

am not in a position to indicate the sort of lectures that are delivered at the School of Mines, or what comprises the curriculum of the course, but I would say, if it is not already done, that it would be a good scheme for the minerals section of the Mines Department, together with the geological department of the University to assist the men who go out by giving them a better idea of where to look for minerals, and some method of identifying the different metals that occur throughout the State.

A great deal can still be done to help prospectors. In the past there have been taunts at the idea of assisting prospectors because it has been said that the Government was merely handing out a dole to men who went a mile or so out of town and reclined under a shady bush without doing anything for the contributions they received. That state of affairs could easily be overcome by devising a method whereby some control could be exercised and reasonable records made of the work of the men; although I quite agree that if we asked an old-time prospector to keep a written record of where he had prospected and what he had done, we would get a sharp answer. I think we could do much to revitalise mining in this State. Members may have read in this morning's paper of a woman prospector—and, of course, that is the proper description of that lady—

The Minister for Mines: You do not mean a gold digger, do you?

Hon. W. J. MANN: No; in this case the metal was wolfram. This lady by her persistence and personal interest in a mine discovered a valuable deposit of wolfram. I say, good luck to all prospectors whether they be men or women—and quite a number of women have assisted their husbands in prospecting in the past, as we all know. I do not think any apology is required when we ask the State to contribute a relatively small amount to see whether further valuable mineral deposits can be unearthed.

Conditions today are such that mining development requires a great deal of capital and a fair amount of scientific research, but I believe that the prospector can be well and truly utilised in conjunction with that research. The late Hon. J. Scaddan had the idea that the proper way to encourage the prospector was to say to him, "Here is an amount of money that will keep you going for a wee bit. Go out and see what you can find. If you find anything that is worth while, come back to me and I will see that sufficient money is made available for the carrying out of a proper investigation." That was a sound policy. The late hon. gentleman knew his mining—I think, none better in this State. We can, with perfect safety, pass the motion and trust that the Government

will make some real effort to get the right type of men to go out to see what they can find.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 19th October, 1950.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### ROADS.

(a) As to Commonwealth Aid Road Funds.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Works:

On the 15th August, in reply to a question in the Legislative Council it was stated that the sum of £1,373,894 of Federal aid road money was unspent at the 30th June, 1950. Will he supply a detailed statement showing to what public works this money has been allocated—

(a) in the metropolitan area

(b) for what public works in the metropolitan area;

(c) the amount allocated to each country road board and municipality?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) £138,990.

(b) Construction and maintenance of roads and bridges.

(c) Excluding £224,950 reserved for plant pools, supply of screenings, allocations for new settlement roads, forest areas and unexpended authorisations for the maintenance of main roads, approximately £1,009,954 authorisations allocated to country local authorities and North-West road board districts remained unexpended at 30th June, 1950.

(b) As to Work Allocations.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Works:

What allocations have been made for the current year for work on—

(a) declared main roads;

(b) other roads,

in each local authority's district outside the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER replied:

#### MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT.

Statement of allocations on the current year's approved programme for works on—

(a) Declared main roads

(b) Other roads

in each Local Authority's District outside the metropolitan area.

Road Board District.	Declared Main Roads. (a) £	Other Roads. (b) £	Total. £
Armadale-Kelmscott	15,130	2,250	17,380
Albany Municipality	...	3,200	3,200
Albany Road Board	4,000	11,000	15,000
Augusta-Margaret	11,100	10,250	21,350
Ashburton	...	12,000	12,000
Beverley	...	6,900	6,900
Brookton	12,500	4,250	16,750
Broomehill	...	2,600	2,600
Bunbury Municipality	...	3,000	3,000
Bridgetown	...	6,550	6,550
Ballingup	...	3,050	3,050
Bruce Rock	2,000	5,650	7,650
Black Range	...	1,400	1,400
Broome	...	7,150	7,150
Chittering	...	2,300	2,300
Cranbrook	4,000	6,850	10,850
Corrigin	...	4,500	4,500
Cuballing	1,200	3,050	4,250
Capel	...	6,800	6,800
Collie	2,700	9,750	12,450
Cunderdin	...	3,900	3,900
Carnamah	5,000	4,950	9,950
Cue	...	2,200	2,200
Coolgardie	3,000	31,200	34,200
Carnarvon Municipality	...	2,000	2,000
Denmark	9,000	9,150	18,150
Dumbleyung	3,000	3,100	6,100
Dardanup	2,750	2,200	4,950
Drakesbrook	500	3,700	4,200
Dowerin	15,500	3,900	19,400
Dalwallinu	10,500	3,500	14,000
Dandaragan	...	6,000	6,000
Dundas	3,000	7,200	10,200
Esperance	3,000	3,200	6,200
Fremantle	4,470	1,700	6,170
Gingin	...	2,750	2,750
Gnowangerup	...	5,650	5,650
Greenbushes	...	2,860	2,860

Road Board District.	Declared Main Roads. (a) £	Other Roads. (b) £	Total. £
Goemalling	...	5,050	5,050
Greenough	8,000	1,700	9,700
Geraldton	...	3,250	3,250
Geraldton Municipality	...	4,750	4,750
Gascoyne-Minilya	...	14,000	14,000
Harvey	22,400	9,850	29,250
Halls Creek	...	11,500	11,500
Irwin	...	2,200	2,200
Katanning	...	5,050	5,050
Kondinin	...	5,300	5,300
Kent	...	5,300	5,300
Kojonup	2,000	8,150	10,150
Kulin	4,000	4,200	8,200
Kellerberrin	2,000	5,700	7,700
Koorad	...	4,350	4,350
Kununoppin-Trayning	9,500	3,680	13,180
Kalgoorlie	...	2,400	2,400
Lake Grace	3,000	9,850	12,850
Laverton	...	1,200	1,200
Leonora	...	3,700	3,700
Mandurah	5,000	3,200	8,200
Mundaring	2,500	2,750	5,250
Murray	...	15,750	15,750
Maradong	...	5,100	5,100
Manjup	...	22,550	22,550
Merredin	11,500	5,400	16,900
Mt. Marshall	...	2,950	2,950
Mukinbudin	...	4,000	4,000
Mingenew	...	5,650	5,650
Moora	8,500	7,600	16,100
Morawa	10,900	8,700	19,600
Mt. Magnet	...	4,300	4,300
Mullewa	9,000	7,350	16,350
Meekatharra	...	7,850	7,850
Murchison	...	2,950	2,950
Menzies	...	3,700	3,700
Marble Bar	...	18,000	18,000
Narrogin	7,000	3,400	10,400
Nannup	...	6,050	6,050
Narembeen	...	4,900	4,900
Northam	1,000	5,850	6,850
Northam Municipality	2,000	...	2,000
Nungarin	2,500	4,400	6,900
Northampton	...	9,900	9,900
Nullagine	...	7,000	7,000
Phillips River	...	5,950	5,950
Pingelly	7,500	4,000	11,800
Plantagenet	...	7,000	7,000
Freston	8,400	7,300	10,700
Perenjori	17,200	4,250	21,450
Port Hedland	...	19,200	19,200
Quairading	16,000	4,300	20,300
Rockingham	...	3,200	3,200
Roebourne	...	10,000	10,000
Serpentine-Jarrahdale	...	5,000	5,000
Swan	2,000	16,750	18,750
Sussex	12,000	5,700	17,700
Shark Bay	...	11,000	11,000
Tambellup	3,000	3,050	6,050
Tambling	...	3,050	3,050
Toodyay	20,000	6,400	26,400
Three Springs	...	5,500	5,500
Tableland	...	13,500	13,500
Upper Blackwood	12,000	8,400	20,400
Upper Chapman	...	9,850	9,850
Upper Gascoyne	...	4,000	4,000
Victoria Plains	9,000	3,050	12,050
Wanneroo	...	6,400	6,400
Wagin	15,500	3,200	18,700
Wandering	...	3,750	3,750
Wickepin	4,000	3,200	7,200
Williams	...	5,600	5,600
Woodanilling	2,000	2,950	4,950
West Arthur	28,000	4,800	27,800
Westonia	...	2,850	2,850
Wongan-Ballidu	...	5,400	5,400
Wyalkatchem	3,500	4,200	7,700
Wiluna	...	2,600	2,600
West Kimberley	...	16,750	16,750
Wyndham	...	10,500	10,500
York	1,000	4,800	5,800
York Municipality	8,000	1,000	9,000
Yalgoo	500	3,000	3,500
Yilgarn	...	25,400	25,400
Maintenance of Main Roads	135,000	...	135,000
	£517,760	£758,550	£1,276,300

## OFFENCES AGAINST FEMALES.

*As to Number of Cases.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Police:

What number of female persons—

(a) under the age of 16 years;

(b) 16 years and over,

have been assaulted, interfered with, or otherwise molested by males during each of the last three years respectively?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied:

So far as the records of the Police Department are concerned, the numbers are as follows:—

(a) 1948, 92; 1949, 85; 1950, 93.

(b) 1948, 73; 1949, 61; 1950, 82.

In each case, the figures are shown for the period ending the 30th June for the year concerned.

## TRAFFIC.

*As to Medical Certificate Issued to Mrs. Dargie.*

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Attorney General:

(1) What is the name of the medical practitioner who issued the certificate stating that Mrs. Dargie was a total abstainer?

(2) Was any fee charged for the certificate?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Dr. D. S. McKenzie.

(2) No fee was paid by the Government.

## MINING.

*As to Koolyanobbing Iron-ore for Wundowie.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What monthly tonnage of iron-ore is being mined at Koolyanobbing?

(2) From where is the ore railed?

(3) What is the cartage cost from Koolyanobbing to rail?

(4) What are the railage costs?

(5) Is this ore for use exclusively at Wundowie?

(6) By whom is the ore being mined and at what cost per ton?

(7) What is the total landed cost of Koolyanobbing iron-ore into works, Wundowie?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT replied:

(1) Production is not yet regular; it is planned ultimately to mine 1,000 tons of ore per month.

(2) Southern Cross.

(3) See (6).

(4) 19s. 3d. per ton.

(5) Yes, blended with local ore.

(6) Bell Bros. are at present mining, carting and loading ore on rail for 40s. per ton.

(7) 59s. 3d. per ton. It is expected that this cost will be reduced considerably as the deposit is developed, and roads for cartage to rail are improved.

## HOUSING.

*(a) As to Joondanna Heights and Glendalough Areas.*

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) Has the capital cost of houses erected in Joondanna Heights and Glendalough areas under the Commonwealth and State Housing Agreement yet been ascertained in accordance with the provisions of such agreement?

(2) If not, when is such cost likely to be determined?

(3) What is the reason for the delay?

(4) With regard to each of the above housing projects and to clause 4 of the First Schedule to the above agreement—

(a) What rate of interest is taken into account in connection with the calculation of annual amortization allowance and economic rent?

(b) What is the annual amortization allowance for each type of dwelling?

(c) What amount is charged for—

(i) maintenance;

(ii) administration?

(5) Will purchasers of such homes be credited with the amount of maintenance charge in the economic rent already paid in cases where no maintenance has been carried out by the Housing Commission?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Capital cost of houses in Joondanna Heights and Glendalough areas now being determined.

(3) Delay has been due to need for ascertaining final road costs.

(4) (a) Three per cent.

(b) Repayment of cost over period of 53 years.

(c) (i) Three-quarter per cent.

(ii) £5 per house.

(5) No. In view of the fact that houses were sold at cost thereby giving the tenants an opportunity of purchasing at a figure below valuation, it was decided that houses would be sold in their present condition.

*(b) As to Commonwealth-State Rental Homes Allocations.*

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it possible for an applicant for a Commonwealth-State rental home to be in two or more allocations without obtaining a tenancy?

(2) How many allocations have taken place during the year ended the 30th September, 1950?

(3) What number of houses was allotted in each allocation?

(4) What is the highest and lowest number of applicants whose applications were considered in respect to each allocation during the above period?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) Since May last, allocation of Commonwealth-State rental homes have been made on the basis of 25 per cent. to specially emergent cases, 25 per cent. to inadequately housed building tradesmen, and the balance to other hardship cases.

An applicant whose hardship has been established is listed in date order of application or establishment of hardship on priority lists for districts in which he is prepared to reside. When an applicant's turn is reached on any district list, a check inspection is made to ascertain whether hardship still exists and, if so, he is allotted a home in that district and his name is then withdrawn from other lists.

(2) Allocations are now made progressively as houses become available—names being taken from priority lists.

(3) During the year ended 30th September, 1950, houses were allocated as follows:—

	Metropolitan Area.	Country Area.
October, 1949 .....	71	17
November, 1949 .....	64	24
December, 1949 .....	55	26
January, 1950 .....	16	10
February, 1950 .....	42	30
March, 1950 .....	64	30
April, 1950 .....	35	24
May, 1950 .....	52	21
June, 1950 .....	65	45
July, 1950 .....	59	28
August, 1950 .....	50	32
September, 1950 .....	68	26
	<hr/> 641	<hr/> 313

(4) See answer to (1).

(c) *As to Commission's Emergency Committee.*

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Honorary Minister for Housing:

(1) Is there a body known as the Emergency Committee functioning in connection with the administration of State Housing Commission?

(2) What are the names of the members of the Committee?

(3) What are the functions of the Committee?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes—under the direction of the Commission.

(2) W. H. Butler, Assistant Secretary; A. G. Irvine; C. G. Reilly.

(3) To consider any special emergent circumstances of applicants such as Court evictions affecting young children and grave medical conditions of applicants or their families, and to determine whether such circumstances justify making allocations before turn is reached on priority lists.

## CYCLONE FENCING WIRE.

*As to Price.*

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Attorney General:

What is the price, per foot, of 24in. cyclone mesh fencing wire?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

Retail prices per foot of 24in. cyclone mesh fencing wire (2in. mesh, 12 gauge) are:—Australian manufacture, 7½d. per foot; imported wire, 11d. per foot.

## RAILWAYS.

*As to Bunbury Fitting Shop and Marshalling Yards.*

Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it intended to remove the Bunbury loco. depot fitting shop and marshalling yards from Bunbury?

(2) If so, what is to be the new location?

(3) In considering this matter and any suggestion of moving the loco. sheds and fitting shops to Picton, has the possibility of a double-line track linking Picton and Bunbury been considered to facilitate working traffic and locos. from Bunbury, instead of moving the sheds and shops?

(4) If any change is proposed, when is it anticipated that this will take place?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) The re-organisation of loco. depots throughout the system is at present under consideration but a decision has not yet been reached.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) Answered by (1).

(4) Answered by (1).

## NORTH-WEST.

*As to Government Employees' Leave Concessions.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) Is the Government giving consideration to an agreement or regulation covering travelling time and fares for Government workers returning home on annual leave from the North-West?

(2) If so, when is a decision likely to be arrived at and the unions notified?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) This and other aspects dealing with the employment of Government workers in the North-West is receiving the attention of the Government.

(2) A considerable amount of research is necessary, but a decision will be made as early as possible.

### FLAX.

#### *As to Production Requirements.*

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Has he received any indication from the Federal Government as to whether any increase in flax production in this State is required, or desired, next year?

(2) In the event of no information being to hand, will he take such steps as are necessary to obtain such information, in order that the flax industry may arrange to meet any additional requirements that may be made on it?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Action to obtain this information has been initiated by the Blackwood Flax Co-operative Company Limited. Information will also be sought by the Government, which is anxious that the company should have the opportunity of sharing in any planned expansion.

### MEAT.

#### *As to Price Increases.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY (without notice) asked the Attorney General:

Is it a fact that the master butchers have, on their own initiative, made a substantial increase in the prices of meat?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

Not to my knowledge, but I will make inquiries.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1. Bush Fires Act Amendment.
2. Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act Amendment.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

### BILL—ROADS AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE STATE HOUSING COMMISSION AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Report of Committee adopted.

### BILL—STATE TRADING CONCERNS ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. D. Brand-Greenough) [4.42] in moving the second reading said: This small Bill has come to us from another place and is designed to remove the Boya State

quarry from the State Trading Concerns Act. This quarry was established about 1913 as a trading concern and for many years produced metal required for the road work which was being undertaken at the time, particularly the road now known as Stirling-highway. In course of time it was found that stone of the particular type and dimensions available from the quarry was no longer suitable, and competition was encountered from private enterprise. The White Rock Quarries were established more firmly and, as a result of those quarries having purchased more modern machinery and being able to supply local authorities with stone of half-inch mesh, the Boya quarry could not compete.

In 1942, the Government of the day decided not to proceed further with the production of stone at the quarry, and the records show that in 1947 the Government decided to sell by tender all the equipment, though not the quarry itself, with the object of closing the undertaking. The Bill will give effect to that intention. Over the years, the total loss on the undertaking amounted to £43,453. The assets at the time of realisation were valued in the books at £12,000 and, as an outcome of calling for tenders, cottages, piping and the crushers realised £2,024. Very little equipment remains to be sold. The excision of the quarry from the operation of the Act is merely a formal matter and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [4.46]: Not much objection is likely to be offered to the Bill because the Boya quarry has not functioned for quite a number of years. The quarry is situated in the old Middle-Swan district and I had close contact with the undertaking in association with the former member for Guildford-Midland. The quarry provided a good deal of employment in its time, the stone having been used extensively by the Main Roads Department. What affected the quarry was not so much the production of metal as the cartage costs. The White Rock Quarries were able to load their stone on motor trucks at Gosnells one day and deliver it at a country destination at 7 o'clock the following morning. While the Boya quarry produced a certain type of metal suitable for road-making in those years, the time arrived when a smaller mesh of stone was required, owing to changes in road construction methods. The Government of the day did not see fit to install machinery to crush that type of stone.

The Minister for Works: And the Perth City Council established its own quarry.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes; I understand that the Perth City Council did not continue operations, but leased its quarry to another party. I was saying that the Boya quarry found difficulty in competing with privately-owned quarries owing to cartage

costs. This is another instance of the encroachment of private transport on business that the railways formerly enjoyed. The motor trucks had a big advantage in being able to deliver the stone where required in the country much more expeditiously than could the railways. I do not know whether all the machinery has been sold, but it was not of great value.

The Minister for Works: It was of no value, but the quarry itself is being retained by the Crown.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: In the circumstances, it is unnecessary to continue booking up interest charges against this undertaking. I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

### **BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale) [4.53] in moving the second reading said: 'The Bill contains two amendments to the Mining Act, the first of which is an amendment of Section 92 which covers the exemption of labour conditions. The section provides—

That the owner of several adjacent leases desires to concentrate on one or more of them the labour compulsory on such leases, and to obtain suspension of labour for the other leases.

If the amendment be agreed to the provision will then read—

That the owner of several adjacent leases within the same goldfield desires to concentrate on one or more of them the labour compulsory on such leases, and to obtain suspension of labour for the other leases.

The amendment is being sponsored on behalf of the Western Mining Corporation, and I do not think that members, particularly those representing Goldfields electorates, need be told that this is one of the most powerful, both from a financial and a resources point of view, of all the gold-mining companies that have come to Western Australia.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It is one of the best companies we have ever had in the State.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR MINES:** That is so. I have no doubt the hon. member has in mind the great work it has done and the money it has spent on what is now the Central Norseman mine, but which used to be the Mararoa mine. In 1935 the company came here and spent about a quarter of a million pounds, acting on the advice of Mr. Connelly, a

geologist at the time with the Wiluna Gold-mines, in an endeavour to prove that the quartz lode of the old Mararoa would recur at depth. That was something unprecedented in mining history. However, the company acted on Mr. Connelly's advice, which proved to be correct. As a result, Norseman has been revitalised, and looks like being one of the best mining centres in Western Australia for many years to come.

Mr. Marshall: The amendment throws that portion of the Act wide open. It does not give a concession to any particular company.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR MINES:** That is so, but I think it was framed with the idea of giving certain concessions to the Western Mining Corporation in the Bullfinch area. The entry of this company in the Bullfinch-Southern Cross district is of great moment, not only to that part of the State, but to all mining people in Western Australia. I notice that in the latest report of the Western Mining Corporation containing the statement of accounts for the year ended the 30th March, 1950, there is a resume of the operations of the company and one of its subsidiaries, Great Western Consolidated (N.L.) This company was formed with a capital of £2,500,000 which has not all yet been subscribed. The Western Mining Corporation owns 14 per cent. of the paid-up capital, and it has already spent over £300,000 in that district.

By the amendment we are asking that the labour conditions be suspended so that this company—or any other, as the member for Murchison said—may be able to spread its labour conditions over a number of leases and not be compelled, as the Act provides at the moment, to man each individual lease with a certain number of people. The Great Western Consolidated Company is endeavouring to work an area which covers a distance of approximately 35 miles from the North-West to the South-East around Southern Cross, with a total of something over 6,000 acres. It will include Manxman (eight leases), Bullfinch (37 leases), Corinthian (five leases), Jasper King (eight leases), Pilot Group (12 leases) and Southern Cross (36 leases). The idea of the application is to allow this particular company to be able to concentrate all its labour, which in this area would have to be for the first 12 months, 220 men, and at the end of 12 months, 345, in any one of the leases within the group.

I understand that the company desires to erect a mill at Bullfinch—and I believe it has commenced the erection—and to that mill it will, from the leases to which I have referred, move the ore. Mining in these days is a costly business, and were each of these leases to be worked independently the company would be faced with separate costs of administration for each one, and

there would probably have to be a mill on each, together with technical officers, and so on. It is the company's wish that it be allowed to work the leases together, and to concentrate the labour from time to time so that it might proceed at the Manxman and then the Bullfinch, and so move its men around as the situation demands and, at the same time, spread over the whole of the leases the costs of development. That is a most important point because development is absolutely necessary in the goldmining industry and, in fact, in any mining industry at all.

In Western Australia we have three different types of ore bodies; there is the continuous lode such as at Kalgoorlie, and I think I am right in saying that the same conditions apply at Wiluna. Then there is the quartz reef such as at the Mararoa at central Norseman and then we have the intermittent type. Even at Norseman they had these intermittent lodes. The old Phoenix and the Mararoa were both in intermittent belts of country. Further south there was another belt of country in which the Lady Miller and Princess Royal were situated. Those, in days gone by, were independent companies and, other than central Norseman, the smaller companies were operated by small groups of individuals who did not have sufficient capital to be able to test them at depth.

A company such as this, with its available resources both financial and technical, will be in a position, if this Bill be passed, to have that finance and technical assistance which will enable it to operate all these leases to the best advantage of the people in the district and the whole of Western Australia. A further factor is that the Yilgarn field is not a very rich one and I understand it averages somewhere in the vicinity of 6.34 dwt., as most mining members in this Chamber will know. It is only a company of some substance that can work mines with a grade such as that, and at the same time be able to undertake the necessary developmental work which would have to be done in scattered leases and chutes such as these.

Mr. Marshall: That would be wonderfully good value if it had the width.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, the hon. member is correct. It would be good value if it had—

Mr. Styants: It is above the State average.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR MINES: —continuity and it was possible to continue with it. Unfortunately, that does not apply. There may be 10 dwt. in one place and, as members of this House who have worked underground will know, a few feet further on it may go down to two dwt. and would average about four to six dwt. over-all.

This company holds 110 mining leases along a line extending 10 miles south of Southern Cross to five miles north of Bullfinch—I understand that is approximately 35 miles. The company has requested an assurance that it be given the opportunity to work all these holdings with a concentration of labour in any one particular spot in the area. Speaking as the Honorary Minister for Housing, I believe that this company is very sincere in its desire to open up the area. Approval has been given to build 74 houses and the company has asked for a further permit, making 250 houses in all over the next two years.

The amendment, if passed, will meet the company's requirements. Furthermore, as members know, there is the safeguard that every six months the company will have to apply to the warden and, if the warden thinks the company is not playing the game, it can be quickly brought up with a jerk. The second amendment is to Section 277 of the Mining Act and it is required by a company which, although well known in Australia, is not so well known in Western Australia. I refer to the Australian Mining and Smelting Coy. This company is greatly interested in the development of fertilisers, zinc and such things and some time last year sent an expert to Western Australia. That expert stated that there was a good possibility of finding certain alkali deposits, which are required by the company. I understand, too, that the geologist stated that in Western Australia there was more possibility of finding these particular types of alkali deposits than anywhere else in Australia. The minerals required by the company comprise salts of sodium, magnesium, barium, calcium, strontium and potassium. These are essential items in regard to fertiliser manufacture.

Mr. Kelly: Why is it necessary to have such big holdings of roughly 6,000,000 to 8,000,000 acres?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR MINES: The company is asking, in this case, for approximately 5,000 square miles. If the company brings over—as I hope it will—its technical experts, they will want to look over a large area of country. The company will do this if the Bill becomes law. As members know, it will not affect the man who is looking for gold. He will still have the opportunity to peg leases in the normal way and obtain his protection any time he goes to the warden and makes application.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It will not be to the detriment of prospectors?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR MINES: No, not in any way. Members will observe that the Bill does not at all restrict the right of a prospector or anyone who is looking for gold. Similar provisions exist in regard to the deep alluvial deposits and those provisions do not interfere with prospectors.

Mr. Marshall: I do not think a reservation was ever granted under Section 277.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR MINES: These amendments are of prime importance to the future of the goldmining industry generally. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Marshall, debate adjourned.

# **BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT (CONTINUANCE).**

## *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [5.8] in moving the second reading said: This is a continuance Bill to extend the operations of the Marketing of Eggs Act, 1945-1949, for a further period of five years. The Western Australian Egg Marketing Board was proclaimed to come into operation on the 22nd March, 1946, under the Marketing of Eggs Act, Commonwealth control, under the National Security (Egg Industry) Regulations, was still in existence during the earlier part of the board's operations, and it was appointed an agent of the Controller of Egg Supplies on the 1st July, 1946.

Mr. Marshall: And eggs have never been dearer.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This state of affairs continued until the 31st December, 1947, when Commonwealth control of the industry ceased. On the 1st January, 1948, the board assumed full control of the marketing of eggs in the area proclaimed under the Act, which approximated the South-West Land Division. In the matter of exports, however, the board became subject to the direction of the Australian Egg Board, a Commonwealth body set up under the Egg Export Control Act, 1947—a Commonwealth statute—principally to protect the shipping of the whole Australian exportable surplus under a Government to Government contract. This contract will continue until June 1953 with a review on the 1st January of each year.

It provides an assured outlet for the whole of the surplus production but, in addition to the British market, valuable markets have been developed in Malaya, Persian Gulf and Colombo. The following figures indicate the development of the export market which has taken place since the board came into operation:—

## **UNITED KINGDOM.**

Year ended the 30th June.	Dozens.	Value. £
1947	1,787,093	140,091
1948	2,097,379	190,301
1949	2,641,796	290,343
1950	2,087,397	277,346

## **SINGAPORE.**

1947	145,140	12,168
1948	210,180	18,049
1949	541,350	64,474
1950	644,280	90,592

The egg industry is an essential part of primary production and contributes over £1,000,000 to the economic wealth of the State. The average gross price paid to producers by the board over the period reflects the benefits of a stabilised market, a direct result of the board's marketing policy.

Year.	Average gross price per dozen. (All grades.)	
	s.	d.
1947	1	8.26
1948	1	10.79
1949	2	3.82
1950	2	8.28

These prices are influenced by the net return from the export market. They have risen from 2s. 1d. a dozen to 2s. 7d. gross on a standard 15-lb. pack, varying up or down according to the grades exported. The net return to the board on a 2s. 7d. basis is approximately 2s. 3½d. a dozen. By the introduction of a price stabilisation scheme during the export season, June to December, of 1948, the industry was returned an additional 1.013d. per dozen, averaged over all grades received during this period.

The scheme was carried on in the 1949 export season, returning an additional 1d. per dozen approximately, and an extension of the scheme this year will add a further 1½d. per dozen to the producers' price. Price stabilisation was accepted by the board as a medium towards offsetting, to some extent, the ever-increasing cost of production over which the industry has no control, and the fundamental of such a scheme is a charge varying from 1d. to 4d. a dozen made on producers and deducted from the gross wholesale price fixed by the board. The money received from this charge is returned to the industry in the form of an increased price averaged over all grades received or sold progressively with fortnightly payments.

The board's policy of stabilising prices is of undoubted benefit to producers and consumers alike and removes the tendency towards violent fluctuations in prices according to the varying periods of production. Another important aspect of the board's operations is the steady improvement effected in the quality of eggs and egg products, mainly frozen pulp, for the home and export market. Only eggs of first quality are marketed in the shell form and this is made possible by individual examination on grading machines and by experienced operatives. The introduction of stamping provides a safeguard for the consumer, and reports from overseas show that the Australian egg has reached a high



standard mainly through control of quality, together with a comparatively new machine-oiling process.

Modern equipment installed in the pulping plant at Robbs Jetty has added greatly to the efficiency of handling the product, both in the savings effected and the retention of quality at world export standard. On two occasions I have visited Robbs Jetty where this plant is set up.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: A jolly good plant, too!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, it is an excellent plant.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I remember all the argument over installing it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Commonwealth inspectors are present all the time and it would be of benefit to members if they found it possible to visit Robbs Jetty and see this machine in operation. Hygiene is one of the main factors considered in the handling of the eggs and before they are pulped they are thoroughly cleansed of any foreign matter. They are loaded on to the conveyor just as quickly as the girls can handle them, go along to the pulping machine, and then from one outlet one can see the finished article running into the tins and from another the shell coming out compressed to such an extent that even our fertiliser plant at Robbs Jetty can make no use of it because it cannot be broken apart. That shows there is not much loss in the handling of the egg. The system there is excellent and we are producing a wonderful article through that machine.

The board's policy of providing full grading facilities in country areas, where production is sufficient to warrant such an extension, has met with universal approval. Apart from a depot at Narrogin, which was already in existence, grading floors have been established at Bunbury and will shortly be established at Geraldton, whilst receiving depots, operated under permit, have been sponsored at Northam and Geraldton. The board has purchased the Narrogin depot property to safeguard tenure, and acquired land at Fremantle on which a modern grading floor is being erected to give improved marketing facilities to producers in that area. An extension of the delivery service to retailers has recently been developed by the provision of a specially constructed insulated wagon together with a smaller van and, for the convenience of housewives, eggs will shortly be marketed in attractive cartons to hold one dozen.

To a large extent, the board has overcome the shortage of eggs during late summer by cool-storing sufficient quantities when supplies are plentiful, thus ensuring reasonable quantities to supplement production for the local market. Here again, the oiling process has enabled the board to market a high quality product for the

protection of the public. The exercise of careful control over expenditure has enabled the board to handle the product at a minimum cost, and the overall marketing charge of 3d. per dozen, covering receiving, grading, handling, selling, and the provision of packing materials (cases, fillers, tins, cartons) cartage, and cool storage costs, for the export and local markets, is the lowest in Australia.

This marketing charge also provides funds for normal price stabilisation as well as administrative costs which compare favourably with any other comparable organisation, as the following illustrates:—

1948	....	4.3 per cent.
1949	....	2.4 per cent.
1950	....	2.9 per cent.

These percentages are based on the gross value of eggs sold by the board since it operated on its own, but the year 1948 does not bear a true comparison as this was for the period, the 1st January, 1948, to the 30th June, 1948, during which receipts were dropping to the lowest point, whereas administration carried on at the same figure as compared with the whole 12 months. It is interesting to note that under Section 32 (4) of the Act the board may deduct up to 10 per cent. of the proceeds of the sale of eggs and the foregoing figures show that administrative costs are relatively light. The board received from the Commonwealth control scheme a proportion of the profits made by that organisation, amounting to £39,982, which was appropriated in the following manner:—

	£
Working capital	6,106
Building fund reserve	24,424
Price stabilising reserve	9,452

This, together with an accumulated surplus of £18,863, most of which was received when the board acted as agent for the Commonwealth Controller of Egg Supplies, places the board in a sound financial position.

The value of the assets of the board has risen from £52,164 in 1947 to £103,666 in 1950. Those figures show the great improvement made in that direction. It can be claimed that the board has achieved a large measure of success, both from the point of view of stabilising the industry and giving a service to the public by sound marketing. It is the wish of the board that the House give approval to this continuance Bill to extend its life for another five years. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

**LOAN ESTIMATES, 1950-1951.***Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1950-51 and recommending appropriation.

*In Committee.*

The House resolved into Committee to consider the Loan Estimates, Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

*Vote—Departmental, £151,500:*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [5.23]: In submitting the Estimates of the Expenditure from the General Loan Fund for this financial year, amounting as they do to £16,798,000, I feel that some explanation is due to members as to the size of the programme, and I hope that the information I will give will be of interest.

I have no doubt the Leader of the Opposition can remember the time when the Loan Council, with some diffidence, adopted a programme of less than £16,000,000 to cover the whole requirements of the Commonwealth and the States, and it may appear to be somewhat staggering that one State should require an amount for its own needs in excess of what was once the total loan requirements for the whole of the Commonwealth.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: That is only one State, which is the second lowest borrower from the Commonwealth.

**The PREMIER:** That is so. Several factors are contributing to the size of the loan programmes for this year. In the first place, on account of the war, there was built up a substantial accumulation of public works, which had been deferred. All the States are now endeavouring to overtake this accumulation.

Then again, the delicate situation which has arisen in international relationships and the peculiarly vulnerable position in which Australia finds itself in world politics, makes it essential that, from a defence point of view, the economy of Australia should be substantially strengthened. In order to strengthen our economy, more population is needed, and to this end a vigorous migration policy has been adopted by the Commonwealth and the State Governments. The rapid increase in the population of all the States since the end of the war, due largely to migration, is evidence of the success of this policy.

While increased population is most desirable, it is obvious that the best use cannot be made of our increased numbers unless we have the necessary facilities available. The basic industries, which would form the backbone of a strong defence organisation, cannot function to full efficiency unless they are provided with power, light, water and transport. In Australia, as contrasted, say, to

America, the provision of these services rests large with public undertakings controlled and financed by Governments.

The Governments are, therefore, met with the need to expend large sums not only to replace the lack of natural growth which would have occurred during the war and which was held up, but to provide much greater capacity in order to meet the needs of growing industry, rendered necessary by the substantial increase in population. The fulfilment of the urgent need for the development of our industries and the strengthening of our economy, is unfortunately hampered by the obligation resting on the Commonwealth Government to strengthen the Defence Forces, that is, the actual fighting units of Australia.

It is quite clear that no nation can divert a substantial proportion of its national income, resources, and manpower to the building up of a strong Defence Force, without at the same time interfering with the provision of those services which help to meet the expanding peacetime needs of the people. I was, therefore, very pleased to learn from the announcement recently made by the Prime Minister that the Commonwealth Government had decided to institute a system of priorities in regard to investments and to re-establish the control of capital issues.

Mr. Styants: He did not always say that.

**The PREMIER:** If, from limited resources, a nation proposes to make itself less vulnerable to attack—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You have changed your opinion an awful lot from, say, 1947.

**The PREMIER:** It is a wise man that changes his opinion as necessity arises.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It keeps one's mind clean if one changes it ever so often.

**The Minister for Works:** The hon. member changed his opinion along another course just recently, too.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Not me!

**The PREMIER:** If, from limited resources, a nation proposes to make itself less vulnerable to attack, and, at the same time, make a minimum interference with the domestic life of the community, it is essential that there should be an overall control of investments to ensure that their flow will be directed to those channels which will serve best the requirements of the community.

Until this year, the need to strengthen the defence position of the Commonwealth had not been so very pressing. Therefore, within the limits of the manpower and material available both in Australia and from overseas, it was felt that the capital requirements for the various States could proceed without undue restriction so far as the supply of money

was concerned. With defence needs more pressing, however, the necessity of much greater regard to the expenditure of money has become one of substantial consideration.

When the Premiers met the Prime Minister at the recent Loan Council meeting, this position was stressed strongly by the Prime Minister. Unfortunately, however, the State Premiers found themselves in the position of having already committed themselves for large expenditure on various public works, and indeed, in some cases long-term contracts had been made. Unless these contracts had to be broken or the public works left unfinished—which would have been a very great economic waste—it was impossible for the State Premiers to agree to make any substantial reduction in their loan programmes for this financial year.

In regard to our own loan programme of £16.8 million, £10.1 million is the estimated cost of carrying on the works already in progress, and of this sum no less than £7.1 million is committed; that is, we have entered into contracts or have ordered material. Of the balance of the programme of £6.7 million, £1.5 million represents commitments, so that more than half of the total programme consists of expenditure which the Government cannot escape.

Before dealing with the details of our own programme, I should like to give members an overall picture of the loan programmes of all our Governments, including semi-governmental bodies and local government bodies, as it was submitted and considered by the Loan Council. The total programmes submitted for this year amounted to £242.2 million, made up of:—

	Million. £
Governments .....	171.4
Semi-governmental bodies .....	59.2
Local governments .....	11.7

So far as the Government borrowings are concerned, the programme for this year of £171.4 million compares with an approved programme of £117 million for the previous year. Of the approved programmes for last year, the expenditure amounted to £101 million.

Mr. Marshall: Who got the other £16 million? Was that the unexpended balance?

The PREMIER: Yes, that is so. The semi-governmental bodies include types of undertakings, particularly in New South Wales and Victoria, which are included in the State programme for Western Australia. For example, the Victorian semi-governmental programme includes an amount for the State Electricity Commission of that State, which exceeds by far the whole of Western Australia's borrowing programme.

Mr. Marshall: Water boards also have borrowing powers, have they not?

The PREMIER: Yes, that is quite true. Other semi-governmental organisations have that power beside the Government.

Mr. Marshall: Does the State get any credit for doing that work through the Government?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. J. Hegney: At any rate, those semi-governmental bodies are subject to the Loan Council.

The PREMIER: Yes. The details of the programmes for this year for the Commonwealth and each State are as follows:—

	Government £ million.	Semi- Government £ million.	Total £ million.
Commonwealth ..	27.5	—	27.5
New South Wales ..	39.6	16.2	55.8
Victoria ..	38.0	33.8	71.8

Mr. Marshall: In Victoria the semi-governmental borrowing is nearly equal to that of the Government.

The PREMIER: Yes. The Government borrowing is only a little over £4 million more, compared with that of the semi-governmental institutions. I pointed out that in that State the Electricity Commission has borrowings that exceed by far the whole of Western Australia's borrowing programme. To continue with the table—

	Government £ million.	Semi- Government £ million.	Total £ million.
Queensland ..	19.6	8.3	27.9
South Australia ..	21.0	—	21.0
Western Australia ..	16.8	—	16.8
Tasmania ..	8.9	.9	9.8
Total ..	171.4	59.2	230.6

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Can the Premier tell us where all this money was back in the depression years?

The PREMIER: The hon. member, of course, knows what happened then. Like him, I know that prices for all our primary commodities today are vastly different from what they were during the depression. At that time we were just wondering what we could do with our primary products such as wool, wheat and so forth. The main reasons for the substantial increase of the loan requirements of the various Governments for this year as compared with last year, may be set down as follows:—

(1) Increase in basic wage which was reflected both in the labour costs and the cost of material from Australian sources.

(2) Use of more costly imported materials, for which orders were placed last year, and which are now arriving.

(3) Some capital works, previously financed from sources other than loan, as, for example, revenue and reserves created from revenue built up during war time, when some of the larger States enjoyed substantial surpluses. These reserves are now being exhausted and most capital requirements are being financed from loan.

(4) Large orders for railway rolling-stock and plant for the production of power, which were placed last year and now have to be paid for this year.

(5) Financial provision for advances to provide working capital for land acquisition and purchase of material and plant. The acquisition of land is a substantial cost to some of the larger States under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme, and forms a fairly large part of the Commonwealth's loan programme for the needs of the Housing Agreement.

Of the total programme of £171 million, no less than £130 million is required for major works. Power production, that is, electricity supply, etc., accounts for £47 million, railway rehabilitation requires £30 million, and other large major works account for £53 million. The other major works consist of sewerage, water supplies and the provision of other services essential to the development of house building programmes. Despite the very large expenditure on plant and equipment, a fairly large proportion of the estimated loan expenditure will be applied to the cost of labour. Of the total estimated expenditure by Governments and semi-governmental bodies of £242 million, £103 million will be spent on other than labour costs, leaving £139 million to be spent on labour.

The Loan Council had before it a report on the labour situation, from which it was clear that migration was expected to be the main source for the provision of additional labour. It is anticipated that during the 12 months ending June next, about 120,000 workers will come to Australia under the migration scheme. So far as local sources of labour are concerned, these in the past have come mainly from the Commonwealth Reconstruction Training Scheme. The numbers from this source are, however, declining. It is estimated by the Commonwealth Department of Labour that between 1,000 and 1,500 ex-servicemen will complete their basic training by the end of 1950.

Unemployment is virtually non-existent and there are no sources of additional labour apparent other than migration and the entry into industry of youths leaving school. It is quite clear that there is a large deficiency in the labour required in many basic industries. This applies not only to the building industry, but to the engineering and metal working trades. Unfortunately, the labour position is not uniform throughout the States. In the two larger States—New South Wales and Victoria—there is a very acute shortage of labour whereas in this State some difficulty is being experienced in placing migrant labour, particularly in regard to displaced persons. The difficulty of suitably placing displaced persons can be readily appreciated.

Mr. May: And it is going to be a job to place some of them.

The PREMIER: It may be. Many of these people are not accustomed to hard physical work, and under the conditions of their entry to Australia they are required to undertake such work as they are directed to by the Commonwealth Department of Labour. The difference of language also is a problem and there has been a tendency for these people to remain in camps pending suitable employment. Probably one of the greatest needs in Western Australia is that of labour in the country districts, and there appears to be difficulty in finding suitable employment for displaced persons in the country.

This difficulty has a tendency to congregate the displaced persons in the city, which is undesirable, and the Government is giving special attention to the commencement and enlargement of works in the country, which can absorb displaced persons rather than have them employed on works in the metropolitan area. In order to see that this policy is carried out effectively, it may be necessary to curtail some of the works in the metropolitan area, which are now included in our loan programme for this year. When the Loan Council met, the chairman expressed doubt as to the ability of the loan market to find sufficient money to finance the whole of the programmes contemplated.

Mr. J. Hegney: Who is the chairman—Mr. Menzies or Mr. Fadden?

The PREMIER: Mr. Fadden.

Mr. J. Hegney: You mean the Commonwealth Treasurer?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You can call him "Artie."

The PREMIER: Not here. In view of the fact, however, that the programmes consisted very largely of orders for which the Governments were committed, and for the continuance of works in progress it was decided that the programmes should be approved. The expenditure of such a huge sum on public works at a time when Australia is attempting to grapple with the problems arising from inflation must have a disturbing economic effect. With the increase in the tempo of rearmament which is taking place in America and Europe, the overseas sources of supply and materials are fast drying up. Had those sources still been available to Australia the effect would have been to lessen the pressure on the upward movement of inflation within Australia, since it would have relieved the demand for Australian manufactures.

It would appear almost inevitable, therefore, that with increased pressure on the industries providing the material for the loan works contemplated in the programme, the whole of the works included

in the loan programmes will not be capable of being carried out. It is quite clear that, in view of this difficulty, some steps must soon be taken to decide which works have the highest priority in order that the available material and manpower may be concentrated on them. Until this is done, however, each State must press for the maximum programme which it feels is essential for its own development.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Is there any idea of re-introducing the system of a co-ordinator general of works, as prevailed during wartime?

The PREMIER: The Co-ordinator General still reviews the loan programme, as he did when the Leader of the Opposition attended Premiers' Conferences.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He exercised great authority then.

The PREMIER: He still does, and the loan programme is carefully examined with our officers, just as when the hon. member attended Premiers' Conferences. In addition to this proposed very heavy expenditure on capital works, the Commonwealth Government is committed next year to pay the war gratuities promised to our ex-servicemen and women, and the substantial sum involved—nearly £70,000,000—will inevitably cause another impetus to inflation. I am very pleased that the Commonwealth Government has announced some measures it proposes to take in an endeavour to counter these inflationary tendencies.

Mr. Marshall: I would like to hear of them.

The PREMIER: But even more drastic action may have to be taken in the future if further inflation is to be avoided.

Mr. Marshall: None has been taken up to date. Not one proposal they have in their Budget will interfere with the upward trend of prices. I shall be speaking on that subject in the near future.

Mr. Styants: That is a threat!

The PREMIER: I do not know whether it is a threat or a promise, but I fully expect to hear from the hon. member on the Loan Estimates.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: And you will earnestly listen to him!

The PREMIER: I will. Turning now to a more detailed examination of our own loan programme, the estimated expenditure of £16.8 million this year compares with an actual expenditure of £8.35 million last year.

Mr. W. Hegney: Is the new basic wage taken into account?

The PREMIER: No, it is not taken into account in these figures. The very substantial increase is due in the main to the need to pay for materials which have been ordered principally for the railways

and electricity supply, and these materials are now arriving. Of the total expenditure of £16.8 million, approximately £10 million represents expenditure on other than labour.

Mr. J. Hegney: Does that include an amount for extension of power plant?

The PREMIER: Yes. Nearly £9 million represents the purchase of plant, machinery and equipment. It is estimated that £6.5 million will be spent on plant procured from overseas and £2.4 million on plant which will be obtained in Australia. I shall now deal with the main spending departments and endeavour to give members fairly detailed information on the nature of the works on which the expenditure will be incurred. With regard to the railways, the Estimates for last year provided for an expenditure of £2,839,000, whereas actual expenditure was £2,194,000. The major portion of the provision for 1949-50 was for rollingstock, an amount of £2,006,000 having been set aside for this purpose, including £300,000 to meet the cost of the 25 "ASG" locomotives acquired some years previously from the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Styants: Is it intended to pay for the new locomotives out of railway revenue the same as was done in the case of the 25 "ASG" engines?

The PREMIER: We are paying portion out of revenue.

Mr. Styants: On the new locomotives?

The PREMIER: As explained to members on a previous occasion, only a small portion of the total cost of these locomotives was met from loan, namely, £98,000, the balance of the amount being charged to the Revenue Fund.

Mr. Styants: That is very unusual.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is quite a good idea, when you have the money.

The PREMIER: I think it is a sound thing to do. The life of these locomotives is estimated at 10 years.

Mr. Styants: They were supposed to be super locomotives.

The PREMIER: This largely accounts for the decline in actual expenditure on rollingstock which, amounting to £1,754,000, was £252,000 less than the estimate. In the Estimates, an amount of £1,165,000 had been provided for the purchase of 35 "PR" locomotives for operation on trunk lines, and £215,000 as a first payment on the purchase of 40 "W"—general purpose branch line—locomotives. During the year delivery was taken of the "PR" locomotives, more properly described as "PMs," 12 being in use at June last. Since then, the remainder of these engines, with one exception, have been placed on the road, following certain modifications.

Progress was made during the year on the construction of 100 "CXA"—light double tier sheep—wagons, the contract being 80 per cent. completed at the end of the year; but only £8,000 was spent of the £89,000 allocated last year for the construction of 140 "GE" waggons. Actual expenditure on additions and improvements to opened railways amounted to £440,000 or to little more than half the amount of £833,000 provided in the Estimates. This was largely a reflection of the difficulty of securing basic materials and specialised equipment. At Midland Junction, the authorised re-organisation of buildings is now about 75 per cent. complete, but work on the press shop is in abeyance pending delivery of steel work. The contractor engaged on the railway stores building has been held up for the same reason.

Other building works in progress include the diesel electric rail shed at East Perth, which is 75 per cent. complete, and the canteen at Midland Junction, where the work has progressed to 50 per cent. completion after some delay caused by the difficulty of securing bricks. A start has been made with the relaying of the existing 45lb. track on the Boyanup-Busselton section with 60lb. rails, and preliminary work is in progress at Collie on the projected marshalling yards. An amount of £75,000 has been provided for expenditure last year on the installation of centralised traffic control. Orders were placed for equipment last year, but actual expenditure was negligible as there are delays of up to two years in the delivery of this type of material.

The ability of the railways to employ additional men for rehabilitation of the system is largely dependent on the progress made with the department's housing programme. Since the beginning of last year, 10 homes have been purchased and another 51 built. There are 23 additional houses under construction, and the commencement of a further 74 has been authorised. For the current year, the total provision for railways is £5,940,000, comprising £1,985,000 for additions and improvements to opened railways and £3,955,000 for locomotives and rolling-stock.

Mr. May: Does that include the diesel engines?

The PREMIER: I cannot say what classes it includes, but the hon. member can obtain that information when we come to the details of the Estimates. Included in the amount I have mentioned is provision for payment of the balance due on the 60 "W" class locomotives on order, which will be coming forward towards the end of the current financial year. This will absorb approximately £1,554,000. An amount of £97,000 has been provided to clear the sum due on the "PM" locomotives delivered last year.

Provision has also been made for a substantial programme of waggon and coach stock replacement. It is proposed to arrange for construction by contract of 107 coaches for country travel, and £350,000 has been set aside for the purpose this year.

The new waggon stock programme contemplates the acquisition of a total of 4,160 vehicles, mainly for replacement of waggons due for retirement. It is expected that orders will be placed for upwards of 3,000 of these vehicles during the current year, covering the following types:—

Sheep	....	....	300
Cattle	....	....	300
High side	....	....	600
Medium side	....	....	500
Low side	....	....	250
Covered louvered	....	....	1,000

The provision in the Estimates for these vehicles is £1,945,000.

Mr. Brady: Does that mean that orders will be placed with private firms, or will the work be done in the workshops?

The PREMIER: A number of them will be placed with private firms because it will be beyond the capacity of the workshops to provide them in the time, and they will be very urgently needed. A substantial proportion of the provision for additions and improvements to opened railways is represented by rails for permanent-way needs and sleepers, crossing timbers and bridge materials. It is expected that rail deliveries during the year will total some 15,000 tons, of which only about 2,000 tons will be of Australian origin. Workshop machinery deliveries are expected to cost £87,000. Insofar as the expenditures I have mentioned are for the replacement of assets—the value of which has been extinguished—they would in previous years have been partly chargeable to Revenue.

In dealing with the Revenue Estimates, however, I explained that under the proposals for the placing of the railway accounts on a more realistic basis, which includes the writing-down of the department's capital liability, as from this year replacements will be made in their entirety from the Loan Fund, and an annual depreciation provision made from Revenue to cover the extinguishment of the liability of the respective assets during their anticipated lives.

Turning to other provisions in the Railway Estimates, an amount of £220,000 has been included for the housing of staff, and a sum of the like order for station yard improvements and additions. Of the remaining items, the more important are main line improvements on the South-West railways, track ballasting and the provision of buildings, including new building in Perth of telephone exchange and administrative offices. Although the Estimates for the year 1949-50 contemplated

expenditure by the Tramways amounting to £541,000, the sum actually spent was only £43,000. This difference was largely due to the fact that, except for the minor sum of £15,000 spent as a progress payment on 12 buses, no outlays were made from the Loan Fund on the purchase of vehicles.

A sum of £326,000 had been set aside for the purchase of 50 trolley-buses. Actually, only £218,000 was spent and this was charged to Revenue as the expenditure was for the purpose of replacing obsolete tramway equipment. Again, £160,000 had been included in the Estimates for portion of the cost of 50 additional Guy diesel buses. In the absence of deliveries, no payments were required. This year the Tramways' expenditure allowed for is £588,000. Included in this is provision for the purchase of 50 Guy omnibus chassis and their bodies, which are being built locally under contracts already let, and for payments on seven buses, which were not delivered last year under an order for 24 buses required in connection with the replacement of trams on the Victoria Park route.

Provision has also been made for payment on the balance of the 50 trolley-bus bodies on order. Contracts for 10 of these were let in the Eastern States and 40 locally, but so far only four bodies have been delivered. It is expected, however, that these orders will be completed during the year. The Estimates also provide for the conversion of tram to trolley-bus routes in Mt. Hawthorn, Bulwer-street and Walcott-street. Expenditure on the State Electricity Commission during the year ended the 30th June, 1950, totalled £2,328,000. Of this amount £1,894,000 was spent on work in the metropolitan area and £434,000 in country districts. During the year three auxiliary generating sets, each of 1,000 kilowatt capacity, were installed in the metropolitan area. Two were placed at the Midland Junction Workshops and one at the Welshpool industrial centre. These sets have been of considerable assistance to the Commission in helping to carry the load.

The first section of the South Fremantle power station will include two 25,000 kilowatt sets generating at 50 cycles. The second section is designed for a further two sets of the same capacity, making in all a total of 100,000 kilowatts for the station. Good progress was made on the construction of the station during the year. The buildings for the "A" station are complete and work on the first two boiler units and on the first turbo-alternator of 25,000 kilowatt capacity has reached an advanced stage. The first boiler unit is now actually under test.

Mr. J. Hegney: Is that likely to be in operation early next year?

The PREMIER: It is expected that it will be in operation in time for next winter. The work is being pushed ahead with all possible speed but, as some units of equip-

Council and Collie Council. Private undertakings that were conducted at Bridgetown, Pinjarra and Brunswick Junction were also purchased from the owners. Some diesel generating units were purchased and hired to country supply authorities.

Progress in connection with the installation of three 2,500 k.w. generating sets at the Collie Power Station has been satisfactory. Work on transmission lines in the South-West is proceeding according to plan. It is anticipated that expenditure for the year ending the 30th June, 1951, will be approximately £3,121,000. Expenditure on the South Fremantle power station during the year is expected to total £1,968,000. It is expected that most of the work in connection with the "A" station will have been completed and substantial progress made with the buildings for the "B" station.

Construction of the "A" and "B" 66,000 volt lines between the South Fremantle power station and the East Perth power station is progressing very satisfactorily. The work of stringing the conductors on the towers is now proceeding and the position is such that these high tension volt lines will have been completed, linking the two power stations together through the frequency changer, in ample time to enable No. 1 unit at South Fremantle to feed into the metropolitan system immediately it is ready to come into operation. An additional boiler was ordered in 1949 for the East Perth power station, on which it is anticipated that some loan expenditure will be incurred during the year. The Commission is planning well ahead in order to prevent the metropolitan system or the South-West system from ever again suffering a shortage of supply of electricity such as has been experienced over the last three years.

owing to the shortage of steel supplies for the manufacture of pipes for large water mains, but the position has been relieved to a considerable extent through importations from overseas of small water pipes. There is an acute shortage and spun cast-iron pipes have been ordered from England.

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

The PREMIER: Before the tea suspension I had started to deal with the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department and had made reference to the fact that the department was still experiencing difficulty owing to the shortage of steel supplies for the manufacture of pipes for large water mains, but that the position may be alleviated after the order for spun cast-iron pipes has been met from England. Supplies of asbestos cement pipes should materially improve with the construction of the new works, which are nearing completion, while increased production of reinforced concrete pipes is also expected. This year an amount of £740,000 has been provided for the department, of which £450,000 is for works in connection with water supply. Recurring works, such as minor extensions and improvements, the purchase and fixing of meters and services, absorb £135,000, and are for the purpose of meeting requirements of building development throughout the metropolitan area.

At Mount Yokine work is proceeding on the service reservoirs, which are being installed to meet the increasing peak loads of summer. No. 1 reservoir is practically completed, and endeavours are being made to have the second reservoir of 30 million gallons ready for service by the summer of 1950-51. The provision for these works is about £90,000. Other works in progress include the 36-inch trunk main from Belmont to Mount Yokine, and the 30-inch main from Mount Yokine to Mount Hawthorn. It is anticipated that these projects will be completed and in operation during December. Mains are being laid across the new Causeway as the bridge work proceeds.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Someone suggested that the new King Charles might open the Causeway. That would not be right, would it?

The PREMIER: That is just a facetious remark. The cement lining of pipes is being carried out by contractors for the purpose of prolonging the life of mains and reducing the occurrence of bursts to a minimum. An amount of £20,000 is being provided for each of these works. Lesser works in progress comprise the reticulation on the Innaloo and Hackett Estates and the laying of an eight-inch asbestos main at Harden Street, Canning Bridge. The total amount required for the completion of these last mentioned works is estimated at £10,000.

be built adjacent to an immense volume of relatively cold water, such as the ocean, in order that the efficiency of the turbo condensers may be high. Owing to the limited quantity of water available at Collie it is not economical to enlarge the power station beyond the capacity of the machines now being installed.

Last year a revaluation of the plant at the East Perth power station was made and the capital of the Commission was relieved of the deficiency in the book values of the depreciated assets. As from the 1st July, 1948, the Commission has been made responsible for its own financial stability, and must therefore balance its budget or fund its own deficits. Over the last three years there has been a steady increase in the price of coal and in all other items affecting the cost of generating and distributing electricity, and the latest increase in the basic wage must inevitably react on the Commission's finances. Although the new units at South Fremantle will be much more economical in the use of coal per unit of electricity generated than the older units at East Perth, yet the extremely high capital cost of the South Fremantle equipment will prevent any appreciable reduction in the overall cost of electricity generated.

In order to cope with services for the rapidly increasing metropolitan population and at the same time make progress in overcoming arrears of work accumulated during the war, the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Department has been obliged to provide for a substantial programme of extensions and improvements. In the Estimates for last year an amount of £553,000 was provided for this department, but the material supply position had not improved sufficiently to enable the expenditure of more than £486,000. The department is still experiencing difficulty



For new water supply projects the amount provided in the current year is £150,000, including provision for work on a 30-inch feeder main from Mount Eliza to Swanbourne. Other new works proposed include a third service reservoir at Mount Yokine to meet the requirements of peak summer demand two years hence. The estimated cost of this reservoir is £130,000, but during the current year work will be largely confined to the commencement of excavation and preparation of tanks and will involve expenditure of the order of £15,800. The more noteworthy of the remaining provisions for new works and improvements are for the concrete lining and general reconditioning of the trunk main from Canning Dam to Kelm-scott, and for 12-inch feeder mains in the metropolitan area.

In the sewerage section of the department, provision has been made for the expenditure of £290,000. For works in progress, the provision of £190,000 is made and covers reticulation extensions in the Fremantle, Claremont, Subiaco, South Perth, Bayswater, Perth and Midland Junction districts, the reconditioning of the main sewer between Lake Monger and the treatment works, the construction of additional digestors at the works, and the laying of the 21-inch sewer line over the new Causeway. The provision for recurring works embraces small extensions in existing service areas and the financing of connections to properties under deferred payment agreements.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Does it say anything about putting a bit down near Loftus-street?

The PREMIER: I have nothing in my notes about Loftus-street.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I must see the Minister for Works about that.

The PREMIER: No doubt information will be given to the hon. member when we come to the Estimates.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I will have to see that it is put on to the Estimates.

The PREMIER: An amount of £100,000 has been set aside for new works. Under this authority new sewerage areas are listed for construction during the year in Fremantle, Claremont, Subiaco, South Perth, Victoria Park, Bassendean and Midland Junction. Provision has also been made for additional sludge drying beds at Subiaco and Swanbourne treatment works and for machinery replacements at Claisebrook and Fremantle pumping stations. The amount in the Estimates of last year for other water supply undertakings, including the comprehensive agricultural scheme and the Goldfields Water Supply was £799,000. Actual expenditure was £504,000.

Provision has been made for the expenditure of £800,000 this year on work connected with the Comprehensive Water

Supply Scheme. The first stages of this scheme consist principally of the laying of steel mains to carry water through the areas to be reticulated, these to be followed at a later stage by the small distribution mains. Owing to shortages of coal, shipping hold-ups, etc., the output from the Broken Hill Pty. Ltd., has been limited to such a degree that only a very small tonnage of steel plate has been available for the manufacture of pipes for these main conduits.

Because of the urgency of the scheme, the Government has been forced to place contracts overseas for the supply of the necessary steel plate, even though the cost landed in Western Australia has been approximately twice that of the Australian plate. Contracts have been let in Japan, Belgium, France and England for thousands of tons of plate. It is regrettable that the concentration by these countries on either the Korean war or defence needs has greatly retarded delivery of the plates, and progress is slower than was expected. It is hoped to have the whole of the main arteries laid within three years, and the laying of the smaller reticulation pipes will be progressively pushed ahead as supplies of these pipes become available.

A contract has been let for a new electrically powered pumping station at Mundaring to replace Nos. 1 and 2 steam pumping stations now in operation. Another has been let for the two pumping stations to be installed on the Wellington Dam-Narrogin main. Improvements have been made to the Goldfields Water Supply main; a bottleneck small diameter pipe at Grass Valley, east of Northam, is being replaced; and other sections are either being duplicated or relaid with larger pipes. A diesel operated booster pump of large capacity is being installed on the main at Kellerberrin, which will enable an increased quantity of water to be pumped eastward from that town. A new 8,000,000 gallon storage tank is nearing completion at No. 8 pumping station and an additional 25,000,000 gallon storage tank is under construction at Kalgoorlie. This will greatly improve the water supply position to the Eastern Goldfields over the summer months.

Mr. McCulloch: Where will they get the water to fill these dams?

Hon. P. J. S. Wise: The usual place.

The PREMIER: As the hon. member knows, Mundaring is being enlarged, as is Wellington dam.

Mr. Styants: Would those dams be ready for service this summer?

The PREMIER: We have not been able to fill them this summer. They are a considerable distance from the top.

Mr. Styants: What I mean is, will the reservoirs be ready for use?

The Minister for Works: Not the one at Kalgoorlie.

The PREMIER: The Mundaring Weir raising, for which £250,000 has been provided on the Estimates, is making satisfactory progress. The top of the wall was raised 3ft. prior to June last, increasing the capacity from 4,650,000 to 5,300,000 gallons. Unfortunately the winter rainfall was not sufficient to fill the enlarged storage capacity, in fact the reservoir now holds only 3,800,000 gallons, approximately three-quarters the capacity of the original dam. It is anticipated that the raising of the dam by 32ft., increasing its capacity to 15,000,000 gallons, will be completed about the middle of next year. In regard to the Wellington dam raising, £50,000 has been provided for this work during the current year. This will cover the preliminary operations such as preparation of foundations, erection of plant, camps, etc. As sections of the work at Mundaring Weir are completed, the men and equipment will be transferred to Wellington dam.

As to country towns sewerage, £72,000 has been provided. At present the department is continuing the sewerage of the town of Albany which was commenced approximately two years ago. The pumping station and rising main will be completed within a few months and connection of houses will then be proceeded with. Work on the sewerage of the central portion of the town of Collie has been commenced, and arrangements have been made with the Geraldton Municipal Council to take over the sewerage system of that town, to provide a new sea outfall, and convert the system from septic tank effluent to the treatment of all sewerage, approved trade wastes, etc. The system would also be extended outside its present boundaries.

Insofar as country town water supplies are concerned, the Government in its policy of decentralisation has given a great deal of attention to the provision of amenities to those living outside the metropolitan area.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: That is southern decentralisation, is it not?

Mr. Styants: It is in a southerly direction all the time.

The PREMIER: I suggest members do not interrupt! The Government has given the highest priority to the improvement or provision of water supplies where practicable for country towns. Particular attention will be given during the current 12 months to the water supplies to towns in the areas between Perth and Geraldton. The shortage of pipes, however, has seriously held up this work.

In regard to agricultural areas water supplies, the provision of large key dams in the areas outside the boundaries of the comprehensive water supply scheme is being continued. It is intended to roof a number of these but, due to the housing position and the shortage of materials, this work has had to be postponed for the present. Once these key dams have been roofed and filled the effect of droughts will

be materially alleviated. Following the completion of Stirling dam, the construction of new irrigation channels north and south of Harvey is being accelerated, as it is realised that production can only be obtained from the water stored in the dam by supplying it to the land in the form of irrigation. For this work £85,000 has been provided. Drainage of the large area of land between Albany and Denmark is progressing slowly. For this work £30,000 has been provided. In regard to Port Hedland—

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Now you are talking.

The PREMIER:—a sum of £33,000 has been set aside for the completion of the Port Hedland water supply system. The rate of progress of this work is entirely dependent on the supply of pipes which are forwarded from Fremantle.

Hon. E. Nulsen: What are you spending on the Esperance water supply?

The PREMIER: It is hoped that shortly the Port Hedland supply will materially improve and that this sorely-needed amenity can be provided. A sum of £25,000 has been allotted for the work on the Wittenoom Gorge water supply. A portion of the piping has already been delivered on the site, and it is hoped to forward the balance in the very near future. Wittenoom town is now becoming stabilised and, with the improved methods of mining which have been developed, it is hoped that the asbestos industry will become a permanent one.

Mr. Mann: What about the Great Southern? Any comment about that?

The PREMIER: Yes. There is comment about every portion of the State in its turn.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Except Leederville

The PREMIER: A sum of £10,000 has been provided for the improvement of the stock routes in the East Kimberleys leading to the Wyndham Meat Works.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Not half enough

The PREMIER: This work is subsidised on a pound for pound basis by the Commonwealth Government and the item therefore represents a total expenditure of up to £20,000. So, when the hon. member interjected, "not half enough," he quickly got the other £10,000! The Government is convinced that the first need of the pastoralists in the Kimberleys is an increase in the number of water points on the stations. It hopes ultimately to see one such water point, comprising bore or dam with windmill or pump, storage tank, troughing, etc., provided for every 28,000 acres of grazing land, which will mean a maximum walk by cattle from water to the outer rim of the grazing area of three and a half miles.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I understand that some of the properties have made 100 per cent. on the capital invested. Will they benefit under this scheme?

The PREMIER: The intention is to provide these water points on all stations.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Whether held by absentee owners or not?

The PREMIER: Yes; it is all part of the plan of development to which further consideration will be given by the Government. The Leader of the Opposition is well aware that erosion has occurred in that territory through lack of water points.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you think it is fair for the Government to undertake all that burden?

The PREMIER: From time to time the pastoral leases are appraised and, if the water points were provided by the Government, that would add to the value of the leases and would be taken into consideration in future appraisements.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It does not work out that way.

The PREMIER: The Government will shortly be giving very serious consideration to northern development and, if the Leader of the Opposition has any proposal for the development of those areas, I shall be prepared to have his advice and work in close co-operation with him, because I know of his knowledge of that area.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You cannot altogether satisfy me in that way.

The PREMIER: With increased water points, it will be possible more readily to control the grazing and to check soil erosion, particularly around the existing permanent waterholes, which is now becoming so dangerous to that portion of the State. An amount up to a limit of £20,000 per annum will be provided to assist pastoralists on a pound-for-pound basis to locate water and purchase storage tanks, etc. Loan funds are also provided for the improvement of water supplies in the various North-West towns, improvements and additions to hospitals, to jetties and to other stock routes.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You referred to hospitals, but have not mentioned Carnarvon.

The PREMIER: I should say that Carnarvon would be included amongst the northern hospitals.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: At one time it was on the list with Pinjarra, but it slipped off.

The PREMIER: I did not see that list.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I have it in my office.

The PREMIER: An amount of £5,000 has also been provided for preliminary work in connection with the transfer of the hospital, school and hostel from Halls Creek to the new townsite adjacent to the aerodrome.

An item of £360,000 has been provided for the purchase of heavy tractor equipment for land clearing. The Commonwealth Government has been advised of this State's desire to purchase 80 tractors of between 80 and 90 drawbar horsepower, to be employed on land clearing. It is desired greatly to accelerate the rate of clearing, particularly for soldier land settlement. These machines would be purchased under the recent dollar loan negotiated by the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. Nalder: Will farmers be able to avail themselves of that loan?

The PREMIER: Approval would have to be secured by any person wishing to obtain equipment from America under the dollar loan. He would first have to establish a credit, and this could be done only by going to the Commonwealth Bank and purchasing the requisite dollars, but, before the credit would be approved, the need for the equipment would have to be shown and approval received. The effect which the heavy tractors, fitted with bulldozer and treedozer equipment, is having on increased production from the land is only just becoming apparent, and will increasingly produce evidence as the land is brought under crop or pasture. The number of heavy machines in the State is rapidly increasing, and it is probable that if the work of all machines were added, it would be found that not less than 100,000 acres per year of virgin country are now being brought into production each year.

Mr. Bovell: What are we going to do about super?

The PREMIER: All possible steps are being taken to establish super. works at Albany rapidly, and I assure the hon. member that no effort is being spared by the Government to obtain the equipment required for them. The hon. member knows that the question of sulphur supplies has been receiving the attention of the Government to the end that the output of super. may be increased. The Government is fully alive to the acuteness of the existing position, though, if present conditions continue, our difficulties in future may become more acute.

Mr. Bovell: I suggest that consideration be given to the establishment of works at Busselton.

Mr. J. Hegney: Not by the present Government, surely! That would be socialism.

The PREMIER: The estimated expenditure for Harbours and Rivers in 1949-50 was £890,000 compared with actual expenditure of £390,000. Of the amount of £264,000 allocated for work at Fremantle, only £70,000 was spent, while payments on the purchase of suction and grab-hopper dredges, amounting to £160,000, was just half the expenditure that had been anticipated on this account. For improvements at Fremantle Harbour, ap-

proximately £310,000 has been provided. Of this amount, £74,000 has been allocated to works in progress, including the reconditioning of existing berths; £60,000 for the provision of sidings and rail connections at Leighton Beach, and £176,000 for new work as the first stage in implementation of the Tydeman scheme. A sum of £50,000 has been provided for construction of additions to buildings and equipment for the bulk-wheat installations. Owing to the difficulty attending the supply of steel and other materials, which has been accentuated by the international defence position, it may be found impossible to make the progress anticipated at Fremantle. The policy of the Government, however, is to treat the development of Fremantle Harbour as of the highest priority.

The member for Maylands will be interested to learn—although he may have received the information in reply to a question asked by him—that the South Australian harbour engineer, Mr. H. C. Meyer, who is to review for the Government certain aspects of the Tydeman scheme, will arrive in this State on the 21st instant. When his report has been received and a determination made by the Government on the matters referred to him, the work at Fremantle will be pushed ahead with the utmost speed. An amount of £200,000 has been included in the Loan Estimates for this year's expenditure on the Bunbury Harbour development scheme. Satisfactory progress is being made with this work. Dumping of stone on the breakwater groynes is proceeding, and also on the sand groyne extension on the east side of the bay, and on the new groyne being built immediately north at the Turkey Point cut. The Turkey Point cut will connect Leschenault Inlet to the ocean and will enable the Preston, Ferguson, Collie, Wokalup, Brunswick and Wellesley Rivers to discharge direct into the ocean instead of into the Bunbury Harbour, where their load of silt has previously been discharged.

Mr. Guthrie: That is very good news.

The PREMIER: For Albany harbour, £200,000 has been provided on the Estimates for work during the current year. Preliminary work has been in progress at Albany in preparation for the arrival of the dredge "Sir James Mitchell."

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is marvellous what you have to spend on a perfectly natural harbour, is it not?

The PREMIER: In the development of harbours the Government depends on the advice of its expert advisers.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I asked the question only because of how perfect it seems to be when we listen to the member for Albany.

The PREMIER: I see! The first stage in the development of Albany harbour provides for the reclamation of approxi-

mately 60 acres of land and two deep-water berths. The dredge "Sir James Mitchell" arrived from England a week ago. It is now being slipped and refitted and will probably leave for Albany in about one month's time. A sum of £18,000 has been provided on the Estimates for Busselton jetty improvements during the current year. The work involved will comprise a lengthening of the shipping berth and general improvements at the head of the jetty, which should facilitate the handling of shipping at Busselton. It is anticipated that a commencement will be made on this work when material is assembled in a few weeks' time.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Before you leave the consideration of our ports, is Esperance so perfect that no money is to be spent there?

The PREMIER: Some notice has been taken of Esperance. I think the hon. member knows that.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: There is nothing on the Estimates for a deep-sea port up north, is there?

The PREMIER: Owing to the use of the "Governor Stirling" dredge at Bunbury, comparatively little work will be carried out this year on Swan River improvements. As soon as the dredge returns, it will be employed cleaning up the channels immediately upstream and downstream from the new Causeway. Against public buildings there was a provision in last year's Estimates of £750,000 to cover a wide range of new construction work and additions and improvements urgently required for education, hospital and other essential purposes. The actual expenditure for the year was £673,000, which was relatively close to the Estimate. This year the estimated expenditure is £1,000,000 and includes provisions similar to those made last year.

Loan moneys made available to the Forests Department have been provided for the purpose of pine and mallet afforestation and new housing works. The total provision for the department last year was £51,000 and the actual expenditure was £113,000. Progress was made in overtaking arrears of maintenance and pruning in the plantations, and the organisation and clearing of new areas was commenced. On the housing side the department had aimed last year to complete 35 houses. Actually it completed 23 and made good progress towards the completion of another 11. The department's housing programme, which is for the purpose of settling its forest employees in small bush communities, forms an essential basis of forest development and fire control, each new community enabling the extension of control over upwards of 200,000 acres of unprotected forest.

For the current year the provision is £204,000, of which £150,000 is accounted for by pine plantations. In view of the

prospective decline in hardwood output within the next three or four decades, it is aimed to expand plantations, which will also be drawn upon to supply peeler logs for plywood manufacture, timber for cases and containers, and probably raw materials for pulping and wall boards. If any members have any doubt about the wisdom of providing such a large sum of money for pine plantations, I wish they could go to South Australia and see some of the pine forests in that State. Unfortunately I did not have the time that I would like to have had to look at them, but I am informed that a mill, which will cost something like £600,000, is to be established in some of that pine country.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is an amazing achievement for a State with no natural forests.

The PREMIER: It is, and it will be a very valuable asset to that State. Some people rather doubt the wisdom of planting pine forests, but I think the expenditure is justifiable.

Hon. E. Nulsen: We have hundreds of thousands of acres in the Esperance district with a 25 in. rainfall suitable for pine plantations.

The PREMIER: Yes. The hon. member took me out to see a pine plantation which unfortunately had not received the attention it should have received, and in latter years has had very little attention indeed. There were certainly some very fine trees, and the indications are that portion of that country at least could be developed for pine plantations. The only difficulty which confronts us in that connection is that it is a long way from the metropolitan area.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: So is Scandinavia.

The PREMIER: Yes, I know we are importing timber. But the point I am making is that I think the Forests Department is inclined to favour country which is nearer to the metropolitan area, where labour is available and where conditions generally are more satisfactory. The Minister for Lands says there is a programme of pine plantation for Esperance.

The Minister for Lands: The difficulty is to obtain labour.

The PREMIER: I agree with the hon. member that pines will undoubtedly grow in that area. I will have a word with the Conservator of Forests to see just how we are progressing in that direction; and if the hon. member will remind me later I will let him know what is contemplated.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Thank you very much!

The PREMIER: The pine working plan of the department envisages planting at the rate of 2,000 acres a year, rising within five years to 3,000 acres. At present, the available nursery stock limits planting to about 500 acres, but next year it may be

possible to establish more than 2,000 acres. At the mallet plantations in the Narrogin division, 17,600 acres of stock are already established, of which a considerable proportion is approaching the stage when a return from the bark and timber of the thinnings can be expected.

This year it is anticipated that a quantity of sticks, poles and billets will be sent to the Goldfields as mining timber. Other works, for the development of agriculture, were expected last year to absorb an amount of £797,000, including £500,000 for additional capital for the Rural and Industries Bank. In total, corresponding actual expenditure amounting to £783,000 closely approximated the estimate, the only noteworthy variation being in expenditure on renovations and improvements at various research and experimental stations, which was some £21,000 less than the anticipated amount.

Last year the grain distillery at Collie was purchased for the sum of £144,349, and it is hoped that it will be possible to make good use of this building by the establishment of another industry in Western Australia. The flax mill at Boyup Brook, previously operated by the Commonwealth Government, was purchased for £25,000 and is being sold over a period of years to a new co-operative company which has been formed and is showing satisfactory financial results. For the current year the total provision for the development of agriculture, excluding forests, is £584,000 of which £350,000 is represented by additional capital needed by the Rural Bank for expanding business. Other important provisions are £151,000 for reorganisation and remodelling of the abattoirs and saleyards and £70,000 for land purchases and development, and new buildings and improvements at research stations and minor works.

For the development of mining, the provision in last year's Estimates was £52,000, including £19,000 for general loans for development of mines or erection of plant, and £20,000 for deep drilling at Collie. Amounting to £109,000, actual expenditure was £57,000 more than the estimate, due largely to the provision of assistance for the installation of mechanised cutters, loaders and other modern equipment at Collie, which had not been contemplated in the Estimates. Together with additional assistance proposed during the current year, this advance will be repayable in half-yearly instalments with interest over a period of seven years.

Expenditure last year on deep drilling amounted to approximately £12,000. The work commenced during the calendar year and three bores have been completed to date for the purpose of supplying information as to the bedrock of the Collie field and the seams at depth. The work will continue for a further two years and £36,000 is provided in the Estimates for

operations during the current year. The balance of the estimate for development of mining amounts to £114,000. This includes provision for general loans for the development of mines and erection of plant under the Mining Development Act. Also included is provision for purchase of a mobile compressor for hire to mine-owners in the Marble Bar-Nullagine district.

Under the heading of Development of Goldfields and Mineral Resources, amounts of £100,000 have been provided for the charcoal-iron industry and £20,000 for the State alunite industry. During the last financial year £165,000 was spent on the charcoal-iron and steel industry. This sum is accounted for by an excess cost of operating, amounting to £56,000, and an increase in assets of £109,000. The loss on the operation of the works is being treated as preliminary expenses. The Loan Estimate of £100,000 for this year provides for the installation of a 200-k.w. diesel generating set to provide additional power. It is also proposed to install a pig machine to aid the production of pig-iron, a new blower for the furnace and additional facilities for the production of more charcoal. It is also proposed to install a suitable crusher for the ore which will be obtained from Koolyanobbing. When these plant additions have been made, production of pig-iron will be increased to 12,000 tons, sawn timber to 6,000 loads and acetic acid to 440 tons.

The amount spent last year on the State alunite industry was £76,000. Most of this expenditure represented the excess cost of producing potash over and above the revenue received. The whole of the losses on this industry have been charged to capital as being in the nature of development of mining. It was hoped that the Commonwealth would make some substantial contribution towards this loss, and an approach was made to the Prime Minister to this end. The Commonwealth Government has agreed to make technical assistance available to see whether the process for the production of potash can be cheapened, and technical officers of the Commonwealth are now engaged on this investigation.

The alunite deposits at Lake Chandler are, as far as I know, the only deposits suitable for the production of potash in Australia. From a defence point of view alone it would be a great pity if these deposits were not kept available, and I am hopeful that when the Commonwealth technical investigation is completed, some understanding—satisfactory both to the Commonwealth and the State—will be made possible. The sum of £20,000 provided for this year was to cover the cost of the industry up to the beginning of this month, when the plant was leased to Australian Plaster Industries, who, as members know, are proposing to produce plaster for the next three years. There is no need now, I think, for me

to expand on the work at Chandler since it has already been well discussed in the Chamber. I will content myself with saying that the lease which has been arranged will be a satisfactory one from the Government's point of view.

In this year's Estimates an amount of £420,000 has been provided for the purchase of a new vessel which will go into commission early in the New Year. A single screw vessel powered by twin engines, this ship promises to be an economical one to operate, particularly on the side of fuel and maintenance costs. About the same size as the "Dorrigo" or the "Dulverton," it has a gross register of 2,700 tons and capacity for the carriage of about 37 passengers, 220 to 230 cattle, 140 tons of refrigeration, and 1,800 to 2,000 tons of general cargo. In regard to North-West shipping, I recently had an interview with two gentlemen from England, a Mr. Denny and a Mr. Cotton, representatives of a great ship-building firm. They have been North to see the conditions applying there, and they will give us plans of a new ship of about the size of the "Koolinda," I think, and if the vessel is approved by the Government, she will carry about 550 cattle and a smaller number of passengers, but not much less, than the "Koolinda" carries today.

Mr. Styants: It sounds like a further extension of socialistic enterprise.

The PREMIER: I think the State has an obligation to provide transport for the people.

Mr. Marshall: We think so, too, in many directions.

The PREMIER: We do it in these and other sparsely populated parts of the State. Need we pursue that argument any further?

Reviewing quickly the other items in the Loan Estimates, I wish to say that last year the sum of £180,000 was provided for the purchase of plant under the control of the Plant Engineer, and this year an amount of £450,000 is provided for the same purpose. It is hoped that purchases of heavy earth-moving equipment will be obtained through the Commonwealth dollar loan. Members are aware that most of the heavy plant is under the control of the Plant Engineer and is hired to the various public works as required.

Under the heading of Welshpool Industries an amount of £29,246 was spent last year. This covered some extension to the railway siding at Welshpool and the completion of the foundry at Chamberlain Industries, which is being rented by that industry from the Government. For this year £165,000 is provided, which is the sum necessary to purchase from the Commonwealth the machine tools installed at Chamberlain Industries, and which are being purchased from the Government by Chamberlains on a rent-purchase basis.

The Loan programmes of the States are more or less closely associated with the programme of works estimated by the National Works Council. Members are aware that this council was appointed by the Loan Council towards the end of the war, with the object of collecting particulars of public works which could be started to relieve unemployment after the war, if the need arose. The idea was to prepare for such works by carrying out the necessary preliminary investigation, preparation of plans, and, where necessary, initial surveys so that there should be available a pool of works ready to meet an unemployment emergency. Fortunately the emergency did not arise, but it was deemed advisable to continue the work of the council since the provision of a pool of available work is a necessary part of the scheme for social security adopted by the Commonwealth Government as one of its post-war objectives.

Mr. Marshall: If they put a lot of those civil servants into industry they would be doing much more good.

The PREMIER: Members who have recollections of the depression days will recall the difficulties experienced in finding worthwhile public works that could be put in hand quickly to provide employment. Frequently good labour-absorbing jobs could not be commenced because of lack of planning, or because some other non-labour work had to be carried out as a necessary preliminary to the main job. In consequence, many men were put to work which was not productive. The main objective of the National Works Council is to prevent a repetition of such circumstances, and at the recent Premiers' Conference the council reported that a pool of public works, estimated to cost £977,000,000, was available as at the 30th June last.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What is the good of a programme of work if no money is made available when the need arises?

The PREMIER: Western Australia's share of that total is £54,000,000. The council reported that 31 per cent. of the number of works, representing 39 per cent. of the total cost, had reached the stage of being ready to commence. It must not be assumed that these works are in "cold storage" ready to be withdrawn at a moment's notice, or that the money to meet the cost of them has been set aside. Some of the works—and many of those in the "ready to commence" stage—are represented by the estimated cost of completing works now in progress. If large scale unemployment developed, such works could not relieve it to any great extent, though probably they could be speeded up and thus employ some additional labour.

Other works consist of projects which will be included in the ordinary loan programmes of the States in the near future,

and some of these will do no more than provide for a continuance of employment of the men at present employed on public works. Some other works are somewhat distant and the necessary preliminary planning cannot be carried out because of the lack of technical officers. It would obviously be most unwise to divert engineers, draughtsmen and architects from their work on present public works to undertakings which were not contemplated for several years ahead. Despite these qualifications, however, there is still a large volume of work available which could be commenced if unemployment developed. Much of this work is connected with the building industry, and activity in this industry has far-reaching economic effects. We can rest assured, therefore, that should depressed conditions arise—and we all hope they will not—we will not be in the same unfortunate position as we were in the early thirties insofar as the provision of work is concerned.

Mr. Marshall: There was plenty of work to do and any number of men to do it in those days, and this is all rubbish that is being put up.

The PREMIER: We know what happened in the 1930-33 period and we are taking steps to guard against that sort of thing happening in the future.

Mr. Marshall: There was plenty of work and plenty of men, but no money available in 1930.

The PREMIER: We are making provision for the money.

Mr. Marshall: When the money is required the banks will say "No."

The PREMIER: I suppose that, in the words of a famous statesman, we will have to "Wait and see," but I feel convinced that the difficulties that confronted us in the years 1930-33 with regard to the monetary set-up will not recur to anything like the same degree in any future recession.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Premier is an optimist.

The PREMIER: No, but I believe that Governments and those in authority have learned something as a result of that depression.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: We will see.

The PREMIER: That is so.

The Minister for Education: I hope we will not have need to worry about it.

The PREMIER: If we have another depression, anything like that of the 1930-33 period, every man and woman in every democratic country of the world will suffer.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What sort of Government had we in 1930-33?

The PREMIER: The hon. member is getting off the track. No matter what kind of Government we had then, or what

its political complexion. Governments in every part of the world were in the same position.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I was not expressing any opinion to the contrary.

The PREMIER: In regard to our own share of the pool, viz., £54,000,000, this consists of provision for:—

(1) School buildings, £3,000,000.

(2) Electricity supply, £4,000,000, which in the main represents part of the cost of the "B" station at South Fremantle and extensions of the South-West Power Scheme.

(3) Public Works, £27,000,000 raising of Wellington dam; comprehensive water scheme; irrigation; Albany and Bunbury harbours; and public buildings.

(4) Railways, £6,000,000, mainly rehabilitation.

(5) Water supply and sewerage, £10,000,000, including a new reservoir for the metropolitan supply.

(6) State Housing Commission, £2,000,000, home building programme.

I want to make this point clear. The Loan Estimates were prepared before the Federal Arbitration Court announced its decision in regard to the basic wage. The very substantial increase granted will have a marked effect on our ability to carry out the programme. Even allowing for the difficulties which we will experience in securing the necessary material, the programme may have to be curtailed, or additional loan funds provided.

Revenue expenditure will also be greater, and I estimate that the increase of £1 per week in the basic wage, plus the added cost of paying female employees 75 per cent. of the male basic wage, as compared with the present 54 per cent., will add between £1,300,000 and £1,500,000 to our Revenue expenditure. This disturbance to our Estimates cannot be overcome immediately by increasing all governmental charges, and I feel that it will be necessary for the Prime Minister to meet the State Premiers for the purpose of making some adjustment in the allocation of moneys under the Uniform Tax scheme. The increase in incomes will add to the Commonwealth's revenue from income tax, from which the States should receive some advance this year. Under the formula for the distribution of income tax moneys, the States would not get the benefit of the increased income tax collections until next year. Even if the programme has to be curtailed, the amount that will be spent will add substantially to the public debt, which at the end of June last stood at approximately £110,000,000.

Mr. Marshall: That is the State debt.

The PREMIER: Yes. While all the works that are contemplated in the programme are necessary for the development

of the State, the financial results of the operation of the public undertakings created from loan moneys are such as to cause some concern. As I intimated when I introduced the Budget, a very heavy drain on our revenues arises mainly from the losses sustained on the operation of public utilities. These figures should interest members. As at the 30th June last the net deficiency on the cost of the public debt, that is the cost of interest, sinking fund and exchange, less the earnings from the undertakings, amounted to £5,400,000. The most disquieting feature disclosed by the returns is that operating costs, excluding interest, sinking fund and exchange, exceeded the revenue by no less than £745,000.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Will you tell us what you are doing to bridge that gap from loan investments?

The PREMIER: Is the hon. member referring to loan undertakings?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I mean this £5,400,000 loss.

The PREMIER: Bridging the gap from loan undertakings presents a most difficult problem. The Leader of the Opposition must agree with me that we have to continue with certain of our loan undertakings even though we know many of them cannot be reproductive for a long time to come.

Mr. Marshall: If ever!

The PREMIER: Of course the hon. member is right in some respects. Some of our loan undertakings are really never reproductive from the monetary point of view. Hospitals, schools and such like are built from loan money and, while I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that great care has to be exercised in the spending of loan money, I told the Prime Minister that I just could not see any direction in which the State could curtail its loan programme without that being disadvantageous to the State. So, in reply to the hon. member I would say that the only thing we can do about looking after the State's economy from the loan point of view is to exercise the most careful watch over loan expenditure and try to get full value for our money.

In reference to the loss of £745,000, the railways were, of course, the main contributors where the working expenses exceeded the revenue by no less than £1,694,000. To this has to be added interest sinking fund and exchange, making a total loss of just on £3,000,000. The Government is giving this matter serious consideration, but it is inevitable that there will have to be an increase in all our charges. Every care will be exercised in the expenditure of the loan moneys estimated for this year, as not only must we be satisfied that the money is not spent uneconomically, but we must also endeavour



to be sure that it is spent in such a way as to increase the productive wealth of the country.

Mr. Fox: Will you take over all the transport instead of leaving it to private enterprise?

The PREMIER: I do not think that would be the answer. The Government's experience with transport, as I have indicated, is that it has been a very heavy loser. In fact, that accounts for a very great part of our losses.

Mr. Fox: If we had Bell Bros.' profit, it would go a long way towards reducing that loss.

The PREMIER: I do not know that it would make a profit if it was a State undertaking.

Mr. Nimmo: Of course not!

The PREMIER: Wise expenditure of loan moneys affects the economic life of the State, and a grave responsibility rests on any Government to satisfy itself that the investment of loan moneys is made wisely. It is with that intention that I now submit the Loan Estimates for the consideration and approval of members.

Progress reported.

#### BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

##### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 12th October.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [8.40]: The first thing that impresses is what I might term the lack of stomach on the part of the Government in passing the duty of introducing this Bill to a private member instead of introducing it itself. I say that because, as the law stands, it is the duty of the Government to make necessary arrangements for the conducting of a poll on the question of prohibition in this year, 1950. Apparently, it is not the intention of the Government to conduct such a poll, and as it would appear it has no such intention because of the lateness of the year, surely the Government itself should take the necessary steps for a deferment rather than allow a private member to take the initiative on this question.

Whilst there may be quite a number of members who believe in the principle of a poll being taken on the liquor question, or on one particular aspect of it, there is, I dare say, a great divergence of opinion as to whether it is necessary or desirable at the moment. I think it is well known to members that there has not been a poll on the prohibition question since 1925, and this Bill seeks merely to do something which has been done on four previous occasions. I definitely state that I have been unable to discern any public demand whatsoever for a poll to be taken on the question of prohibition. Neither has any request been submitted to me, other than by passing reference when discussing other

matters, that there should be an alteration of the basis on which the poll is taken which, to say the least, is most undemocratic.

I think I would be right in saying that the liquor interests in Western Australia do not desire a poll to be conducted on this question, and I have good reason to believe that the temperance folk are not desirous of a referendum being taken on the question this year. I shall give my reasons in support of that statement in a few moments. By and large, there is public apathy on this question, and I think it is generally recognised that, without a shadow of doubt, if a poll were taken, the result would be overwhelmingly against the enforcement of prohibition in this State. If the Bill were passed, then of course the State itself would be involved in considerable expenditure, as would the rival factions. I think that our efforts could be devoted to something far more practical and useful at this time than stamping around and engaging in general propaganda warfare, more especially when it would be a fight for a lost cause.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It all depends on which side you are.

Mr. GRAHAM: I shall make some reference to that interjection a little later, but all in good time.

Hon. A. H. Panton: You would be on a good winner on one side.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have my opinion as to how certain people would vote if a referendum were held. During a recent referendum campaign, I received a questionnaire from an organisation which calls itself "The Six o'Clock Closing and Liquor Reform Council."

Mr. Oliver: It must be a commo mob!

Mr. GRAHAM: I do not think there is any need to be facetious on this question because the sponsors are earnest and sincere in the cause they espouse. It is my intention to read extracts from the only correspondence I have received this year on the liquor question. The communication from "The Six o'Clock Closing and Liquor Reform Council," which was dated the 1st March, 1950, merely asked me to express myself on two propositions—

(1) Are you in favour of letting the people decide by a referendum whether they want six o'clock closing of liquor bars?

(2) Are you in favour of local option—letting the people decide by vote whether or not they wish to have liquor sold in their district?

That, I repeat, is the only approach that was made to me by any organisation or any individual prior to the election. Since that time, I have received several letters, the first from the Women's Christian Temperance Union, dated the 22nd August, reading—

Would you be prepared to support an amendment to the Licensing Act to make provision for a local option poll on a democratic basis in lieu of the prohibition poll provided for in Part VI. of the Licensing Act? We feel you will agree that the only sane method of dealing with the liquor traffic is for the people to have the right to decide their own liquor requirements in their own districts.

So it will be appreciated that even that body has not asked my opinion on the question of prohibition in Western Australia. In a letter dated the 31st August, 1950, which the West Australian Alliance (Incorporated) sent to me, after dealing with the prohibition question generally, the following appears:—

May we press for a far better measure of reform? We respectfully ask that you use your influence in Party room and in the House to which you belong to the end that the people of this State be given the right to decide this most important question themselves by local option polls on democratic simple majority basis?

Once again it will be noted that there is no suggestion whatever that they desire a referendum this year on the question of prohibition. That communication, as with the previous one, arose because of the fact that in the daily Press an announcement appeared that legislation was to be introduced dealing with the Licensing Act. On the 5th September, 1950, a letter from the Women's Service Guilds of Western Australia (Inc.) was received by me, in the following terms:—

At the last State executive meeting of the above Guilds, support was given to a suggested amendment to the Licensing Act, to make provision for a local option poll on a democratic basis in lieu of the prohibition poll provided for in Part VI. of the Licensing Act.

On the 3rd October this year I received from the State Director, West Australian Temperance League, a communication which discussed the question of liquor reform generally, and then went on to stress the advantages from the point of view of that organisation of local option and also the question of trading hours being fixed by a vote of the people. In not one single instance, from any of these bodies which are representative of opinion supporting temperance or prohibition, was there a request or even a suggestion made to me that they desired the Act to follow its course and for a referendum to be taken this year.

On the contrary, over the telephone today one of the most prominent persons associated with the temperance question indicated to me that on account of public apathy to some extent, the lateness of

the hour and the necessity, as members will appreciate, of making plans and taking preliminary steps for a campaign for at least 12 months ahead, no good purpose would be served by allowing the provisions of the Act to apply. I trust therefore that members will now agree with my point of view when I say that I have seen no evidence whatsoever of a public demand on a large scale, or even to a limited degree, to allow the present Act to operate.

Mr. J. Hegney: Why should not the law be given effect to?

Mr. GRAHAM: I was hoping that I was adducing some sound reasons why the amendment contained in the Bill should be supported. Might I remind members that when this measure was before the Chamber, a matter of six years ago, only two members in this House addressed themselves to the question—the member for Murchison and myself—and I always expressed sentiments somewhat along these lines. But the provision is in the Act, and whilst the platform of the party which I support makes provision for the taking of a poll on the question of prohibition in a democratic manner, unlike this legislation, it is not an easy matter to commit the State and the people to the inconvenience of a poll when there is no warrant for it.

If I could at any time be convinced that there were circumstances warranting a poll or that there was a sufficient demand for it, I would be second to no man in seeking to take action to allow people to express themselves. But when from members' own observations there is no such demand, and when the organisations which were responsible for the prohibition section in the Licensing Act, in none of their communications have asked me, when dealing with this question, to support a move for the defeat of this Bill to allow a vote to be taken, then I say there is no warrant for it.

Mr. Fox: It is not meant to defeat the Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am afraid the member for South Fremantle did not listen to me very closely.

Mr. Fox: I did, and I have letters.

Mr. GRAHAM: The hon. member can indicate to us the terms of the letters he received, but I do not know whether he will be able to produce any that are in favour of the proposition that we are discussing at present. This is the position. If we defeat this amending Bill it means first of all that it will be physically impossible for full and proper arrangements to be made for the taking of a poll because, necessarily enough, it will entail electoral rolls being reasonably up-to-date, to say nothing of the machinery in getting the gear necessary for the taking of a poll distributed to many parts of the State.

Secondly, in the event of a poll being taken the people of this State will quite unnecessarily have their radio programmes interfered with and their letter boxes cluttered up with propaganda—

Mr. Marshall: It will be a change from the weird music we get over the radio.

Mr. GRAHAM: —and the people will, I take it, be compelled to attend the poll for the purpose of recording a vote on a question on which there is no doubt whatever.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: If you can guarantee that suggestion about the radio I will vote against this Bill.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have not listened to a great number of political speeches over the air, because at the time they are being broadcast I am usually performing a somewhat similar action though possibly from a street corner. But from the comments of people, particularly towards the closing days of the campaign, I should say they are anything but pleased, and would do anything but welcome the plethora of propaganda with which they would be confronted, if this campaign were hurriedly crammed into the few weeks that are available before the approach of the festive season. I do not know whether my electors, irrespective of their viewpoints on this matter, would thank me particularly for casting a vote and confronting them with such a state of affairs—more especially, I repeat, when there has been no demand from any quarter, so far as I am concerned, that the people should have this question foisted upon them at this stage.

The Bill is to defer the taking of a poll on this question for a period of five years. I hope and trust that in that period, before this question again comes before us, some steps will be taken to provide for a complete overhaul of the existing license laws of this State. They are outmoded and archaic. In many places they do not conform with the requirements of the people, irrespective of the viewpoint of any person who assesses the position. We know there are departures from the present Licensing Act in various parts of the State, and surely some official recognition should be given to that fact or else action taken to see that the provisions of the Act are complied with.

I have discussed with a number of members from both Houses and representative of all parties the question of adopting some non-party approach to the whole problem. This would take a considerable time to evolve as data would be required from other parts of the world. Irrespective of the individual outlook, there seems to be a feeling that it is necessary to do something in this direction. Not even the most rabid drinker or the most ardent prohibitionist is satisfied with the existing state of affairs. I hope some advance will be made along the lines I

have indicated so that, before the question of taking a poll on prohibition or any other feature of the Licensing Act is again submitted to us, an impartial inquiry will have been made, based on the experience in other parts of the world.

I conclude on the note on which I opened, that, in my honest belief, there is no public demand whatever for a poll. I repeat that no representations have been made to me by anyone requesting that a poll on prohibition be taken, and without doubt there has been no public agitation for a poll. Whilst a majority of us favour consulting the people on important public questions, more particularly if provision to that end has been made in an Act of Parliament, I maintain that there is no call for such a step to be taken at this stage, and we should be failing to face up to the situation if we permitted the taking of a poll that nobody wanted. I should like to be informed what sections of the community would thank us or would consider that we had done them a favour if we foisted this proposal upon them. I have already indicated that I have received quite a number of communications on the liquor question, but in not one instance was I asked to support a poll on prohibition this year, and the bulk of those letters were addressed to me after the object of this measure had been made known. In all the circumstances, I trust that the Bill will be passed.

MR. NEEDHAM (North Perth) [9.51]: My attitude to the second reading of this measure will be consistent with that which I adopted when similar measures were before the House in 1934, 1939 and 1944. The reasons advanced against the taking of a poll were the unnecessary expense that would be involved and the fact that there was no demand for a poll. In 1934 we were in the midst of the years of depression; in 1939, we were just entering upon World War No. II., and in 1944 we were still engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the most ruthless enemy in history. Today we are involved in a world-wide inflationary spiral and certainly peace has not yet come to the world. The Korean situation is as yet undecided and the European situation is pregnant with many possible dangers. Therefore I consider that the present is not a suitable time to set the people at loggerheads on the question of prohibition.

There is no demand for a poll and, even if a poll were taken, the result would be a foregone conclusion. To take a referendum today would be more expensive to the Government than in former years, when it was estimated that the cost to the State was £7,000 or £8,000. That would be a trivial amount for a referendum giving the people an opportunity to express an opinion, if they desired a poll, but that would not be the full cost by a

long way, because the contending parties would be involved in considerable expense, and to countenance that at the present time would not be right.

I have already stated that the result of a poll would be a foregone conclusion. The experience of the people of the United States of America is well known and has been a warning to the people in other parts of the world. In 1930 a referendum was taken in Victoria on the question of liquor licenses when 522,339 people voted for and 418,902 against, a majority of 133,437 in favour of a continuance of licenses. Another referendum was held in 1938, the year before World War II started. There was a larger vote and a greater majority. The figures were—for the continuance of licenses 721,704; against 368,376, the majority being 353,328. I venture to say that a somewhat similar result would obtain here in proportion to our population if a poll were taken. For those reasons I support the second reading.

**HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam)** [9.12]: If this Bill had proposed to delete from the Act that portion which it purports to amend, I might have been a supporter of it. To find reasons why a certain thing should not be done, when the law or some other authority lays down that it shall be done, is not difficult. It would not be hard in any year to find some reason or some excuse why something which ought to be done should not be done. I think that Parliament should be given the opportunity of facing up to this situation for the purpose of deciding the question on a permanent basis. I would go further and say we should be compelled to do that very thing. It is true that no referendum under the provisions of this Act has been held for 25 years, even though it provides that one shall be held every five years. If this Bill happens to be defeated and the Government is thereby compelled to hold a referendum this year, any rush in connection with the holding of it will be the sole and complete responsibility of the Government.

**Mr. Marshall:** Of course it will! It was the Government's job to see that it was ready.

**Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE:** Therefore it is not logical to argue in favour of this Bill for a postponement of the referendum on the ground that such referendum, if it were held this year—as it should be under the Act—would not allow either of the disputing parties to the issue time to put their case properly to the people, and would not allow the people time to study the issue sufficiently to enable them to make a decision for the one side or the other. I take it for granted that the attitude of the Government to this proposal is typified in the speech that the Attorney General made in connection with the Bill a few days ago.

On that occasion the Attorney General sat evenly balanced upon the fence. He had a hand stretched out for the party on one side of the fence and a hand stretched out for the party on the other side of the fence. He was willing to shake hands from his precarious position on the fence with the disputing parties on each side. As he was making his speech, the thought came to me that it was a great pity the fence upon which he was sitting was not of barbed wire; because if it had been, he would have been compelled to jump on to one side or the other. That would at least have given the House a lead, even if it were in the wrong direction. It would have been better for the Minister, on behalf of the Government, to have given the House some lead rather than sit so evenly balanced on the fence and give it no lead whatsoever.

It is all very well to say that the people in this State are not interested in the question whether the production and distribution and sale of alcohol and spirituous liquors should or should not be prohibited. People do not have to go running around the country advocating this or demanding that in order to prove that they are interested in a particular thing. It might very well be that the great silent majority in this State—and the great majority in every State are usually silent—have very decided views about the issue. As legislators, and as the presumed leaders of the people, we would be very foolish to be impressed only by those who are vocal in the community in connection with any particular issue that might arise, because those who are vocal usually have a very powerful self-interest to serve in connection with issues of this description.

I have a lot of sympathy with and a lot of support for the remarks made by Dr. Hislop in another place a few weeks ago. I know how powerful are the interests which oppose any effort made to interfere in any way with the liquor traffic in this State. I know how powerful they are and how much more powerful they desire to be as time goes on. On the production side of the liquor traffic in this State I am aware that we have a very powerful and cunning monopoly, which has not only a monopoly in regard to the production of alcohol in Western Australia but is fast moving to a position where it will have an almost complete monopoly of the hotels in this State.

So let no member of this House be foolish enough to think that in supporting this Bill, and thereby preventing the taking of a referendum on the question of prohibition in this State, he is doing all that is required of him on this issue. For my own part, I would like to see the most searching and exhaustive investigation possible into the liquor trade in this State, both at the point of production and all along the line from there to the ultimate point of distribution through the hotels

which are, in effect, the retail traders in the traffic. It is my considered opinion that far too much respectability and popularity have been built up around the beer trade in recent years. I open "The West Australian" each morning, look through its pages and read some of them. I open the "Daily News" each afternoon, and do the same thing, and it is astonishing to notice, out of the total number of photographs published in each newspaper, how many are used for the purpose of popularising the beer trade in Western Australia.

Mr. Manning: And probably the persons photographed would be under age.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes, unfortunately many of the people shown in the reproduced photographs as consuming liquor of some kind or another would be under 18 years of age, or very close to it. I do not know how the majority of members will vote on the Bill, but I hope that those who vote for it will not feel that they have done their duty to the State in connection with this issue merely by taking action in this House to postpone for another five years the holding of a referendum upon the question of the prohibition of liquor traffic in the State. I shall vote against the Bill. I think we should either permanently amend the Act now to make it more applicable to present-day circumstances, or we should enable a referendum to be taken upon the issue this year.

The Minister for Lands: Why do not you move an amendment to have it cut out altogether?

Mr. Styants: Why do not you on the Government side introduce a Bill?

The Minister for Lands: Why did the hon. member support the postponing of a poll on three occasions?

Mr. Styants: There were good reasons then.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I said earlier that the poll had been postponed on a sufficient number of occasions, and that the time had arrived when we should either amend the Act permanently or else take a referendum this year under its provisions.

The Minister for Lands: I agree with you on the point of amending it permanently.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If a referendum is taken this year, it will at least indicate how many people in Western Australia favour prohibition, and how many are opposed to it. If the number favouring it turns out to be as small as one speaker tonight suggested, then Parliament would be abundantly justified in permanently deleting from the Act the provision which makes it obligatory for a referendum on prohibition to be taken each five years. I would like to see the referendum listed for this year postponed until next year. If that were done, we as a Parliament

could this year discuss the whole question as it should be discussed and come to a majority conclusion which could take effect, legislatively, in permanent fashion. In other words, if a majority of the members of this House and a majority of the members of another place decided that the existing provision in the Act was unwise, then Parliament could decide to delete it altogether.

If, on the other hand, a majority of the members of this House and another place decided that a referendum on prohibition should be held next year, on the basis of a simple majority prevailing, we could amend the Act accordingly and hold the referendum next year. On the results of that poll, Parliament could decide whether there should be any provision in the legislation for the holding of future referendums. I should say that the referendum would be so decisive, one way or the other, on a simple majority basis, as to justify Parliament in subsequently altering the legislation to delete from it altogether the necessity to take future referendums on prohibition. That would mean there would be no law at all in operation making it obligatory on the Government to take a referendum on prohibition. Whether a referendum were to be held would then depend on the strength of any advocacy or agitation which might arise from interested people.

I sincerely trust the Bill now before us will not be carried in its existing form. I would be prepared to support a move to postpone the taking of a referendum until next year because I realise that there is not much time left this year to make all the necessary arrangements for the holding of a referendum. If an amendment to that effect could be moved and carried, I think Parliament this year should be called on, in some special debate, to face up to the issue in a complete way for the purpose of seeing whether we could arrive at some clear-cut conclusion as to what ought to be done about this question.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.28]: Although by no means a prohibitionist, I make no apology for subscribing to the views of the member for Northam and I propose to vote against the measure. The arguments put forward by the members for North Perth and East Perth were, in my opinion, rather weak. The member for North Perth sought to show that, on each occasion the referendum had been postponed, there was a reason for it. He was right up to a point, but he still argued that the present time was not ripe for the holding of a referendum, and that peace had not yet been established. I refuse to be dragged at the heels of any private member who seeks to introduce a Bill to amend a law of this nature. I am amazed from one point of view, but not from another, that the Government has no

introduced a measure to amend the law. Why did it have to fall back on a private member? Although I may be entirely wrong, I think this prerogative should have been exercised by a responsible member of the Government. Instead, we find it has been left—I think I am right in saying it was by agreement—to the member for Mt. Marshall to introduce the Bill, the purpose of which is to strike out the figure "50" and insert in lieu the figure "55".

The Act has been in force for many years and, although the referendum has not been held for some 20 years, I will not be a party to helping to remove from the statute book a provision permitting the people of the State to decide for themselves whether or not they want prohibition. I would support any move to amend the Act to provide that a simple majority of the people of Western Australia could determine the issue instead of a three-fifths majority such as is required by law at present. The member for North Perth and the member for East Perth used specious arguments about the question of expense and other more or less irrelevant matters. I, like the member for East Perth, have received letters from people who advocate local option. Every member of this House knows the weakness of local option and how ineffective it would be, if introduced tomorrow. In "The West Australian" of the 12th October there appeared the following:—

Beer consumption rose from 12.13 gallons per head to 17.96 gallons per head in the ten years ending June the 30th, 1949. In an analysis of the brewing industry issued yesterday, the Commonwealth Statistician, Dr. Roland Wilson, showed that production rose from 89,200,000 gallons—of which 26,000,000 gallons was bottled—in 1938-1939, to 144,500,000 gallons—20,000,000 gallons of which was bottled—in 1948-1949.

The report contained one figure which will make thirsty drinkers wince. Waste beer amounted to 1,600,000 gallons.

My point is that if a referendum did nothing but focus the attention of the young people of Western Australia on the dangers of excessive drinking, it would be well and truly justified. I am no prohibitionist, but I believe that anything this Parliament can do—responsible men and women as we are—to try to focus attention on the dangers to which young people are subjected in this regard, is well worth doing. If we did that, we would be rendering a service to future generations. I will not support any amendment the object of which is to take from the people the right to determine for themselves whether they desire prohibition. Previous speakers this evening have said that there is only a small minority of the people that would vote in

favour of a prohibition poll, but that is only a forecast and is no reason why people should be denied the right of determining for themselves how they wish to vote.

I know numbers of temperance people and moderate drinkers and others who have never drunk alcoholic liquor in their lives, and I believe they are all imbued with the same ideal as we are for the protection of the young people of the State. Members of temperance organisations have done good service in trying to steer young people away from temptations that beset them in hotels and elsewhere, and in encouraging them to take up sport and build themselves into good citizens of the future. While there may have been reasons during the depression and during the war period for a postponement of the prohibition poll, I see no justification now for an adjournment for another five years.

Mr. Oliver: What about a Gallup poll?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The hon. member can move an amendment later. For all I know, he might win in a canter. The suggestion of the member for Northam would be preferable to the amendment outlined by the member for Mt. Marshall. The Government has been sadly lacking in its duty in not ensuring that this Bill—if thought necessary—was introduced earlier in the session, so that the contending parties could give sufficient thought to it. If a prohibition poll were held tomorrow, I would vote against prohibition, but those who hold the opposite view have an equal right to express their opinion. The Government should not have left it to a private member to introduce the Bill, and I hope that the measure, as introduced by the member for Mt. Marshall, will meet the fate it deserves.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [9.36]: I have no wish to cast a silent vote on this important matter. I agree with the member for Northam and the member for Mt. Hawthorn that the Government has been indifferent on this question. It had a precedent and could have ensured that this measure was dealt with last session, or early in the present session, following the policy adopted by all former Governments. On a previous occasion, the decision for 1945 was actually made in 1944, and the same applied in 1940 and in 1935. On each occasion the decision was made in this Chamber about 12 months before the coming into effect of this particular provision of the Act. On the present occasion, however, the Government has waited until within 24 hours—so to speak—of the time for taking a vote on this important question, and has then had the measure submitted to the Chamber by a private member. The bringing down of this Bill was a prerogative that the Attorney General should have taken as his responsibility, seeing that he administers the Licensing Act.

Member: But he is away fixing prices.

Mr. MARSHALL: God help this community, as far as the prices he will fix are concerned! I will not assist the Government to escape its responsibilities in this regard, and I therefore cannot support the Bill. I have always been a firm believer in the people within a democratic sphere having the right to determine questions of a major character, and in a true democracy no Government would deny them that right. Members will recall that I moved a motion in this Chamber—and I think it was supported—calling upon the Premier of this State to make representations to the then Prime Minister of Australia that under no circumstances should the Bretton Woods Agreement be signed without the question being first submitted by referendum to the people. But, it was not done. Without any reference to the people, and over their heads, the sovereignty of the Commonwealth was given away in that act. Before long, now that we have been successful in getting the Yankee Jew to advance us dollars we will see the effect of the international bankers and the Bretton Woods Agreement interfering with the production of this beautiful Commonwealth of ours.

Mr. Oliver: There will be no beer in that.

Mr. MARSHALL: No, our spirits on that occasion will be dampened rather than receive any beneficial results. On previous occasions, when legislation of this sort has been submitted to the Chamber, I have been lenient in my criticism because of circumstances which prevailed. In 1930 the anti-Labour Premier of that time put forward the argument that as we did not have sufficient money to distribute among our citizens in an endeavour to keep bodies and souls together, it was not an appropriate time to spend £8,000 or £9,000 on a referendum. From then on we were in the midst of a war atmosphere. I have always spoken, on these measures, in the same way and like the member for Mt. Hawthorn I would never vote for prohibition. But I sharply disagree with the member for East Perth. He advances the argument that there has been no real move of apparent importance or size in an endeavour to persuade the Government to carry on with a referendum.

Mr. Graham: I did not say that. I said there has been none whatever.

Mr. MARSHALL: I put it to the hon. member, has he ever seen any intense agitation for a State general election? If this Government came forward with a Bill to postpone a general election today, would he agree with it?

Mr. Graham: He would not.

Mr. MARSHALL: Of course he would not; then he is inconsistent.

Mr. Graham: No he is not.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, he is. Where he has an opportunity to shift from this side to that side, with the hope of promotion, he will vote for it. In this case he says that because there has been no great agitation, that he knows of, he is not prepared to do other than support this particular measure.

Mr. Graham: Do you know of any agitation?

Mr. MARSHALL: I know of scores of factors which agitate the minds of the community, where there is no great agitation but where they would dearly love the right to have a say upon it! May I point out to the member for East Perth that even though he anticipates an overwhelming majority for a decision in regard to prohibition, who would have expected that an anti-Labour Government would have won the State elections in 1947?

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Nobody.

Mr. MARSHALL: No-one but madmen; but they did and only people whom we decree to be almost half-wits would have suggested it. So, the member for East Perth is not altogether far-seeing in these matters. At no time has there ever been any demand, that I know of, for either a Commonwealth or a State general election.

Mr. Graham: Four times previously you voted for this.

Mr. MARSHALL: I have done so under circumstances which are entirely different from those which exist today, and I have already explained it. But, in all my utterances I was justified in doing what I did because of the circumstances which existed.

Mr. Graham: Maybe I think so today, so why not be charitable?

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not want the member for East Perth to start interjecting now. He had a very good say and I did not open my mouth.

Mr. Styants: Which is unusual.

Mr. MARSHALL: That may be so.

Mr. Graham: I was not criticising you but you are criticising me.

The Minister for Lands: You are baiting him.

Mr. MARSHALL: I am not criticising the hon. member, but I am criticising his utterances which make him inconsistent. I want to support to the full the proposal put forward by the member for Northam. In the circumstances, that is the most logical proposal that has been made on this question because the Government has delayed the introduction of this measure thus making it almost impossible to hold a referendum this year. I do not say it is impossible—that is what the member for East Perth said. It is not impossible because it can still be held. I also consider that these questions, when submitted to the country by referendum, should not

be discussed by politicians or interested bodies; they should not express their opinions one way or another.

Mr. J. Hegney: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARSHALL: The case should be put up in pamphlet form, for and against, and the people permitted to make their own decisions.

Mr. Graham: Why not do that in elections, too?

Mr. MARSHALL: I would not object to it in elections either.

Mr. Graham: That sounds like the new order to me.

Mr. MARSHALL: I do not know about its being a new order. This particular proposal is one that has been on our platform for many years, and if there has been any new order then it is the attitude of the member for East Perth.

Mr. Rodoreda: Cut that out and get on with the Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL: So I suggest that the Government give serious consideration to the proposal submitted by the member for Northam and amend this Bill so that a referendum can be held next year. The Government should adjourn the debate to ascertain whether some more suitable amendment could be moved with a view possibly to holding a referendum next year. As the member for Northam suggested, such a vote would at least be a guide to whether this particular provision in the Licensing Act should be deleted altogether.

Hon. A. H. Panton: We could amend 1950 to read 1951.

Mr. MARSHALL: So far as I am concerned, I will always advocate the right of the people to decide for themselves questions of major importance such as this.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [9.51]: We have seen the sponsor of the Bill, the member for Mt. Marshall, in various roles in this House. We have seen him in those of critic, satirist, comedian and statesman, but this is the first occasion upon which we have seen him in the role of a stooge. I am satisfied that he is a stooge for the Government because undoubtedly this measure should have been introduced by a Minister of the Crown.

Hon. A. H. Panton: But the member for Mt. Marshall will add weight to it!

Mr. STYANTS: While the hon. member may quarrel with the Government on the question of water supplies, when it is a matter concerning something stronger than water he is able to sink his differences and throw himself into the breach.

Mr. W. Hegney: That is the right spirit.

Mr. STYANTS: The history of this question shows that the holding of a referendum has been postponed from time to time ever since 1925. On two occasions I

have myself voted in favour of a postponement. I submit, however, that circumstances then were entirely different from what they are now. We are back to normality. There is no longer any reason why a referendum should not be held. In 1930 we were feeling very seriously the effects of the depression. In 1935 there were still between 8,000 and 10,000 people unemployed in this State.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Many more than that.

Mr. STYANTS: Possibly so.

Mr. Marshall: There were 17,000 of them.

Mr. STYANTS: In addition to those, there were many working part-time only. By 1939, war had broken out and the idea of holding a referendum on the liquor question in those circumstances would have been quite unreasonable. Those conditions also applied in 1945 before the termination of the war. Now we have returned to normal, I cannot see any reason or justification for a further postponement of the referendum. To my mind, rather than continue postponing the referendum from time to time it would be much better to strike this provision out of the legislation, and possibly insert an amendment in it leaving it to the discretion of the Governor, which would mean the Government of the day, to decide just when the holding of a referendum was justifiable.

The appropriate time could be gauged by any agitation on a wide scale by the people in favour of a referendum being held. I believe that if such a poll were taken this year or next year there would be a substantial majority in favour of continuance of the liquor traffic. However, I have made mistakes before in anticipating what the result of an appeal to the people would be, and I might be mistaken on this occasion. A couple of years ago I was in New South Wales when a referendum was taken on the hours of closing hotels. The question was whether the hotels should close at 6 o'clock, 9 o'clock or 11 o'clock. Judging from what I thought I knew of public opinion in this State, I was almost certain that there would be an alteration from 6 o'clock closing. However, the people there decided to continue 6 o'clock closing, and that was a surprise to the majority of those with whom I discussed the result of the referendum.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The women's vote has a great influence in deciding issues of this description.

Mr. STYANTS: Undoubtedly women can do their own thinking these days. Most decidedly in earlier days women were more abstemious than they are today and did not smoke to the extent they do nowadays. It is well known that quite a number of females enjoy their alcoholic refreshment, just the same as the male sex. As regards



the cost of holding a referendum, I do not regard that as a very serious bar, because the money expended would not go out of the country. If a referendum were to involve the Government in the expenditure of £10,000, which was the estimate given to the House by the Attorney General, that money would be distributed largely among the printers and poll clerks, and would be still available within the State.

The amount spent by the rival parties might be considerably in excess of £10,000, but that money would not go out of the State. It would still circulate among the community generally, and I am quite certain that a large proportion of it would pass back within a short time to those who dispense alcoholic liquors. I believe a referendum should be held because it is in accordance with the law of the land, and I think we should not continue postponing the issue from time to time. Before any such poll is taken, however, the Act should be amended in two directions. One is that voting should be compulsory and the other is that the decision should be arrived at by way of a simple majority.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Hear, hear!

Mr. STYANTS: According to my reading of the Licensing Act, if a referendum were taken this year or, in fact, at any time, the voting would not be compulsory. When the last referendum was taken in 1925, compulsory voting had not been brought into force here, not even for State elections. As I read the Act, it would be optional for a person to decide whether or not he would exercise his vote at the referendum. The Act provides for a three-fifths majority, and I consider that utterly undemocratic. I think any such decision should be arrived at on the basis of compulsory voting and a simple majority. I have looked up the results of the referendum taken in 1925 and I find that of the 200,000 people whose names were on the roll, only 55 per cent. recorded their votes.

That is no way to find out what the opinion of the electors really is. That is only possible if provision is made for compulsory voting by means of which there should be a 92 or 95 per cent. poll. The result of that referendum was that 41,362 votes were recorded in favour of prohibition and 77,133 against, which meant that they favoured a continuance of the liquor traffic. If a poll were taken tomorrow, it would be on the basis of more than a 50 per cent. increase in the number of voters. On the Assembly rolls there are 315,000 names as against 200,000 on the former occasion. Those additional people have never had an opportunity to express an opinion on this question, and it would be merely surmise on our part to suggest how they would be likely to vote. It may make a difference in the position, but personally, I do not think it would.

I still think there would be a substantial majority in favour of continuous liquor traffic. In conclusion, while the law provides for it under normal conditions, and I believe that conditions are normal at present, I intend to vote against any further postponement of a referendum on this particular question.

Mr. RODOREDA: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

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

Ayes	.....	16
Noes	.....	27

Majority against ..... 11

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Fox	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Needham
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Panton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Read
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes
Mr. Wise	Mr. Abbott
Mr. Sleeman	Mr. Yates
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Hill

Motion thus negatived.

MR. RODOREDA (Pilbara) [10.5]: My remarks will not take up much time. I agree with some of the previous speakers in this regard at least, that there is a great lack of backbone on the part of the Government and complete dereliction of its duty towards this House and Parliament in not introducing this Bill itself. The subterfuge it has indulged in is without any respect for honour and integrity. If it were not prepared to stand up to its duty by introducing it at least it should have fostered the Bill or else let the situation continue as it has been doing. We have not even heard its views on the question.

Mr. Oliver: You have not given it a chance.

Mr. RODOREDA: The hon. member cannot blame me for that. At least Government members have had a chance to speak but they have not shown the least inclination to do so. Lest I be misunderstood I am going to vote for the Bill.

Mr. Styants: Shame!

**Mr. RODOREDA:** I am following the lead my own Government has given while I have been a member of the House. At least in that respect I claim a little bit of consistency. Not that there is a great deal of virtue in consistency for its own sake, but one speaker was extremely insistent about consistency and inconsistency. We have been told of excuses and different conditions obtaining which made it undesirable to conduct a poll on the three or four occasions when it should have been conducted. Of course, different conditions may have obtained, but there was only one thing lacking and that was the will to go on with the poll. One can find excuses for any action one takes; an individual or a Government can do that. On that count alone, seeing that this poll has been postponed so often and there has been no outcry against the postponement it is now a fact that there is no demand for this poll to be held, although people who were interested knew that it should have been held this year. They have made no endeavour to stir up any agitation towards persuading Parliament to do its duty according to the law and go on with the poll.

Whilst I do not wish to adopt the role of prophet, I would like to be as certain of backing the big double that is coming off shortly as I would be on the result of a poll should it be taken. We hear a lot about democracy. I fail to see how this provision became to be embodied in the Act. I object strenuously to any body of persons telling me whether I can have a drink of beer or not. It is not democracy to interfere in what is termed a social custom and deny a man the right to decide what he shall drink. Why should we not introduce a Bill providing that there should not be any tobacco, any trotting or any racing?

**Mr. Manning:** All filthy habits!

**Mr. RODOREDA:** O.K., but we should not have a poll in order to make a decision; we have a Parliament to do that. One member said that every question should be decided by referendum. Why? If that were done there would be nothing for Parliament to do and that might be a very good thing, too.

**Mr. Oliver:** Let us have a referendum on that.

**Mr. RODOREDA:** I feel very much in favour of that, but I am quite sure that the members of the Legislative Council would not agree. It would only be a waste of time. I fail to see why we should go on with this liquor poll. I agree with the member for Northam in this respect that it is only fiddling with the question, and like him, I think we should delete it from the Act. It is a dead letter and a remnant of the days gone by. In spite of the fact that we see photographs of lads and lasses in the papers with cocktail glasses in front of them, the position

has changed since this provision for a poll was embodied in the Act. It may not be to the credit of the young people, but it is a fact, and despite what we might do to focus attention on the pitfalls and dangers of over-indulgence of liquor by youths, it is a social custom and it is that which must be changed before any propaganda we indulge in will have the necessary effect.

Anybody who has given any thought to the social customs prevailing today, compared with what they were 25 years ago, will admit my contention. All this indulgence in liquor by the youth of the nation and by every class of society stems from the fact that it commenced when women started to frequent the lounges. We cannot do anything about that. It has become a social custom and we have just got to face it. It would be a waste of money and time to hold this poll, and we would be ridiculed by a greater proportion of the public in this State for doing so.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning) [10.12]: Some reference has been made to the inactivity of the members of the Government in regard to this measure. I find myself very much in support of the suggestion made by the member for Northam. I believe there is a demand throughout the State at present for something to be done in regard to the liquor traffic, and I think the postponing of the measure for a period of five years is only putting off the evil day. The time will come, I believe, when the public will demand a referendum on the Act, not as it is as present but after these clauses have been amended. The reference made by several members that there is no demand for a poll is perhaps not quite correct. I might state that a deputation waited on me, and asked me to introduce it to the Minister in order that it might ascertain what the Government intended to do on this measure. After quite a lot of delay I managed to get the Minister to agree to meet the deputation, but he would give no indication at all as to what the Government's intentions were.

**Mr. Styants:** You went to the wrong person. You should have gone to the member for Mt. Marshall!

**Mr. NALDER:** The suggestion of the member for Northam as to an inquiry into the position would, I think, if adopted, help to clear the air as far as the public of Western Australia are concerned. When I brought this matter up on the Address-in-reply debate, there were several interjections to the effect that I should be careful of what I said, or something like that. I believe there is a general opinion that the liquor traffic is reaching such proportions that it is causing considerable concern. I do not think I need mention the question of the alarming incidence, before the court, of drunken driving, or the fact that many of our young people who are under age are indulging in the drinking of in-

toxicating liquor. I think some move should be made and I very strongly support the suggestion of an enquiry put forward by the member for Northam.

**MR. CORNELL** (Mt. Marshall—in reply) [10.16]: In reply to this rather acrimonious debate might I say that consistent with the Bills I have introduced in the past, this one also appears to have drawn a number of crabs.

**Hon. A. H. Panton**: You have got a good bait.

**Mr. CORNELL**: In introducing the Bill I said that when the referendum was taken not one of the 50 electors voted in its favour. The member for Leederville queried that assertion, but since then I have checked it and found it correct. The member for Northam says he intends to vote against the proposal. I have no fault to find with that except to say, as has already been said by interjection, that he voted in favour of a similar measure on at least two previous occasions. I daresay it is the privilege of a parliamentarian to change his mind. I have no objection whatever to any inquiry of any description to overhaul and make some innovations in the Licensing Act. I fully appreciate and agree that the Licensing Act could be improved. I also agree that many publicans are not discharging their obligations under that Act.

**Mr. May**: Appoint a Royal Commission.

**Mr. CORNELL**: Many publicans evade their responsibility under the Act and, although there is a re-orientation under the Act in the Licensing Court, there is still room for improvement. I did not ask the Attorney General to give me assistance in the passage of this measure. The support he gave me was unsolicited and, like all solicitors, he has the ability of riding one horse at one time in two different directions. Talking of horses, I notice my friend the member for Murchison could not help getting astride his hobby horse. What the Bretton Woods agreement has to do with licensing laws I have yet to discover. The increase in the beer output has also been quoted. I do not know whether that oblique reference indicates that I might have contributed to this increase. I point out, however, that during the 10 years in which the increase has taken place we have been through a war period, and at times such as that the consumption of alcoholic beverages is stepped up.

Since the war we have been experiencing a boom unprecedented in history. I think all members will agree that in boom times the consumption of alcoholic beverages does tend to increase, and I venture to say that if we experienced a recession one of the first businesses to show a falling off would be the liquor trade. In my view,

there is only one way to obtain prohibition, if that is desired, and that is by a vote of Parliament, just as legislation in the United States of America was passed to bring about prohibition; but whether any one of us will live to see the day when such a measure will be passed by this House, or emasculated in another place, remains to be seen.

Mention has been made of pictures, published in the daily Press, of young people indulging in drinking. The member for Harvey may be a better judge of female age than I am, but that has nothing to do either with me or with the measure before the House. I think members may blame the capitalistic Press for that. If we consider the pictures published in the week-end Press, I do not think we can take much exception to the pictures mentioned by the member for Northam. The member for Kalgoorlie, ascribing various attributes to my Bill, for which I thank him, said it was the first time that I had done something to assist the Government, but he has yet to convince me that I have been doing something for the Government.

**Hon. A. R. G. Hawke**: The Government has done nothing for you.

**Mr. CORNELL**: I am already suspect and, if I can help the Government out in a small way, I think I should do so.

**Hon. A. H. Panton**: It must be due to the company you are keeping.

**Mr. CORNELL**: I offer no apologies for introducing the Bill. It is precisely the same as measures introduced during the last 15 years by Labour Governments, and the remarks I made in moving the second reading I adhere to. Undoubtedly, the taking of a poll would lead to much waste of money, and there is no possible chance of such a poll being carried. Members on the Opposition side have criticised the Premier for squandering money but, now that I am endeavouring to help the Premier with an economy measure, some members of the Labour Party consider that the money should be spent. The story, however, does not end there, because what the Government would spend on a referendum would be a fleabite compared with the money that would be expended by the two contending factions. I should have no objection to acting as a stooge for the Government next session by introducing a further amendment to the Act to provide for abolishing entirely the provision for a local option poll.

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

Ayes	.....	23
Noes	.....	20
Majority for	.....	3

## Ayes.

Mr. Brand	Mr. Nidham
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Doney	Mr. Nuisen
Mr. Graham	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Mann	Mr. Watts
Mr. Manning	Mr. Wild
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Bovell
Mr. McLarty	

(Teller.)

## Noes

Mr. Ackland	Mr. May
Mr. Brady	Mr. Nalder
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Owen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Read
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styants
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

## Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Wise
Mr. Hill	Mr. Guthrie
Mr. Yates	Mr. Sleeman

Question thus passed.  
Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Mr. Cornell in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 98:

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 the words "fifty-five" be struck out with a view to inserting the words "fifty-one."

On the second reading I gave reasons which would justify our agreeing to the postponement of the poll for only one year. If this amendment succeeds, I propose to give early consideration to the advisability of moving in this House for a Joint Select Committee of both Houses thoroughly to investigate the liquor traffic in Western Australia with a view to bringing forward a report and recommendations to Parliament. That would mean that, before the end of the year or as soon as Parliament met next year, we would have the benefit of those investigations and the report and recommendations, which might very easily assist Parliament to make a decisive and permanent judgment in relation to what should be done to this particular section of the Licensing Act. I submit that as an additional reason why the amendment should be carried.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I support the amendment. We should do something rather than fool the people by leaving a law on the statute book and postponing its operation from time to time. That becomes farcical, and we are stultifying ourselves and making fools of the people. This is not a party question. We all have different points of view, and the question is not an easy one for the public. What-

ever side of the fence we are on, we cannot expect to please all the people. But the longer the problem remains untackled the more it bristles with difficulties. Strong drink is one of the greatest evils sapping the life of this nation. It is undermining the morality of many of our young people, and it would be a great thing if there were less drinking. If the amendment is accepted, consideration of the matter will be postponed for another 12 months. In the meantime, the mover has said that he will submit a motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to investigate the whole problem. We will thus be in a better position to make a judgment on the question.

Mr. CORNELL: The amendment does not in any substantial way alter the present position. The Bill postpones the taking of a poll for five years. The amendment postpones it until 1951, so that in essence the Act remains unaltered, because we are nearly into 1951 now. I have no objection to the appointment of a Select Committee but that is entirely another matter. It is within the competence of the House to agree to or to reject that proposal. The Bill seeks to postpone a referendum for five years and I must stick to that. Any recommendations made by a Select Committee would affect other sections of the Act besides this one. In any event, whether the poll is taken now or in 1951, 1955, 1975 or 2,005, I maintain there is no possible, probable chance whatever of prohibition in this State being agreed to.

Mr. RODORED A: I find myself in agreement with the amendment. Most of us form our opinions upon or give our vote on matters of this nature chiefly from our own personal point of view towards the problem involved, and I do not think that the great majority of us know what we are talking about.

Member: You speak for yourself.

Mr. RODORED A: I am quite sincere. When we talk about the liquor trade, we have not the facts, and we vote according to our own personal view of the problem. The amendment would do no harm. Indeed, it would do a great lot of good, for by means of a Select Committee we would obtain some real information as to the whole of our Licensing Act. It is high time that some Government tackled the liquor question, and the appointment of a Select Committee would be a move in the direction of securing information which could be relied upon as being impartial on this contentious question.

Mr. Totterdell: There could still be a Select Committee even though a referendum were postponed for five years.

Mr. RODORED A: We could not do anything about this part of it. If the Bill is agreed to the poll will be postponed for five years. It need not necessarily

be so if the information a Select Committee brought back to this House was sufficient to warrant some of us changing our minds as to the advisability of having a poll or not. If the amendment is not agreed to, the question will be postponed indefinitely, and there will not be any move on the part of any Government until the next five-year period when the same process will be gone through again.

Mr. BOVELL: I understood the member for Northam to say he proposed to move that a Select Committee of both Houses be appointed to inquire into the liquor question. That has no bearing whatsoever on the discussion in which we are involved at the moment. It has no effect on the date of a referendum, because a motion for a Joint Select Committee could be moved without any relation to the fact that this clause in the Bill is carried.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He has not moved the motion.

Mr. BOVELL: He said he intended to do so.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Not tonight.

Mr. BOVELL: I believe there is a definite intention to mislead the Committee in regard to the clause and the appointment of a Select Committee.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Who do you suggest is deliberately trying to mislead the Committee?

Mr. BOVELL: The clause has no relationship to a Select Committee. The suggestion of the member for Northam is a good one, but it should not be confused with the date in this clause.

Mr. ACKLAND: It is my intention to support the amendment. I agree with everything the member for Northam and the member for Mt. Hawthorn said previously. I was elected to this Chamber as a supporter of the Government, but there are times when I wish the Government would not try to do what is expedient. It makes me uncomfortable on occasions to know that I am expected to support that expediency and help it put off its obligations. Because previous Administrations have failed in their obligations, there is no reason why the present Government should, and I do not intend to support it in that attitude. I am not a prohibitionist. I believe that prohibition is quite impracticable, but I see no reason why this matter should be postponed for another five years. The member for Northam has suggested that if the referendum is taken some time in 1951, he will move for a Select Committee of both Houses to inquire into the matter. The drink traffic is the greatest scourge the Australian nation has to face. The licensing laws want overhauling. If the amendment were passed, a Select Committee could do nothing but good.

Mr. HOAR: It should be clear to members that the only purpose of the amendment is to give us the first opportunity in 25 years to be honest with ourselves and with the people of the State. We have an Act which lays down a law, and every time we postpone the operation of that law we morally break it. What right have we to break the laws which we ourselves enact? If we were to have a referendum between now and the end of the year there would not be sufficient time for the Government to make proper arrangements for it. As the Government on this occasion has not done what all previous Governments did—that is make a decision of this nature 12 months in advance—the proper thing is to get that 12 months now by passing the amendment. A Select Committee has nothing to do with this, but it would give us an opportunity to see whether the people wanted us to fool ourselves and them for five years, or whether they would prefer to face the facts of modern life and cut out from the Act, once and for all, the reference to prohibition.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I oppose the amendment. The member for Northam said that this was tinkering with the whole subject. Well, his amendment is still just tinkering. The only thing is that in the meantime we would have a Select Committee to inquire into the liquor traffic. The member for Filbara supports that contention because he thinks there would not be an opportunity, with this Parliament, to have a Select Committee if the amendment were defeated. I disagree with him. If the amendment is defeated and the referendum is postponed for five years a Select Committee could still be appointed and a measure be introduced to repeal the law.

Mr. Fox: Could you get it through the Council?

Mr. NEEDHAM: There is plenty of opportunity for a Select Committee to be appointed and for the Act to be repealed. I hope the amendment will be rejected.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I support the amendment. I do not like the idea of twisting and turning and passing the buck. I do not agree with the postponement of the other referendums. Then was the time, just as it is today, to hold a referendum. I support the amendment with the object of a Select Committee being appointed to find out whether there is anything wrong with the liquor trade. I do not indulge in liquor, and do not care whether there is a drop brewed in this country, or anywhere else, but I have seen prohibition and also local option. I know what prohibition has meant to some countries, especially the country I have come from, and I would not be a supporter of prohibition. Some members think there is a lot wrong with the liquor trade. I do not think there is. If a man does not want

to drink beer he does not have to go into an hotel. Why does not the Government abolish the places in Roe-street? It is shelving its obligations all the time. Either this or any other Government, if it were to be honest, would endeavour to do the thing properly.

Mr. CORNELL: I appeal to members to stop playing politics. The member for Pilbara said the liquor trade cries aloud for inquiry, but the Labour Party had 14 years in which to hold an inquiry. I do not think the liquor position has become worse in the last four years than it did during the war period. It seems strange that most of those who say the liquor trade is rotten have never been into a pub in their lives. Had the Labour Party been in office at present it would be doing just what I am endeavouring to do now.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: But the Government would have been doing it.

Mr. May: You would not then have been the stooge.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The beer the hon. member drinks has gone to his body.

The Minister for Lands: There is no need for the member for Northam to be personal.

Mr. CORNELL: I do not think the hon. member intended to be personal. At all events, he could take a leaf out of my book. He could fatten up with advantage to himself, just as I could slim with equal advantage. If we could strike a balance between the two of us, we would both be happy. I do not wish to refer to red herrings, but the question of a Select Committee has been intruded into the debate though it has no bearing on the subject. There is nothing to prevent the hon. member moving for the appointment of a Select Committee, but to postpone the referendum for a period of less than 12 months would, as has been said, simply be tinkering with the situation.

Mr. RODOREDA: It is a pity that we cannot have a debate on liquor or betting without descending to personalities and I object to the innuendo that I am playing politics. If I were sufficiently ungenerous I could suggest that the sponsor of the Bill is doing just that in undertaking a job that is the responsibility of the Government. No Government will take action to amend the licensing laws unless it is forced to do so. I favour the amendment only because I favour the appointment of a Select Committee. Otherwise nothing will be done with regard to the liquor trade for another five years.

Mr. MANNING: I feel that our citizens should be given the opportunity to express their opinions and, if a poll will achieve that end, it should be held. I think there should be an inquiry into the whole liquor question and, if a poll within the next 12 months or so would speed up the appointment of an inquiry, I am in favour of the amendment.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	....	24
Noes	....	....	....	....	18
Majority for					6

#### Ayes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. May
Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Doney	Mr. Owen
Mr. Fox	Mr. Panton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Read
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Manning	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Kelly

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Brand	Mr. Needham
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Wild
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I move—

That the words "fifty-one" be inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

### BILL—BUILDINGS (DECLARATION OF STANDARDS).

#### Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 27th September.

**THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR HOUSING** (Hon. G. P. Wild—Dale) [11.1]: This measure is one which the State Housing Commission feels has a certain amount of merit. For the last four or five years the Commission has been endeavouring to build houses in various road board areas, particularly in the metropolitan area. In the main there has been great co-operation, but there have been one or two road boards that have put everything in the way of building what those road boards call substandard homes.

The powers delegated to the State Housing Commission in the Act give it authority to over-ride any local government by-laws. While this may be suitable for the State Housing Commission, the Commission feels it is not fair to the individual who has not the same opportunity to fight—if I may use the word—the road boards as has the Housing Commission. If this Bill reaches the Committee stage it is my intention to move one or two amendments, as the Com-

mission feels that there are some parts of the Bill that are worthy of commendation, but on the other hand there are others with which it does not agree. Therefore, I tentatively support the second reading with the reservation that I may take appropriate action in Committee.

**MR. READ (Victoria Park)** [11.4]: I have perused the speech made by the member for East Perth when he moved the second reading of the Bill. I feel that he is endeavouring to do something for those people in his electorate, in particular, who are living under distressed circumstances. In my electorate those circumstances are equally distressing. There are people living under conditions which would not be tolerated except for the scarcity of building materials. The object of the hon. member is to allow building materials of a lower standard to be used by people building homes for themselves. But I contend that the power which he desires, in regard to materials, is already covered under the Municipal Corporations Act. His desire is that houses may be erected of materials approved by the Governor. That power is already embodied in the Municipal Corporations Act. Section 313 of that Act provides that the council may in its discretion permit the erection of any building under special license. Section 311 makes special provision for timber-framed dwelling-houses provided such houses do not conflict with the design of neighbouring houses. That section concludes by stating that should the council or any local governing body refuse any plan for such building, there is still the right of appeal to the Minister under Section 298.

So there we have exactly the same thing except that in one instance this Bill proposes that the appeal shall be made to the Governor and under the Municipal Corporations Act the appeal may be made to the Minister. To my knowledge people have on several occasions exercised that right. I remember an instance in the Melville district some years ago when the Melville Road Board refused a person permission to build a wooden house in what the road board termed a brick area. The then Minister permitted the building to proceed. Therefore adequate protection is already existing in the Municipal Corporations Act.

Then the hon. member proposes that selling heights may be varied to any minimum which the Governor may declare. That also is provided in the Municipal Corporations Act under Section 338 (A) where the Governor may by order in council prescribe uniform general regulations covering this and other matters. Such regulations supersede any council by-laws. So it appears that this clause in the Bill is redundant. Then again, in the measure now before us it is proposed that a building may be of such a nature or type as

the Governor may prescribe. That aspect could be governed either in the uniform building regulations, if desired, or by appeal to the Minister. That is to say that in every case where a local governing body refuses a person the right to build any type of building, or refuses to pass a plan, an appeal may be made to the Minister. To my mind that is easier than appealing to the Governor although I think that is the same thing, because in every case the Governor would certainly ask for the opinion of the Minister in control before he made a decision.

The fact must also be remembered that the provisions of the Fire Brigades Act have to be complied with, and the question of fire risks associated with the construction of many types of buildings, particularly those used in industry, must be considered. If an unsatisfactory type of material is used, there will be a clash with the provisions of the Act. Fire hazards have always to be considered, particularly in connection with factory construction. I do not know whether the member for East Perth has in mind any particular class of material that might be used. Today cement is in short supply and asbestos sheeting is almost as difficult to obtain as bricks and other types of building materials. In my opinion, the Bill is unnecessary and redundant. The Minister has absolute discretionary power to veto any embargo on various types of buildings, and I certainly hope the Bill will not be agreed to.

**MR. GRAHAM (East Perth—in reply)** [11.11]: I am pleased with the reception of the Bill by the Honorary Minister for Housing. As he rightly stated, the object of the measure is to facilitate the erection of homes. It has been pointed out that to a degree local governing authorities have co-operated with the State Housing Commission, but people who desire to build privately have encountered great difficulties. I object to the process that obtains by which a person wishing to erect a house of certain materials that can be obtained, is debarred from so doing and is therefore compelled to go to some other area where quite another attitude is adopted by the local authority there. Under the Bill, it is not proposed to allow the use of building materials of a lower standard than those availed of now, as was suggested by the member for Victoria Park. Because certain local governing authorities have a penchant for bricks, that does not necessarily mean that structures erected of other materials are any less useful or serviceable, or would detract from the general appearance or tone of a suburb.

As to the fire risk which the member for Victoria Park mentioned, certain types of building materials may be more inflammable than others, but I refuse to

believe for one moment that the Government in that respect, is any less sensible of the requirements of the people or less concerned about any possible fire hazard than is any local governing body. As I indicated when I moved the second reading of the Bill, any Government, irrespective of its political complexion, must have a far better appreciation of the problems of the people and be more responsive to their requirements than is any local governing authority, for the reason that a Government is responsible to all the people, whereas a local governing authority is elected by a select few.

To a very great extent, the persons who are suffering inconvenience, hardship and frustration because of the enforcement of ideas of local authorities do not, in the main, have any vote in connection with a road board or municipal election. In those circumstances, the local authorities in a sense snap their fingers at such people and their wants. I do not desire it to be thought that I have set out, on a sort of vendetta against local governing bodies. I am not concerned about them, as such. What I am concerned about is to ease the restrictions imposed by local authorities, to a slight degree, in order to assist persons who are desirous of building homes for themselves. Such people cannot appeal to the Minister. We must overcome the necessity for that and I seek to give the Government the right, after weighing all the circumstances, to make a common declaration as affecting a common area.

Mr. Read: The Minister already has that power under the other Act.

Mr. GRAHAM: I have perused that Act, and I am not satisfied on that score. I will give an illustration dealing with a matter that has nothing to do with housing. I happen to be a member of the Loton Park Bowling Club, which has premises at Loton Park at present. A new green is being constructed at Forrest Park, three-quarters of a mile farther north. The Perth City Council is demanding that all structures within its boundaries shall be erected of brick or cement. The bowling club has a wooden pavilion at present, which was erected before these restrictions were imposed by the City Council. The new green will be ready for play in the course of a year or two, but the Perth City Council will not allow the wooden building to be re-erected there. It is impossible for the club to go to the expense of putting up a brick structure, so the ridiculous position arises of a bowling green being put down at a cost of about £1,000, and yet it cannot be used because of lack of facilities and because there is nowhere for the equipment to be stored.

Mr. Read: The erection of a bowling pavilion will not relieve any distress.

Mr. GRAHAM: At the outset of my remarks, I said that the illustration I would give had nothing to do with housing, but it serves to demonstrate the fact that, because of the restrictions imposed by the Perth City Council, a ridiculous position such as I have outlined has arisen. I could quote some instances regarding housing. For instance, in East Perth there are wooden homes and brick buildings that are substandard. All that is required to provide extra accommodation in those dwellings is to construct sleep-outs by enclosing verandahs to provide additional accommodation for people, but those concerned are prevented from doing so. In one instance, the kitchen and the wash-house consist of one room. The lady concerned considered that unhygienic and went to considerable trouble to get together some material and erected an asbestos wash-house, which adjoined a ramshackle shed. That home is in Lord-street.

As soon as the Perth City Council became aware of what had been done, an order was issued calling upon the lady to demolish the structure. Because of the municipal fetish for bricks, apparently it was far better to have the wash-house, with the dirty clothes handled there, in the same room as the kitchen, all because the structure had not been built of bricks or concrete, as insisted upon by the local authority. It is that sort of thing that I seek to overcome. If it will ease the situation a bit, then to that extent it is helping deserving people who unfortunately exist in their many thousands at present. I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Mr. Graham in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.22 p.m.*