannot tell me that he can deal with 105,000 women who would be entitled to be placed on the list.

The Minister for Justice: You are only guessing.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I think I have read the Bill correctly and to show that the Minister has not considered it properly, I would remind members that women can be empanelled, go half way through with a trial, and then say, "I have had enough. I am going home."

The Minister for Justice: No. Once they are sworn in they must stay.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No. It does not say so.

The Minister for Justice: Yes, it does.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, it does not.

Mr. May: You cannot both be right.

Mr. McCulloch: Somebody must be wrong.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Bill says—
A woman qualified and liable to serve as a juror may cancel her liability to serve—

And that means at any time.

—by service of written notice to that effect on the sheriff at the office of the sheriff, Supreme Court, Perth.

So all she has to do is write a notice to the sheriff and she is relieved from liability at any time.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is an insult to the women of this State to think that they would do that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I did not say that they would! All I am saying is that the Minister has not considered the Bill. It is a propaganda Bill.

Hon. L. Thorn: It might be a propaganda Bill but it is not a proper gander!

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It simply says that women can walk off a jury at any time.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you think they would do that once they were sworn in?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is not the point.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is the point; it is the only point.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not think the Minister has really considered the Bill in the way that it should have been considered. It is a most important subject because it deals with the liberty of citizens and should have been given a good deal of consideration. I have placed an amendment on the notice paper to the effect that if they are empanelled they cannot withdraw, unless the judge decrees, once they are sworn, until the case has been completed.

The Minister for Justice: Why do you not look at Clause 9, Subclause (2)?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I propose to support the second reading and I hope the House will agree to my amendments. In South Australia the Legislative Council roll is used for the purpose of selecting juries and the point is: Are there not enough women available, whose names are on the Legislative Council's rolls, for service on juries? A lot of by-play is always made about property. A very small percentage of those on the Legislative Council's rolls are listed because they are property owners. The Minister knows that the biggest percentage of the claimants are there because they are the head of the household; they are the tenants and occupiers of houses. Do not despise the head of the household! He is responsible for rearing his family and supporting his wife.

The Minister for Justice: They can write in after they have been enrolled and be taken off the list.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know that. I am saying that we should not despise those who are qualified to vote for the Legislative Council. If a person pays seven shillings a week rent, he is entitled to vote at Legislative Council elections. Those who own homes or occupy them and are bringing up families are suitable people to serve on juries.

The Minister for Justice: Of course they are.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, and does not the Minister think they are more suitable to serve on juries?

The Minister for Justice: But less than one-third of those who are entitled to be enrolled for the Legislative Assembly are on the Legislative Council rolls.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know they are. I think the Minister will have a large enough jury list as has been found in South Australia; and who is more fit to sit on a jury than the head of the household who has the responsibility of bringing up his family? I suggest that there is no one more suitable. The Minister should not forget that there are many women who are householders.

The Minister for Justice: Because they have £50 in real estate and £150 in personal property.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: At present the Minister has taken no steps to alter that. The Act provides that a man has to have £50 of real estate and personal estate to the value of £150. I am reducing that qualification. I am suggesting that a man need only be a householder.

The Minister for Justice: This Bill does not affect that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know that, but does not the Minister think he should have done something about it? He would then have had some hope of passing this Bill through Parliament. Does he think

he has any hope now? Of course he has not! If the Minister had tried to lower the property qualification for men and had placed everyone on an equal footing as I am trying to do with my amendment, I think the Bill would have been passed. However, with this absurd idea of providing for 100,000 women and 5,000 men, what possible chance has the Minister of getting the Bill through?

The Minister for Justice: I am doubtful if your amendment is relevant to the Bill.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If the Speaker rules that it is irrelevant, that is all right, but I am trying to help the Minister with his ill-conceived Bill, which he knows has little chance of passing through Parliament. Does he think that Parliament is going to agree to 100,000 women and 5,000 men being eligible to sit on juries? Of course it cannot! Why does not the Minister take steps to lower the qualification respecting £50 in real estate and £150 personal estate? Why does not he even things up?

The Minister for Justice: This Bill does not deal with that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Why not? The Minister is dealing with jurors. The Minister has not dealt with that aspect because this is purely a propaganda Bill. Unless my amendments are carried, this measure will have little chance of being placed on the statute book. I support the second reading.

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

House adjourned at 8.34 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 14th September, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.

POISON 1080.

Effect on Humans and Conditions of Availability.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Will he give some further consideration to the extravagant proposals of the Agriculture Protection Board for the use of 1080 special bait for rabbit destruction?

(2) Is he aware that in the world's medical literature there are only four cases of human poisoning with rabbit 1080; and that, of these, three recovered?

(3) Is he aware that the following figures are correct for the minimum single lethal dose for adults of the following poisons:—

Arsenic, 100 milligrams;
Strychnine, 100 milligrams;
Parathion, 125 milligrams;
Cyanide, 200 milligrams;
1080, 465 milligrams?

(4) Is he aware that it would need 1½ lb. of oats used as special bait 1080 to kill a human being?

(5) Is he aware that it is a physical impossibility for a human being to swallow 1½ lb. of oats?

(6) Is he aware that 1080 special bait is freely available to approved landholders in South Australia?

(7) Will he give consideration to approving the release of 1080 special bait for rabbit destruction under the same conditions as those under which it is released to landholders in South Australia?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The matter is receiving consideration. The costs of the Western Australian scheme to farmers are much lower than those of the South Australian scheme.

(2) An American authority recently stated there had been 22 deaths in the U.S.A.

(3) Authoritative estimates of the M.L.D. of 1080 for human beings vary greatly. Some are as low as 72 milligrams, and they range up to the figure of 465 milligrams quoted.

(4) This figure might possibly be as low as 1 lb. of bait.

(5) It appears to be most unlikely for such a quantity to be swallowed.

(6) Yes. At £4 19s. 0d. for a 25 lb. tin of oats.

(7) Answered in No. (1). Farmers, farmers' organisations and local authorities which have seen the Western Australian scheme in operation consider it preferable to the South Australian scheme.