Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 30th August, 1955.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

RETAIL SHOPS.

Five-day Working Week Investigation.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Labour:

(1) In what shopping districts in the State are shops generally permitted to remain open on Saturday afternoons?

(2) Are these districts governed by any industrial awards or agreements?

(3) Are shops in these districts permitted to observe a late shopping night if so desired?

(4) What shopping districts outside the metropolitan area are subject to an industrial award or agreement?

(5) Aside from the conditions of industrial awards and agreements and the provisions of the Factories and Shops Act, has the matter of a five-day working week for retail shops, with provision for a late shopping night on a Friday to compensate for the Saturday closure, been investigated; and if so, what were the conclusions arrived at?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Black Range, Beverley, Cue, Cunderdin, Dowerin, Kellerberrin (Doodlakine, Baandee), Kellerberrin Specified Locality (Township), Laverton, Leonora, Mandurah, Merredin, Mt. Magnet, Phillips River, Tammin, Westonia, Wiluna, Yilgarn.

(2) No.

(3) Yes. But with modern industrial trends including a 40-hour week, together with modern transport and household facilities, the matter of the reintroduction of a late shopping night has not been revived by any authority during the postwar years.

(4) Northampton-Geraldton, Northam, Kalgoorlie, Coolgardie, Boulder, Albany, Katanning, Wagin, Narrogin, Bunbury, Pemberton, Collie.

(5) No.

MURDER AND MANSLAUGHTER CASES.

Supreme Court Sentences.

Mr. YATES asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) How many persons were sentenced in the Supreme Court for—

(a) wilful murder;

(b) murder;

(c) manslaughter

during the years 1952, 1953, 1954, and to the 21st August, 1955?

(2) What were the penalties inflicted in each case?

The MINISTER replied:

The answers to the questions are as follows:—

Year.	Wilful Murder.	Murder.	Manslaughter	Penalty.
1952	*Nil*	2	2	Murder—sentenced to death—hanged, 1. commuted to life imprisonment, 1.
				Manslaughter—sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, 1.
1953	1	2	2	Wilful murder—sentenced to death—commuted to life imprisonment.
				Murder—Both sentenced to death—commuted to life imprisonment.
				Manslaughter—sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment, 1.
				" " 10 " " 1.
1954	*Nil*	*Nil*	4	Manslaughter—sentenced to 15 months' imprisonment, 1.
				" " 3 years " 1.
				" " 5 " " 1.
				" " 3 " " 1.
1955	2	1	5	Wilful murder—both sentenced to death—commuted to life imprisonment.
				Murder, 1—sentenced to death—commuted to life imprisonment.
				Manslaughter—sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment, 1.
				" " 6 " " 1.
				" " 5 " " 1.
				" " 4 " " 1.
				" " 3 " " 1.

FISHING INDUSTRY.

Royal Commission's Recommendations.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Fisheries:

Has any consideration been given the recommendations made by the Royal Commission appointed to inquire into the fishing industry of Western Australia in 1948 (report dated the 27th October, 1949)—

(a) in respect to their two suggestions on page 20, viz.—

(i) the appointment of a marketing board;

(ii) the establishment of fishermen's co-op. societies;

(b) the recommendations set out on pages 22 and 23?

The MINISTER replied:

The recommendations of the Royal Commission have been very carefully considered by the present Government and its immediate predecessors. Meetings with interested bodies have been held and I personally visited the Eastern States in 1954 to observe the workings of the Fish Board of Queensland and the co-operative marketing system in New South Wales.

Since the commission's report was issued much progress has been made by fishermen in this State in relation to the adoption of co-operative principles. The co-operatives at Fremantle, Geraldton and Albany-Denmark, although perhaps still suffering somewhat from growing pains, are now well established. In fact, the Geraldton Co-Operative is on the point of extending its operations to Shark Bay.

Bearing in mind this co-operative development, I feel the most desirable course to pursue for the time being is to allow the co-operatives, by their own efforts, to work out a marketing system which will ensure the proper distribution of available fish supplies and at the same time provide the best return to the fishermen, consistent with a reasonable price to the consumer. I am inclined to think that the foundations they have laid are sufficiently solid to base a worth-while marketing system upon.

I am not so sure, following my investigations in the Eastern States, that the granting to the co-operatives by legislation of a monopoly in respect of the marketing of fish as has been done in New South Wales, is the answer to fish marketing problems in Western Australia. Nor am I satisfied that the establishment of a statutory board like that in Queensland would solve our difficulties here. There is, admittedly, widespread satisfaction with the board in Queensland, but in Western Australia conditions are so different from those in Queensland, which is greatly decentralised, as to suggest that a similar type of board would not be successful here.

The wholesale marketing of fish in the Perth metropolitan area is under the control of the Metropolitan Markets Trust. The Act which established the trust provides that no person, other than the original owner, shall sell fish by wholesale, whether by auction or otherwise, within the metropolitan area, unless the fish has been sold previously by auction in the metropolitan fish market. When this provision was inserted in 1941, it was hoped that fish of all varieties would be available to buyers at the market, but the absence of "good lines" from the market gives rise to the belief that some evasion of the law is taking place. However, this is a matter beyond the scope of the Fisheries Department, which has no standing under the Metropolitan Markets Act.

The hon. member may rest assured that the department will continue to keep a watchful eye on fish marketing generally.

and if at any date in the future it is found necessary to introduce legislation in relation to any aspect of the matter, this will undoubtedly be done.

FERTILISERS.

Tonnage of Trace Elements Used.

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What tonnage of copper has been used in fertilisers in Western Australia for the years ended the 30th June—

(a) 1950;
(b) 1951;
(c) 1952;
(d) 1953;
(e) 1954;
(f) 1955?

(2) What tonnage is imported?

(3) What tonnage is available locally?

(4) What are the prospects for future supplies?

(5) What tonnage of other trace elements has been used in fertilisers for the years ended the 30th June—

(a) 1950;
(b) 1951;
(c) 1952;
(d) 1953;
(e) 1954;
(f) 1955?

(6) What tonnage is imported?

(7) What tonnage is available locally?

(8) What are the prospects for future supplies?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) 1950 Not available;
(b) 1951 Not available;
(c) 1952 170 tons copper (metal);
(d) 1953 200 tons copper (metal);
(e) 1954 425 tons copper (metal);
(f) 1955 650 tons copper (metal);

Copper ore fertiliser contains 6 per cent copper (metal).

(2) and (3) Half the present demand has to be met by importation from other States.

(4) Future local supplies are limited at present price levels.

(5)

	Zinc.	Manganese.	Cobalt.	Molybdenum.
(a) 1950	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
(b) 1951	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
(c) 1952	165 tons	11 tons	Not available	7 cwt.
(d) 1953	225 tons	20 tons	Not available	7 cwt.
(e) 1954	420 tons	19 tons	4 cwt.	15 cwt.
(f) 1955	625 tons	18 tons	19 cwt.	20 cwt.

Above figures as metal in each case.

Zinc oxide	contains 75 per cent.	zinc (metal).
Manganese sulphate	,, 25 ,,	manganese (metal).
Cobalt chloride	,, 25 ,,	cobalt (metal)
Molybdenite ore	,, 60 ,,	molybdenum (metal).

(6) and (7) These trace elements are imported as no materials suitable for fertiliser use are available in this State.

(8) Future supplies of imported materials appear to be satisfactory.

FLOUR.

Quantity Sold for Breadmaking.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Agriculture:

Can he advise the House of the approximate tonnages of flour sold in Western Australia for bread making in the following years:—

(a) Year ended the 30th June, 1953;
(b) year ended the 30th June, 1954;
(c) year ended the 30th June, 1955?

The MINISTER replied:

The approximate tonnages of flour sold in Western Australia for bread making in the following years was:—

Year ended the 30th June, 1953—51,000 short tons.

Year ended the 30th June, 1954—50,130 short tons.

Year ended the 30th June, 1955—49,770 short tons.

GWALIA STATE HOTEL.

Receipts, Wages, Surplus and Assets.

Mr. O'BRIEN asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

(1) What were the bar trading receipts for the Gwalia State hotel for the year ended the 30th June, 1954?

(2) How much was paid in wages for the same period?

(3) What was the surplus amount for the year ended the 30th June, 1954?

(4) What was the value of fixed assets of the Gwalia State hotel at the 30th June, 1954?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) £38,555 3s. 3d.

(2) £5,761 11s. 2d.

(3) £5,117 9s. 10d.

(4) £8,401 13s. 9d.

HANDLING OF CARGO.

Position at Fremantle.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it correct as stated in the report of the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board for the year 1953-54 reported in "The West Australian" on the 18th May, 1955, that "of all the ports for capital cities of Australian States, Fremantle has the slowest gang rate for loading and discharging cargo."?

(2) What are the comparable figures under each heading for each capital city port in Australia?

(3) (a) If the answer to No. (1) is in the affirmative, can he advise the House of any special reasons accounting for the position, and has any action been taken to improve it?

(b) What is the anticipated improvement for the years—

(i) 1954-55
(ii) 1955-56

compared with the tonnages published under the several headings for loading and discharging in the 18th May news report?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Statistically correct. The statement, however, was made by the newspaper and not by the Australian Stevedoring Industry Board.

(2) The "heading" referred to presumably is "gang rate for loading and discharging cargo." The Australian Stevedoring Industry Board report quotes nine types of cargo for Sydney and Melbourne, and seven for Brisbane and Adelaide.

Exact requirements should be stated for comparable figures to be prepared.

(3) (a) Many factors have to be taken into consideration when comparing gang rates in the various ports. For example, the gangs employed in Fremantle are smaller than in the other ports. The main reasons are:—

Insufficient berths and transit sheds.
Insufficient land available for adequate quay aprons, roads, vehicle manoeuvring, etc.

Action taken: Throughput of port has been raised to its present comparatively high level by mechanisation, improved liaison, development of North Wharf, external warehousing.

(b) All improvements so far have not increased the gang rate. Anticipated improvement in the gang rate is impossible to predict.

FINANCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL TRENDS.

Appointment of Consultant Economist.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Premier:

(1) Has the Government engaged the services of an economist for official consultation on financial and industrial trends?

(2) If so, will he inform the House whether or not the continual, if slight, monetary inflation, is accompanied by an increasing real standard of living in the State?

(3) If not, will the matter of an appointment be considered?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The Government has two economists on the Treasury staff.

(2) This is a very debatable question.

(3) Answered by No. (1).

PERTH AIRPORT.

(a) Jurisdiction of Traffic Branch.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Police:

Has the Traffic Branch any jurisdiction over the Commonwealth-owned property of the Perth Airport?

The MINISTER replied:

No.

(b) Sale of Liquor.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Would a liquor licence issued under the authority of the State of Western Australia to a nominee of the Department for Civil Aviation at the Perth Airport contravene any Commonwealth laws or regulations?

(2) Would such a licence, if issued, require to be supplemented in any way by the Commonwealth?

(3) If the answer to No. (2) is in the affirmative, what steps would be required to fulfil all conditions?

(4) Would such a licence be necessary before liquor could be sold in the overseas terminal dining-room to passengers in transit?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: This matter comes under the Minister for Justice who administers the Licensing Act. I shall pass the questions on to him to answer.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE replied:

(1) Such a licence would not contravene any known existing Commonwealth law. It is not known whether or not it would contravene any departmental instruction. It is doubtful whether any licence under the Licensing Act is suitable for the Perth Airport.

(2) and (3) The premises and facilities at the Perth Airport may have to be made more suitable before a licence would be granted by the State Licensing Court.

(4) Yes, unless and until a Commonwealth or State law otherwise provides.

EDUCATION.

Provision of School Quarters at Chowerup.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that a letter written by the Chief Administrative Officer of the Education Department dated the 8th July, 1955, indicated that work would be put in hand during this financial year at an estimated cost of £2,850 for the removal of the school quarters from Mayanup to Chowerup?

(2) Does his answer to a question on Wednesday, the 23rd August, indicate that this work may not be put in hand during the coming financial year?

(3) Is he aware that an answer to a question given by the Minister for Housing on Wednesday, the 23rd August, indicated that suitable new premises could be provided for school quarters at Chowerup with an appreciable saving in cost?

(4) Can he say when school quarters will be provided at Chowerup?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. Estimates were prepared some months ago.

(2) This depends on finance available.

(3) Yes.

(4) No.

RAILWAYS.

Cost of Rumoured New Ministerial Car.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he state what will be the total cost of a new ministerial railcar which it is rumoured is being built at the Government workshops, Midland Junction?

The MINISTER replied:

No new ministerial or other special car is being built at the Midland Junction Railway Workshops. Recently the vice-regal car was given a general overhaul and reconditioned. This car had been converted from an AQ sleeping car in 1920, since when it had not been in the workshops for general overhaul.

HOSPITALS.

Maternity Ward for Wyndham.

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Health:

Further to his promise made in Wyndham, to provide a maternity ward in that town, will he advise what action, if any, has been taken?

The MINISTER replied:

The Public Works Department is preparing plans, and funds have been allocated to permit the work to proceed as expeditiously as possible.

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

Government Financial Assistance.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Treasurer:

What sums have been paid by the Government to the University of Western Australia in each of the last ten financial years?

The TREASURER replied:

Direct payments from Consolidated Revenue Funds to the University.

	£
1945-46	52,539
1946-47	65,005
1947-48	93,779
1948-49	117,968
1949-50	160,758
1950-51	211,364
1951-52	261,005
1952-53	288,501
1953-54	320,752
1954-55	372,844

BITUMEN.

Cost of Local and Imported Product.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) If the Main Roads Department is not importing bitumen—

(a) when did it last import such supplies;

(b) what was the total cost—
(i) per ton;
(ii) per drum?

(2) As the same department will require bitumen for present works, will it use imported reserves; and if so, how long will the reserves last at the present rate of consumption?

(3) As local bitumen is being produced, is it not reasonable to assume that some idea of the price to be charged to the Government has been arrived at; and if so, what is that price?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) The last tender accepted for the supply of imported bitumen was on the 1st July, 1953. Deliveries commenced on the 23rd March, 1954, and continued until the 21st September, 1954.

(b) (i) £32 per ton net bitumen at Fremantle;
(ii) £7 per drum Fremantle.

(2) Imported reserves are now being used as suitable local supplies are not available. It is proposed to spread the use of imported bitumen over the next three seasons.

(3) Negotiations have not been finalised. An agreement is being prepared by the Commonwealth Oil Refineries.

Discussions regarding price have so far been only of a verbal nature.

LOAN FUNDS.

Source and Interest.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Treasurer:

As reports of the Federal Budget indicate the probability that some considerable portion of the loan funds available to this State this year will come from Federal revenue—

(a) Has this occurred before in post-war years?

(b) Do these funds attract interest liability by the State?

(c) In what way do these funds incur interest in Federal hands?

The TREASURER replied:

(a) Since 1951-52, the Commonwealth Government has paid into the National Debt Sinking Fund various amounts out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund, for redemption of Commonwealth debt, including war debt. However, until such moneys are so applied by the National Debt Commission, the commission is authorised to invest them in Commonwealth loans, which are made available to the States to finance loan programmes. Investment of funds in this way has occurred in recent years.

(b) Yes, the States have to pay interest on these funds.

(c) The Federal Government does not have to pay any interest on the funds as they are raised by that Government through the medium of taxation levied on the Australian people.

BEACH EROSION.

(a) Cost to Cottesloe and Government Aid.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Premier:

As repairing storm damage to ocean beaches at Cottesloe alone would probably cost many thousand of pounds, and as it is unfair that the full cost should be borne by the residents of Cottesloe, will he give favourable consideration to making a substantial grant available in the near future for the purposes of essential repair work?

The PREMIER replied:

Consideration will be given to such a request when the estimated cost of essential repair work to property and beach improvements is known in all areas affected by the recent storms.

(b) Erosion Advisory Committee.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Premier:

As it appears that the damage and cost referred to in my previous question will be continuing items, and as it seems that unless remedial work is commenced soon, these items will present ever-increasing financial problems, will he consider creating an ocean beach erosion advisory committee with statutory powers?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes.

MAIN ROADS DEPARTMENT.

Receipts, Disbursements and Interest.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Last Wednesday, when replying to the member for Stirling, I was able to give only half the information asked for, and I promised to supply the remainder this week. I now have the remainder of the answer to his question, No. 6. The hon. member, referring to receipts from the Federal aid road fund (petrol tax) for the last four financial years, asked—

(6) How much of amounts so received in each year was expended in the metropolitan area, and on what principal works?

The further reply to this question is as follows:—

Year.	Amount.	Percentage of Total Expenditure.
	£	
1951-52	314,000	9.8
1952-53	359,000	8.8

The principal work was the construction of the causeway.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Honey Pool.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.

2, Commonwealth and State Housing Supplementary Agreement.

Introduced by the Minister for Housing.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Standing Orders Suspension.

The PREMIER: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Bill to be introduced without notice, and, if necessary, passed through all its stages in one day.

As members probably know, there are some provisions in the existing Act which expire on the 31st day of the present month. Because of that circumstance, it is necessary that an amending Bill be brought down certainly not later than at this stage. Although the Bill is not likely to pass through both Houses of Parliament before tomorrow night, the passage of this measure, at least through this House, will be speeded up by the passing of the motion.

It is not intended to debate the Bill today beyond the introductory second reading speech of the Minister for Housing. Therefore, although the motion does ask for the right to take the Bill through all stages in one day, no such action is intended. The most the Government desires

to achieve at today's sitting is to have the second reading speech of the Minister delivered. This will explain the provisions of the Bill and the debate can then be adjourned by the Opposition in order to give members on both sides a reasonable opportunity of studying the contents of the measure.

Hon. D. BRAND: Under those circumstances, I am sure that the Opposition has no objection to the motion. All that we require is time to give thought to the Minister's speech and the contents of the Bill. We do wonder, however, why its introduction was left so late. It might have been an oversight, as has happened on previous occasions. Tomorrow is private member's day and that creates a problem, too. May I ask if it is intended that private members shall be robbed of the opportunity of proceeding with the various motions they have on the notice paper? The Premier shakes his head, and therefore the Opposition will support the motion.

Question put and passed.

Message.

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

First Reading.

Bill introduced by the Minister for Housing and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [4.55] in moving the second reading said: This will be the fourth occasion on which I have introduced a rents and tenancies Bill for the purpose of continuing in operation some of the provisions of the Act and also for the purpose of making certain amendments. I think all members will recall quite vividly the long debates we had and the differences of opinion that were expressed on previous occasions.

The Bill at present before the House is hardly recognisable when set beside that which was introduced only two years ago. The first important point in regard to the new legislation is that it is proposed to alter the title of what is hoped will become the new statute; it will then be known as the Rents and Tenancies Act. At present it has the longer title of the Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act. In the view of the Government it is necessary to have some form of protective legislation as a safeguard and as a social measure irrespective of the circumstances. In this respect I want to make myself perfectly clear. There is a law which deals with the matter of robbery and violence and that law, with its restrictions and penalties, would have application to only the smallest percentage of the community because the great majority are law-abiding citizens.

But it has been found necessary in this country, as in all other countries of the world, to have certain rules to check persons who might go to excesses. So the Government feels that while it may be true, and undoubtedly it is, to say that the great majority of landlords are fair and reasonable men who do not go to excesses and take advantage of situations which might develop, there are, nevertheless, unfortunately, a few who seek to capitalise upon any and every situation. What is required is a check; in the first instance, the psychological benefit of having some independent body to assess the situation and make a fair and reasonable determination and, secondly, if something extreme is done, certain penalties that can be imposed. Incidentally, the penalties are by no means severe. It is not intended that what already exists in the Act shall be disturbed in that respect.

I say these things because no doubt it will be a simple matter to speak from the point of view of general principles and say that there should be an abandonment of controls, as little interference as possible, and so on. That is the very essence of the legislation. It will not, or it should not, affect any person, be he lessor or lessee, unless in either case he goes to excess or does something which is unreasonable. What is the overall situation? Speaking particularly with reference to housing, the present Government has pressed on with the task of building houses for the people and in every year of the operations of the State Housing Commission has created new records.

The number of homes completed in the financial year just ended, the 30th June, 1955, was 4,066. The number of homes completed by the State Housing Commission alone is practically double the output of houses from all scources in the years prior to the war. The aggregate of the building of dwellings in Western Australia for the financial year just concluded was very little short of 9,000. That again is an all-time record for Western Australia. As the total population of the State—that is, by natural increase and by the influx of immigrants—is not sufficient to absorb all the new houses—even allowing for certain demolitions and conversions to uses other than for places of residence—it indicates that month by month the housing position in Western Australia is becoming easier.

But even under the best of circumstances, I repeat there are certain people who, for certain reasons—I need not go into them now—will be in a position to demand more than is fair or reasonable. That applies in respect of very many things other than dwelling-places. In recent days I have read where action has to be taken in a certain

State to compel the reduction of the selling price of petrol by 1d. a gallon. I have also read that the cost of gentlemen's haircuts is to be reduced in one State by, I think it is, 3d. or 6d.

The fact that there are charges over and above what are deemed to be reasonable does not necessarily suggest that there is a shortage; because there is in the first instance no shortage whatsoever of petrol in this country, neither is there any shortage of gentlemen's hairdressers. In those particular cases unfortunately, as appears in so many instances in what is supposed to be a free economy, free enterprise and free competition, there are nevertheless these groups or rings which determine what the selling price of a certain class of goods, or of a certain type of service shall be. It is practically impossible for any retailer, or those rendering a service, to depart from that figure.

I mention these things in anticipation of the jibe that if the housing position has improved considerably, there should be no need for a continuance of this legislation. I repeat, that in the mind of the Government the necessity exists for this power to enable some action to be taken where something extreme is being done. A great deal has been said about the necessity for stabilising influences in our economy. As a matter of fact, in the last few days there was quite a lengthy address given by the Federal Treasurer. We see statements in the Press, in the trade journals, in publications issued by organisations and the rest of them. Yet we know perfectly well that last year the action of the Legislative Council, in virtually removing all controls, was responsible for setting up a state of affairs in Western Australia that makes this State stand out on a limb.

Western Australia is completely at variance with every other State of the Commonwealth and it is having repercussions. I would like to give the position of the rentals paid in the various States of the Commonwealth for the March quarter of 1954, prior to the lifting of the lid by the Legislative Council and the index numbers for the quarter ended June of this year, 1955. These are house rent index numbers, being the weighted average of the six capital cities of the Commonwealth. In the March quarter of 1954, in Sydney the index number was 1,318. At June, 1955, that increased to 1,332. In Melbourne the index number was 995 and now it is 1,006. In Brisbane it was 1,004 for the March quarter of 1954, and today it is 1,024. For the March quarter, 1954, it was 1,166 in Adelaide and today it is 1,239. In Hobart, the index number was 1,271 in the March quarter, 1954, and today it is 1,272. In Perth, in March, 1954, it was 1,230 and today it is 1,837.

The position is that in Sydney, house rents increased over that period of 18 months by 14 points. In Melbourne, they increased by 11 points; in Brisbane by 20 points; in Adelaide by 73 points, and in Hobart by 1 point. That gives an average in all the capital cities outside of Perth of a 24 points increase. But in Perth there has been an increase of 607 points.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Can you tell me whether the rents charged privately are in excess of those charged by the Housing Commission?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I should say so without question. The average rental paid to the Housing Commission for the financial year just ended was £2 11s.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You do not know what the other average was, do you?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, I do not know what it is from official figures, but I have a pretty fair idea from the documents laid on the Table of this House and from my own experience as a member of Parliament, and also from the knowledge I have gained from people who live in my locality. There is a house immediately over the road that has been erected for some 30 or 35 years—it is a weatherboard-iron roof structure of two bedrooms—and the rent is £6 6s. per week.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Is that unfurnished?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There are a few make-believe items of furniture, as is the case with many of these houses that are advertised as furnished.

Mr. Wild: Is the housing situation in the Eastern States as easy as it is in Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is difficult to answer with any degree of certainty. While I was in the other States earlier this year, I was able to learn that in Queensland they felt they were on top of the problem; in New South Wales it appeared that the position was getting progressively worse—if I may use those apparently contradictory words side by side. In Tasmania and South Australia, I think they felt they were just about keeping pace with the situation—not improving very greatly, but neither was the position getting any worse. In Victoria the position had eased somewhat, but they were in difficulties there through being unable to spend their money under the Commonwealth-State housing agreement, because of the trouble in securing suitable contractors who were prepared to undertake their work. Generally speaking, however, I should say that Western Australia is in a satisfactory position, if not in a better position than any other State in the Commonwealth.

Mr. Court: It is the only State where there is no key money paid. That is why those index figures are misleading when it comes to the actual money people pay.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I do not know how the member for Nedlands can suggest that this is the only State in which there is no payment of key money. I do not think anybody would be in a position to say what happens in the great majority of the transactions in the Commonwealth. I certainly would not.

Mr. Court: You ask people who are trying to get houses in New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am aware that key money under different names and processes has been charged here in Western Australia. However, let us not confuse the situation. The position is that all the States were moving more or less on a common front. It is only because of the attitude of the Legislative Council, and the new turn of events, that rents in Western Australia soared sky high. I do not suppose for one moment that any more key money was charged in New South Wales and Victoria after June of last year than before, but the figures up to the change in circumstances, were comparable, and today, of course, they are poles apart, dating from the time when certain parliamentary action was taken.

Mr. Wild: Having told us that things were worse in the Eastern States, you have put up a pretty good argument for the Legislative Council's action in easing out rent control.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I have done nothing of the kind.

Mr. Wild: You have.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I anticipated that the member for Dale would endeavour to secure cheap points over this matter, and that is why I commenced by pointing out that whether or not there was a shortage of any commodity, or service, there was always a small percentage in the community that would take advantage of their fellow citizens.

Mr. Wild: I suggest that the Minister would get on much better if he left out this political claptrap about the Legislative Council and get on with the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Every time he has spoken or interjected, the member for Dale has shown an exceeding bitterness with regard to anything pertaining to housing. I suggest there is a whole lot of sour grapes about him. Because of that, he is engaging in the type of stuff one would expect him to indulge in from a soapbox on a street corner. I have been endeavouring, quietly and logically, by quoting figures and by recounting my experience of travel in the Eastern States, to answer interjections, and to explain the overall situation, and presently to outline the major provisions in the Bill. Let the member for Dale or anybody else counter what I am saying if they are able to do so.

Mr. Wild: I only said that you have put up a very good argument for us, and I thank you.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I said nothing of the sort, of course, and any reference to "Hansard," when it is available, should satisfy the member for Dale in respect of that. Suffice to say that Western Australia has got completely out of balance with every other State of the Commonwealth because of the drastic changes that were made by the Legislative Council some 18 months ago. That is a statement of historical fact.

Hon. L. Thorn: There is nothing historical about it.

Mr. Wild: That statement is like the parish pump which one keeps on pumping.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There is something historical about it. I do not mind informing the member for Toodyay that this step was taken by the Opposition —if he wants to be a little political about this—firstly, for the purpose of embarrassing the present Government and, secondly, because the Opposition parties feared that the terms of the legislation would be eased and this Government would get the credit for so doing. In order to beat the Labour Government to that objective, this action was taken to precipitate a crisis in the hope of creating a situation not favourable to the Government. But I do not want to discuss this question for the present on the basis of party politics. If what I am quoting from official figures is distasteful to members opposite, then when it comes to their turn to speak on the Bill, let them endeavour to prove that what I have said was wrong.

Hon. L. Thorn: You are too thick in the hide to be embarrassed.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: The hon. member is too thick in the skull to enable worth-while facts to penetrate it. It has been suggested that evictions have tapered off. I want to say for the edification of all members of this House that there have been more evictions in the financial year ended the 30th June, 1955, than ever before in the history of Western Australia.

Mr. Wild: Were any of the evictions brought about by tenants not paying their rents or for being bad tenants?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: There might have been very, very few of such cases.

Mr. Wild: Any of them evicted by the Housing Commission?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No more and no less in proportion than those which took place over the years because there has always been a specific provision in the Act to allow the owner of premises to take action to evict what are commonly known as "bad tenants." For the 12 months I have just mentioned, there were

no fewer than 810 evictions in respect to dwellings in the metropolitan area alone. This is an average of more than 16 for every week of the 52 in the year. Therefore, it can certainly be said that there is a problem in respect of evictions, and naturally the State Housing Commission has felt the burden. Five hundred and sixty families in all were provided with accommodation by the State Housing Commission for the 12 months ended the 30th June last.

Mr. Yates: There need not have been so many evictions if the Housing Commission had given homes without the necessity for an eviction order.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I do not want to discuss at length this abstruse matter.

Mr. Yates: It is not abstruse; it is a fact.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It is very abstruse indeed.

Mr. Yates: Do not be so pig-headed!

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: If I were to follow the remark of the member for South Perth, the only difference would be where an owner gave notice to a tenant to quit and the Housing Commission at that stage provided a home. Naturally such a case would not go before the court, and there would not have been so many evictions by court orders, but there would have been as many by the giving of notice. Once the Housing Commission agrees to a situation like that, there will be collusion between owners and tenants where the latter would approach the former and ask, "Please give me notice because as soon as it is produced to the Housing Commission a home will be provided."

Mr. Yates: That happens now.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I do not know that it does happen now. In the first instance many people approach the Housing Commission in real and complete distress, and they write to me as Minister for Housing in addition to the approach. Secondly, very many of them are scared at the prospect of having to go before a court, either because of nervousness or because they feel there is some disgrace attached to it. Thirdly, it is necessary for them to bear the cost of any court action, which they naturally do not relish. Fourthly, the accommodation which is provided by the State Housing Commission to these people is not in the form of houses; it is the little evictee buildings and converted army camps in certain centres in the metropolitan area. Therefore it would be totally unreal to suggest that any person occupying a comfortable home would approach his landlord to obtain a notice to quit so as to go through the steps I have outlined and finish up in one of the camps which are far from satisfactory in many respects.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You know this goes on, and you are aware of it.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am not aware of it. If the member for Cottesloe is aware of such a thing taking place, he has a public duty to perform and I suggest that he refers the matter to the department or the Minister in charge.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Has not the bench suggested such a course?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Not that I am aware of. It usually advises those who appear before him to call on the Housing Commission, but at whose instigation I do not know. The commission has enough clients without a public official directing people to approach it. Notwithstanding the fact that there has been a change in the personnel of the bench, that procedure seems to continue.

When discussing the steep increase in the house index numbers in Western Australia over the past 18 months compared with the position in other parts of the Commonwealth, I omitted to mention that the component in the basic wage index which reflects this cost would have been increased by 15s. 9d. per week. Of course we know that the basic wage has been pegged for quite a period so the full repercussions have not been felt. I venture to suggest that had an adjustment of the basic wage been made in accordance with the increase in the cost of living which has taken place, not only in this State but in the other States of the Commonwealth, we would, because of the action taken last year in respect of the rents and tenancies legislation, now have been in a most unsatisfactory position in regard to industries in Western Australia as compared with similar industries in the other States.

There is just one other observation I would make before dealing specifically with the Bill. It appears that events have turned out very much in accordance with what had been anticipated and expressed from this side of the House at the time when the rents and tenancies legislation was dealt with. It was felt that there was insufficient protection from eviction if a tenant desired to obtain justice at the hands of a magistrate presiding over a fair rents court. I have before me a report from the rents inspector in the metropolitan area in which he says this—

> Of 140 lessees advised to approach the court for a determination of rent, less than one half lodged applications. Lessees are generally afraid to initiate proceedings due to fear of subsequent eviction and that could occur in respect of dwellings.

I venture to suggest with even greater force that this applies where business premises are concerned. I recall only a few weeks ago the case of a businessman who had been renting a shop in Maylands

at a reasonable sum. It was only a small shop and from memory the rental was £5 10s. a week. He was requested by the owner to sign a lease for three years so as to enable him to go outside the scope of the Act. The tenant was asked to pay a rental of approximately £10 a week. He felt that it would be utterly impossible for him to pay such a rental on the basis of the profits he was making from the business. But he had no alternative; if he did not sign the three-year lease at £10 a week rental, then he would be given 28 days' notice to quit. That man is battling to rear a family from some sort of livelihood derived from his business. Where can he turn?

Mr. Court: He is protected under the Act at the moment. If the £10 rental is excessive, the court can order the landlord to charge only the old rental.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am not a lawyer, but there is a specific section in the Act which excludes premises in respect of which there exists a lease for the minimum period of three years, from the operation of the Act.

Mr. Court: If the tenant refuses to sign the lease he can still go to the court and obtain relief under Section 20B.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: By so doing he would get a notice to quit after the expiration of a very short time.

Mr. Court: He would not have to quit under 12 months if the court reduced the rental by 20 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is so. With a person who has been in a business for a number of years, the prospect of being turned out is something which cannot be faced. So under the pressure of these times, this tenant had no alternative but to sign on the dotted line. I have already indicated that it is proposed to alter the Title of the Act and also the procedure of having to come before Parliament every 12 months to seek a renewal of the legislation, either in the same terms or in some modified form, so that there will be no time limit. In other words, if this measure becomes an Act of Parliament, it will have the force of law until such time as it is repealed.

Again I want to emphasise that the major provision in this Bill, if it becomes an Act as desired by the Government, will prove to be no burden or hardship on owners of premises; it will ensure that those who might from time to time be the prey of an avaricious landlord, or of one who seeks to capitalise on a situation, will receive some minor protection, and that there will be some independent authority to which an appeal can be lodged.

It is proposed to make an addition to the definition of the word "lease" appearing in the Act because the Crown Law Department is of the opinion that while it seems to cover lodging-houses in all respects, there is room for some argument in connection with it and the amendment is designed to remove the doubt, but the inclusion of the few additional words will make no difference to the intention of Parliament last year or on any previous occasion.

As I indicated a few moments ago, leases of not less than three years are outside the Act. In respect of such leases, the lessor may charge any rent he likes or is able to obtain, because there will be no law of any sort covering the position. Parliament intended that there should be as much freedom as possible for negotiation between the various parties, hoping and trusting that they would be able to resolve any differences and arrive at a determination satisfactory to both. The period of three years, because it was somewhat lengthy, would be sufficient to safeguard the situation, but in practice it has been found that this section is being used to defeat the spirit and intention of the Act— an intention that had received the approval of members on both sides of both Houses.

In practice it has been found by the rent-inspector that where a rent determination has been made and the owner of the premises feels that he would like still more, even though the rent had been increased by the court, he is able to defeat the Act by demanding a three years' lease from the existing lessee or from a new party. Lessors have gone so far as to sign up people for a three-years' lease but allowing them an escape clause. Members will see that the three-years' lease has not meant any benefit whatever to the owner of the premises because, instead of having continuity of occupancy, this escape clause has been included. The tenant may leave at any time, but the lease has enabled the landlord to raise the rent.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You mean that the tenant could get out?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That should be an advantage to the tenant, if he could get out of his lease.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: It enabled a Dutch family at Nedlands who were paying 10 guineas a week and could not afford it to get out, but this clause had been taken advantage of for the purpose of charging a high rent, and that was not the intention. The intention was to allow an owner to have a lease in the same manner as in bygone days, so that he could have some continuity or security or, if his property was located in another part of the State, he would not be troubled with tenants coming in and going out.

Mr. Wild: Do you think there are many of those three-year leases being offered?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, I should say there are many. I have no grounds for making that statement, except that quite a number have been mentioned

to me by persons operating on that basis, who have had requests from owners or their agents to sign up. Having heard of a dozen or so such cases, I conclude that it could happen in a great many instances. Taken over all in respect of houses but more particularly in respect of business premises, there is a fair amount of it going on. These leases are being entered into, not for the purpose of doing things that leases usually provide for, but only to remove them from the ambit of this legislation and this, I repeat, is contrary to what was intended by practically every member of Parliament.

The amendment proposes that, in respect of premises where a determination has been made by the inspector and subsequently a lease of some duration has been entered into, the lease cannot be for a figure in excess of what has been determined by the authority. Members will appreciate that this is going only part of the way, but it is most irksome to the officials responsible, and I dare say to the court itself, to have heard evidence, made an investigation, given a determination, say, that the rental shall be £5 a week, only to learn, that it has been completely circumvented and that any figure that the landlord has been able to obtain has been charged.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Only if the landlord can get the tenant to agree.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is so.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The tenant would have security for three years.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: He might have security, but it might also prove to be a tremendous burden that would place him in a very awkward position.

The Act provides that where a lessor gives a tenant notice to quit, the rent shall not exceed that charged on the 28th April, 1954, unless otherwise determined by the court or by an inspector. The idea was to prevent evictions merely for the sake of obtaining additional rent. This provision will expire on the 31st August of this year, and as the Premier has pointed out, action to deal with the situation is being taken, somewhat belatedly, but I think all will agree that there is need to continue that provision beyond the date set down in the Act.

Appertaining to the basic or standard rent, members will recall that the rent lawfully chargeable is traced back to August, 1939, and there were certain automatic increases and other factors taken into account. As that is almost 16 years ago to the day, we have found in practice that to get records so many years back is exceedingly difficult. While it may result in whitewashing, to some extent, excessive charges made but not detected, we propose that the lawful rent, unless otherwise determined by the court or agreed to, shall be that which was being paid at the 28th April, 1954, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary. If the figures are available back to 1939, well and good, but if there is any difficulty, the figures for April, 1954, will be accepted as the lawful rent at that time.

There is another amendment in the same clause proposing to authorise the rent inspector to fix rents for parts of premises or apartments or lodging-houses where goods and services are provided. I think it was the intention that the court should decide in respect of premises and the rent inspector in regard to parts of premises, to what type of goods or services this should apply.

The Act in its present form allows a lessor to evict a tenant, without the necessity for stating reasons, merely by giving 28 days' notice. However, this applies only in respect of premises where leases were entered into prior to December, 1950. Tenancies entered into since then are subject to common law, and in the great majority of cases, I should say, going back more specifically to dwellings, that would be seven or 14 days. The Government feels that 28 days would be a fair and reasonable period, particularly at a time of such expansion and growth as we are experiencing at present, but there is nothing very real about a situation that more or less enables notice to be given based on the intervals at which the rent is paid. The generally accepted thing is that if a tenant pays his rent on a weekly basis, he is subject to a week's notice, and if he pays on a monthly basis, he is subject to a month's notice.

Of course there must be a method for fixing the time for the payment of rent, but it is not satisfactory that this should determine the period of notice to be given. The Government desires that all tenancies should come under this provision of 28 days' notice, irrespective of when they were entered into. Where hardship can be shown, the court has discretion to extend the period up to three months, so that a tenant may remain in the premises he has been occupying for that time. This discretion has been exercised very sparingly by the Fair Rents Court in the metropolitan area, and this was, of course, where there were difficult circumstances, to enable persons about to be evicted to have a little additional time in which to find suitable alternative accommodation.

This provision also was limited to apply to tenancies entered into up to the 31st December, 1950, and it expires on the 31st of this month, hence there is necessity to do something about it, and the Bill proposes to strike out that limiting factor. At present, where an application has been made for the determination of rent by a court or inspector, the lessor is debarred from giving notice to quit for three

months, and in some cases for a period of 12 months, where there has been a serious overcharge. This provision expires on the 31st of this month and the Bill provides for it to continue beyond that date.

It has been found, however, that there is some unfairness towards the lessor or landlord in such cases where action is taken by what one might term a bad tenant to obtain the determination of a fair rental, and the landlord could have been charging an extortionate figure, but when it is determined and the 80 per cent. formula comes into operation, we are then confronted with the position that the bad tenant has protection for 12 months, which I think is grossly unfair. Accordingly there is provision in the Bill to allow the owner of premises, irrespective of this extended period granted by the court, to obtain possession of his premises.

He will be able to do so where the tenant has failed in the payment of rent or has failed to observe some condition of the tenancy, where he has failed to take care of the premises or has been guilty of conduct such as to be a nuisance to the neighbours, or has conducted some illegal business, or something of that nature, on the premises, and for other such reasons. So here we have one provision in favour of the lessor, and it is to cover a most unsatisfactory set of circumstances which has developed, not in many but in some cases. I am informed that there is protection for a tenant where application is made for the determination of a fair rent—that is, protection from eviction—for a limited period, but where the rent inspector, of his own volition, makes inquiries, there is no protection whatsoever.

In many cases, I am informed, action has been taken to evict the tenant merely because the rent inspector has been seen about the place, and in spite of the fact that the rent inspector has informed the landlord or owner of the premises that he was there of his own motion and had not been approached by the tenant. It is proposed, in the measure now before us, that where the rent inspector, pursuing his duties under the Act, finds it necessary to take certain steps, there shall be a deferment, so far as the owner is concerned, for a period of 28 days. There are instances where the rent inspector investigates and where the tenant complains because of interference by the owner with some condition of the tenancy.

I am aware of quite a number of cases where that has occurred, and it may be pertinent here to read a few lines from the report of the rent inspector, who says—

> Unfortunately, the only protection granted is in cases where application is made for a determination. There is no protection for lessees who either complain or in any way assist inspectors in investigating breaches of Sections 26 and 27 of the Act. These sections deal with the interference by a lessor of the normal enjoyment of the use of the premises by the lessee, i.e., pulling the roof down, etc., and the making of overcharges in respect of rent. In practically all cases where the rent inspector has investigated and established overcharges resulting in refunds being made, the lessees were given notice to quit and were subsequently evicted; this despite the fact that in many of the cases the investigations were initiated by the inspector and the lessor informed of this fact. Naturally, lessees are intimidated by threats of eviction and are not only reluctant to lodge complaints in respect of what are known to be serious breaches of Sections 26 and 27 of the Act, but are afraid even to volunteer any assistance to the inspector in his efforts to investigate apparent breaches.

Therefore, members will appreciate the necessity for there being some stay in the matter of notice being given where the inspector is carrying out certain duties at the request of Parliament. There is only one other matter that I need mention. The Crown Law Department advises that when notice to quit is given, the relationship between lessor and lessee ceases and the occupier is then not a lessee within the meaning of the Act and cannot claim protection in respect of overcharging or interference with the rights of his tenancy, and so on. I am informed that there was this protection up till 1953, but that it does not exist at present, and in order to deal with that situation an amendment has been drafted.

The Rent Inspector's Office advises me that experience has shown that 90 per cent. of the offences under these headings —that is, offences by landlords in one particular or another—have occurred after notice to quit has been given. If members will place the amendments in the principal Act, which has been reprinted, so as to have a complete document—I think they will be seized of the fact that the Government has been fair and that, whilst disagreeing in some particulars of vital concern, it has nevertheless accepted the decree of the State Parliament as to how much or how little control there should be, and this measure is, in essence, a continuation of the form of control or protection that has been in operation in Western Australia for the immediately past months.

It is true to say that it has not been very effective legislation, but it has two merits; firstly, that of allowing evictions to take place at a slower rate, thus giving the tenant a little more time to find other accommodation—whether in respect of a dwelling-place or business premises—and, secondly, that of allowing some authority

to investigate cases where a tenant feels he is being overcharged or where a landlord, under certain circumstances, feels that an increase in rent is justified. I do not think it interferes with the liberty of the subject or imposes any hardship or burden on anyone.

The Government fervently hopes the legislation will be enforced only in isolated instances. Perhaps I should give examples from each of the three reports which have been laid on the Table of the House, to indicate that it is necessary to have a check. The first is a dwelling-house in West Perth where the rental being charged was £8 18s. 6d. per week, and the magistrate of the Metropolitan Fair Rents Court considered that £4 3s. 6d. per week was a fair rental.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Was that in a business area?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: No, residential.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But was it in a shopping area?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am unable to answer as to the exact locality, but it was inspected by Mr. Wallwork and there are details in connection with it which appear on the report.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: A lot of premises in Hay-st., West Perth, are now being turned into shops and business premises.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is so. The next report deals with a dwelling-house in Scarborough where the rental charged was £7 10s. per week and the Fair Rents Court decided that £4 15s. was a fair and reasonable rent. The third report gives details of a case in Lord-st., Perth, which incidentally is in my own electorate. Here, the rent charged was £6 10s. and the determination of the magistrate of the Fair Rents Court was £3 6s. 3d. In all cases, almost twice as much was being charged as the authority set up by Parliament, after inspecting the premises and going into the matter, decided was a fair thing.

While, from a party viewpoint, there are some general principles involved and some political points from which each side will no doubt seek to score, I think that if members approach this legislation with open minds, it will receive the endorsement of Parliament because, I repeat, by and large it establishes no new principles but continues in operation the existing legislation. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [5.58]: This Bill was fully explained by the Minister for Justice, when he pointed out that at present a judge—although prior to elevation to the Bench he would have been qualified either automatically as a Q.C. or by election as a member of the Barristers' Board—would no longer be qualified, when he retired for any reason. I referred this measure to the Law Society and the Barristers' Board and neither raised any opposition to it. I, personally, cannot see any objection to it.

The Minister for Justice: It applies not only to the Chief Justice but to any other judge.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so. I think there would rarely be an occasion when a judge, retired for age or other reasons, would wish to take part in the deliberations but, nevertheless, if he did so desire, I see no objection to that, and therefore I support the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre—in reply) [6.0]: I thank the member for Mt. Lawley for the investigations he has made following the introduction of the Bill and also for receiving the measure so kindly. For those judges who have sat in the High Court, whether they be the Chief Justice or any other judge, this Bill will prove to be of great advantage to them when they retire by enabling them to become members of the Barristers' Board. For those reasons I think the Bill will be of some value.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [6.4]: The intention of the Main Roads Department to adopt the policy of appointing cadet engineers is very desirable. This has been a move to which a great deal of thought has been given over the past few years. As the Minister explained, a similar practice has been followed for many years past in the Public Works Department and, I think, also in the State Electricity Commission and it is evident, by the fact that there are young engineers

coming on all the time in those departments, that the policy is practicable and is really working.

In recent years, and mainly because of a large increase in the revenue obtained from the petrol tax, the Main Roads Department has done extensive work in regions outside the metropolitan area. As a result it has been found necessary to supervise the work done in the North-West and in other areas where the activities of the department are becoming more centralised. Whilst I was the Minister in charge of the department, I was of the opinion that in the areas where the supervisors were working—and I should imagine that you would well know the position, Sir, from your own experience in the North—it was most difficult for engineers, although equipped with modern transport, to carry out the detailed supervision required.

I am hopeful that as a result of more qualified young men becoming available to the department, we shall see centres opened up so that better supervision will prevail. I am of the opinion that with the appointment of more supervisors, we can get more done for the money expended. I want to make particular mention of the growing activities of the Main Roads Department in the North, because I am sure that, with the development which must take place there and in the event of the Commonwealth Government making more money available, one of the first works to be carried out, if we are to tackle the problem of populating the North, will be to provide decent roads.

The only authority we can look to with any hope of achieving that objective is the Main Roads Department as it has a secure income from year to year. On the other hand, the department is being called upon more and more to carry out works in the metropolitan area. I should imagine that in the event of any action being taken following the acceptance of the Stephenson plan, the Main Roads Department will be called upon to a greater extent in respect of supervising the work to be done in order that this scheme may be carried out. I repeat that I am pleased to see the Minister has seen fit to introduce this Bill which authorises the commissioner to make agreements with cadets under an arrangement that brings the department into line with others.

Members who are acquainted with the workings of the Main Roads Department will realise that the commissioner, the chief engineer and some of the supervisors are moving towards retirement and, of necessity, young men must be called upon in the very near future to fill their places. At present these young officers are supervising the work that is being done in various districts. I have been told by the department that it is losing some of them to the Eastern States, not because those States are offering better salaries but because these young men desire to travel and gain experience outside their own State. This cadetship scheme ensures a continuity of professional men and it is an excellent move.

In future it may be the policy of the Government of the day that more undertakings shall be done by contract, but in any case, if such work is to prove successful, we must have governmental supervision by men who are qualified and who have the experience which they can get only by working on the undertakings carried out by the department which they serve. I do not think it would be unfair to say that Western Australia has some peculiar difficulties when it comes to the construction of roads. Certainly it has not the bridging problems that other States have.

Neither has it the foundation difficulties which are experienced in Victoria, South Australia and, to some extent, New South Wales. But we have wide open spaces where road-making material is extremely difficult to obtain. Some of our engineers —in particular, I mention Mr. Ron Duncan who was not a fully qualified engineer, but who gained much experience with the experiments he made in the North—have been able to solve quite a number of problems surrounding the surfacing of roads. I would like to pay a tribute to Mr. Duncan for the valuable work he has done in the North-West of this State, working as he did from Carnarvon outwards.

The Minister for Justice: In fact, he is highly qualified.

Hon. D. BRAND: He is a very capable man who works in a practical manner and he stands out as an example of what an officer of the department can do even though he has not the necessary academic qualifications. Nevertheless, it is hoped that we will avoid a similar circumstance arising by offering to young men, following their school years, an agreement to obtain practical experience with the department and to encourage them to remain with it. The cadet system has worked extremely well in the Public Works Department and in others, and I know it is going to work to advantage in this instance. Therefore, I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [6.13]: I, too, have much pleasure in supporting the Bill and also the remarks that have been expressed by the member for Greenough who has put the facts very logically. I would also like to associate myself with the remarks he made with respect to Mr. Duncan, who has done sterling work in the North, together with other departmental engineers. I think it is essential that we should have young men trained to undertake the supervision of our main roads work. These officers have a huge

area to cover, and maintain miles and miles of roads which go through all types of country. It is equally important that we should have trained supervisors to ensure that the taxpayers' money is spent in the correct manner. I commend the Minister for bringing the Bill forward.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [6.14]: I also support the measure because I think it is a step in the right direction. We know that many departments in this State, particularly Commonwealth departments, make provision for the training of young men who will be their future engineers. I refer particularly to the P.M.G.'s department. That organisation, which is probably the largest in Australia, provides for young men to become cadets and also enables them to attend the university so that they will become highly qualified men in every aspect of engineering.

Of course, later in their career they have to obtain practical experience, but there is no doubt that, after becoming fully trained, they make a great contribution in their own field of work. With regard to road construction, whilst the department has many excellent practical men in its employ, I suggest that by adopting the course of offering cadetships to young men, it will enable them to become highly qualified engineers and allow them to approach their work on a scientific basis.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Before tea I was referring to the provisions in the Bill that will allow young men to become graduates and, in a sense, to be articled to the Main Roads Department and obtain practical experience of road construction and bridge building. They will no doubt have an opportunity of attending the university and securing specialised training in engineering which would undoubtedly be of great advantage to the State in the future.

Last year I had the opportunity of travelling on many roads in other parts of the world. One of the roads on which it was a privilege to travel was built by the Romans in the early centuries, and it is still used as a basis for existing roads, which indicates the skill and ability of the roadmakers of those days who laid foundations that have endured since that time.

I feel certain that it will be the policy of the department to send abroad engineers attached to the department to take post-graduate courses in road engineering and to see what is happening in other parts of the world, particularly in England, Germany and Italy. Such a policy would be all to the good. I know that the former chairman of the Main Roads Department, Mr. Young, went to America for five or six months and studied road construction and engineering activities there. I have no doubt that the information he gleaned has been of great benefit to the department. Since then, of course, he has become Director of Works.

We know that the Commonwealth Government—which, of course, has the funds—has made provision for young men in its various departments to become specialists in their particular fields, and they have been given opportunities of attending the university and studying subjects associated with their work. Mr. Chifley, when he was Treasurer, made arrangements for young men to attend a university by the provision of scholarships, and 80 per cent. of the people attending the university do so with the aid of scholarships.

Similarly in this State it will made possible for the Main Roads Department, when selecting cadets, to lay down conditions of their employment; and part of those conditions would be that they should have an opportunity of attending the university and studying many aspects of this problem which will become more intense as the days go by. We all know the revolution that has taken place in motor travel. We are aware that we are not so far removed from the days of horse-drawn vehicles when the damage to roads was not as great as is the case today. We are further aware that there is the possibility of different types of power being applied to road vehicles in the future. There will be diesel engines and vehicles driven by atomic power.

Modern discoveries will be applied to road transport; and road engineers, with the highest qualifications, will need to study road conditions so that roads may be laid down that will be enduring, and value will be derived from the millions of pounds subscribed by the people for the purpose of road construction. The Bill will give many of our young men an opportunity of becoming first-rate engineers, and I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

On motion by the Minister for Education, debate adjourned.

BILL—UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [7.37]: I naturally intend to support this Bill which proposes to increase what could be termed the statutory or fixed grant to the university from £40,000, which is the figure in the Act at present, to £250,000. That means, in effect, that the university in future, whatever may be the circumstances, will receive not less than £250,000 from the State Government. Answers to questions that I asked today, however, indicate that

that figure has already been far exceeded on a number of occasions—in fact, ever since the year 1951.

We find that in 1951 the grant was £261,005. In the following year it was £288,501; in the next year £320,752; and in the year ended the 30th June last, £372,844. So it is quite clear that the university has been able to satisfy successive Governments in recent times that its requirements were considerably greater than the £250,000 which is contemplated as a fixed grant by this measure. I personally have no objection to the size of the grant which can be made to the university; rather the contrary.

After some years of fairly close contact with university authorities, I am satisfied, that the university is worth to Western Australia a great deal more than we have yet subscribed to it; and I feel certain that that is the view that has been held by Treasurers for quite a number of years, the limitation that has been imposed being largely one of inability to extract a greater sum from revenue, and not lack of desire to further the university's activities.

The value of the university to Western Australia is obvious to us all. Not only does it provide a field where persons can be trained in those arts and sciences which are absolutely essential in a community such as we now have in this State; but it also provides people for service not only in other parts of the Commonwealth but also in other parts of the world. What is more, in recent times it has taken under its wing people from other countries—even some of the Asian countries—and in that way I believe it has made a contribution to the comity of nations which in itself is worth something, be it only a small fraction, to us all.

So I do not complain about the size of the fixed amount. If I had any complaint to offer it would be that the amount should be larger, because I cannot see that at any time in the foreseeable future the university will not receive more than £250,000 from the Government. It is fairly remarkable how the subsidies have increased. We find that in 1945-46 the amount was only £52,000. In 1946-47 it was £65,000, a rise of £13,000 for the year. In 1947-48 the amount was £93,000, a rise of £28,000 for that year; and in 1948-49, it was £117,000, an increase of another £24,000. Then in 1949-50, which was the last year in which it was under £200,000 it had increased to £160,000, or a rise of £43,000 for the 12 months.

I would say without fear of successful contradiction that a rise from £52,000 to £273,000 in ten years indicates not only the increased costs that have had to be incurred, as they have had to be incurred in every other branch of industry and business, but also that provision has been made for very substantial expansion in the activities of the university itself. That is all to the good. I realise that with the Government's undertaking in regard to the proposed medical school, a very considerable further sum will be involved in the maintenance costs of that institution when it is set up, and that also will be all to the good.

For my part, I can see a state of affairs coming in the very near future when not less than £500,000 will be paid from State revenue for the maintenance of the university; and again I say that that will be all to the good. So I cannot imagine anyone offering any opposition to the principle contained in the measure—that is, to make it clear to the university that Parliament no longer believes that a basic sum of £40,000 is anything less than ridiculous, and proposes to amend the Act to put the minimum figure at something which might at least be said to bear some resemblance to what the State is likely to provide for the university in the coming years.

Mr. J. Hegney: £40,000 was granted at the end of the depression period. It was not easy to get money in those days.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I am not suggesting that it was, or that the sum at that time was inadequate. I am pointing out how rapidly the cost of the university has increased. Presumably in 1945-46 the sum of £52,000 was regarded as reasonably adequate, otherwise I expect, from my knowledge of the university authorities, they would have continued pressing for more. I hope I have not given the impression that £40,000 was inadequate at the time. I was trying to show that not only had the costs increased, which was common to everyone, but also that the university work must have greatly expanded. I pointed out that there would be more expansion, which I also said was a good thing.

That expansion warranted a figure of £372,000 for the last financial year and that, added to the sum of £100,000 which it is contemplated will be the annual cost to the Government of the medical school, will bring us next year within reach of £500,000. I have no complaints about that. In fact, could the State afford it, I would be pleased to support a proposal to pay £1,000,000 a year to the university because I think it would be repaid, directly and indirectly, to the State by the benefits we would achieve from the work that is done and the learning that is available at the university.

Mr. Brady: Have you formed any opinion as to how you could assess that value?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I do not propose to try to assess it in terms of money because that would be impossible. I think the hon. member will agree with me that if we seek to assess the value of education

in terms of money, we are up against a pretty difficult proposition. Can he assess the value of the tuition provided for the children at the primary schools in his own district? I venture to say he cannot. When we consider the vast achievements being secured at the present time by scientists and others as a result of the tuition given them at various universities, I think we can only feel that we have received value for a much greater sum than we have been able to pay, although we cannot assess it in terms of £ s. d. Without labouring the question any more, I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [7.48]: I also support the Bill without qualification except to say that I hope that with the passage of time the amount the State can make available to the university will increase as fast as practicable. We have good reason to be proud of our university. Its history is one of a series of learned gentlemen who have been prepared to make do with less than has been available to learned people in other parts of the world in the carrying on of their research. By and large, I think they have done extremely well and, in some faculties, exceptionally well; so much so that those faculties are acknowledged far and wide as being of the highest possible standard.

We have a definite obligation in connection with our university life. It has certain distinctive features that are not always appreciated by the man in the street. There was a time when I felt that a university was a haven for long-haired gentlemen who were completely out of touch with the world, but the more we mix with the teachers themselves—the professors—with the undergraduates going through the university and with the graduates themselves, the more we realise that most of these people have got their feet well on the ground.

There is a greater responsibility than we generally realise in this matter, and that is the fact that we cannot expect other States and other parts of the world to make available continually to us the facilities they have built up—over centuries in many cases—for students to graduate in various faculties. If we do accept the theory that our students can go abroad or to other parts of Australia to receive their education in the university field, we run a very grave risk because experience has shown, particularly in medicine, that students of above-average ability who go abroad to be trained, rarely return to their native State.

Being people above average they are attracted by the improved facilities available at various world-famous centres, and they are naturally attracted to research, with the result that they are not easily pleased if they have to come back to a certain amount of improvisation due to a lack of funds in our local establishment. I feel that over the years we will have to get used to an ever-increasing influence from our university as far as education is concerned. There was a time when a certain amount of diffidence was displayed towards the university-trained person, but it is apparent that industry today is experiencing some of the benefits of university training and is accepting—in fact, almost demanding—more and more university-trained men and women.

I feel we will have to do more to publicise the necessity for the people of this State to give support to this great institution. The best lead that has been given in my lifetime is that in connection with the proposed medical school appeal. It is true the Government has given a generous sum to make a start possible, and to indicate to the people that the Government is whole-heartedly behind the project for a medical school.

But I think even more important than that is the fact that a committee of citizens taken from almost all walks of life, has seen fit to do a tremendous amount of work to get ready for the launching of what I should say is the biggest appeal we have ever had in this State—one for £400,000 of which £150,000 is to match the Government's payment, and the balance, I understand, is to be used to make research possible and to start the school on a sound basis.

The fact that the people are going to contribute that sum, which after all is only about 13s. or 14s. per head of population, but which, nevertheless, is a large sum to collect from voluntary giving, will do much to make the people conscious of what is being done in this State in connection with higher education. From my reading of the situation in America, it is pleasing to see that not only have the citizens as such been prepared to make generous contributions to their universities, but industry has realised its obligation to get behind those who want to provide better facilities at university level for training in subjects of great use to industry and commerce.

One is staggered at the sums of money that industry is prepared to put into a place such as Harvard, to mention one amongst many, to ensure that suitable training facilities are available at the right level and in the right form. The courses that are conducted at some of these overseas universities are famous for their down-to-earth nature and the degree to which they are in touch with every day practices. Particularly does this apply to some of the post-graduate courses where we find that men in senior positions in industry—men who have graduated to top executive class and are drawing large salaries—are assisted by their firms to go to some of these

higher courses to bring themselves up to date; to mix with a wide cross-section of skilled and experienced people and so not only absorb greatly improved knowledge themselves, but at the same time impart the benefit of their experience to others.

That, I feel, is one of the greatest achievements that university life can attain. In the past there has been a feeling that university life tends to be too far removed from the people. I think the University Senate of this State, through its various officers and faculties, has done much in recent years to bring the university closer to the people. We find more and more people going to various classes, courses and cultural activities at the university, thus getting closer to the university life and absorbing more of the great spirit that exists there.

I have pleasure in supporting the second reading of the Bill because I feel it is an acknowledgment by the Government and Parliament of this State of the ever-increasing importance of university life in the development of this country.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [7.58]: Although I am in agreement with the previous speakers regarding the importance of the measure before us, I shall oppose the Bill for one reason only, and it has nothing to do with the value of the university. I wish to oppose the Bill because it takes out of our annual Budget, in its important parts, roughly £250,000. The effect of the Bill, if it becomes an Act, will be to place into the section of the Budget, headed "Special Acts" another £210,000, and as every member is aware, the amounts that come under Special Acts are not discussible during the Budget debate.

It is my opinion that, as a matter of accountancy and of preferable practice, an amount such as this should appear under the heading of the Department of Education and not, as it is now, under Special Acts or under Treasury Miscellaneous. I have a copy of the Budget figures as at the 30th June, 1954, and under the heading of "Other Statutes" we have the item "University of Western Australia, Act No. 43 of 1944, £40,000." That is the one which it is proposed to amend and make up to £250,000.

In the same section we have the University Building Act, No. 4 of 1938 and the University Building Acts, No. 37 of 1930 and No. 50 of 1931, each of these making a permanent grant to the university, and placing it in a situation where the financial aspect cannot be discussed except on an occasion such as this when there is an amendment to the Act.

Under Treasury Miscellaneous we have the annual grant, which is additional, and in the Estimates I have before me, the sum was £243,712. That was Item No. 24 and Item No. 25 was University of Western Australia, Faculty of Dental Science, and the figure was £14,002. Then follows:—

	£
Item No. 26, Adult Education	750
Item No. 27, Adult Education Board	1,100
Item No. 28, Chair of Education	9,339

Further down there is an un-numbered item, £500, for the Western Australian College of Dental Science. Strange as it may seem, although the heading of "Education" covers the university, under the heading of "Minister for Education" in the Budget, no money is granted to the university.

I think it is wrong to make these special grants and to take these funds permanently out of the hands of Parliament. Furthermore, I think it is wrong that educational grants, or matters relating to education—and no matter what one's opinion of universities may be, there can be no doubt that they are educational organisations—should appear under the heading of "Minister for Education" in the Budget and in our administration. For that reason I oppose the Bill. However, I wish to take the opportunity of making a few remarks about the university in general because seldom are we able to discuss this particular matter.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You can discuss it on other occasions.

Mr. JOHNSON: Not in a direct form. It is possible to deal with it in a Budget debate, but this is one of the few occasions when it is the sole subject of debate.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That should not matter. There are other opportunities.

Mr. JOHNSON: The university is no small matter. There are many times when one can deal with it in general debate but this is an occasion when the debate is on the university only and thus any debate on a particular subject stimulates thought in that direction. The same point illustrates one I have been trying to make—university matters should be discussed under the heading of "Education." The correct way to do that is to bring the financial aspect under the financial responsibility of the particular Minister concerned. I think that should be correct parliamentary practice.

Perhaps I am mistaken, but I hope that other people, particularly those with an interest in the financial aspects of government, will have regard for that line of thought and I hope that no one will consider my criticism of this Bill and my general opposition to the practice as opposition to the university itself. That is not so. I have taken advantage of the facilities there since I have been a member of Parliament and have found them most useful. I only wish they were more readily available to everybody in the community who wished to make use of them.

There are a couple of points I would like to make, and one is that a good deal of research goes on in university circles, a great deal of discussion, some original thought and a good deal of polishing of other people's thinking, as well as a good deal of relating the thinking of overseas experts to Western Australian conditions. One point that has struck me is the fact that although this research goes on, very little of it comes to the surface in any way. The subject in which I am particularly interested—economics—is not reported in a way which brings forward for public discussion the facts and opinions which are produced at the university.

A study of the national income of the State of Western Australia was made. The last figures in that study were the ones available to the student who took his honours degree in producing them. As far as I am aware—and certainly up to last year—no one had gone to the considerable trouble of bringing the figures up to date. If they were brought up to date they would be most useful, particularly to members of Parliament. I think we should receive a great deal more in the way of reports and the findings at our university. Members of Parliament and the public generally should receive a great deal more information than they do. The information is there but it is available only to those who know that it is there and who know where to look for it. Unfortunately if one knows the information is there, one is not the person who needs it; the person who needs the information is the one who is not aware that it is in existence.

So I want to make a plea for greater publicity of the work that is done at the university, particularly of the work that is done on Western Australian subjects—those that have a Western Australian background. I wish also to agree with previous speakers on the need for expanding our university and for keeping it in line with modern conditions. Universities can have two values; firstly for the establishment of technology and the increasing of our productive capacity. Our university does a good deal of work in that regard. However, in our educational setup there seems to be a weakness in that we have nothing, in regard to technology, between our technical schools and the university itself.

There is a need for an institute of technology; a teaching institution concerned purely with the productive arts—not only the mechanical ones but also the productive arts of all kinds. We should try to increase not only the head-learning of various subjects, but also the hand-learning. There is a great need for the technician who can do the highly-skilled technical work and there is a big difference between the ability to learn figure-work and book-work and the ability to learn detailed hand-work. The future of our country, and of most other countries, rests considerably upon the degree of skilled ability possessed by those who have to do the intricate work possess. We will need the help of these people to keep us in line with overseas countries.

We have seen overseas reports of the great increase in automotation and there is no doubt the time will come when productive factories will be almost completely mechanised; there will be little labour employed. The whole of the effective work will rest in the hands of the small number of mechanics who will need to be extremely highly-skilled. They will keep moving the automatic machinery which will actually do the work.

Mr. Court: That is not the experience of countries that have developed automatic production. A vast army of men is required behind the scenes to keep the production going.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not speaking of the situation as it exists. I fancy that to say anyone has experience of it is jumping to conclusions. The point I was trying to make is that the sun is just breaking the horizon in regard to the mechanisation of production. The time is coming when there will be very few in our factories, which will depend on mechanics who will need to be exceptionally highly-skilled. I believe that that degree of machinery production will extend beyond the fields of the present factory, and there is no doubt in my mind that within the lifetime of most of us here it will be necessary to reduce the working week unless we are to have a high degree of unemployment. This will be brought about because of the technical skill of our productive people.

So while making a plea for a great improvement in the standard of technical education—and I trust a plea for a higher regard for the people who have this technical knowledge—I also want to add that the university can, and I am afraid at present does not, very largely teach those liberal arts and sciences which make the living of a full life possible outside working hours. As I said, I am convinced that within the lifetime of most of us, the working week will be shortened and our big problem will be to keep the people living wholesome, useful and happy lives. Under our present standard of education, and our present way of life, if we were to give the majority of the population a working week of, say, three days, to keep them from going completely crackers, it would be necessary to have races, or other forms of shallow entertainment, on at least four days a week.

On that particular line, the university can do a great deal in teaching people those humanities which were the main teaching of the universities before we reached the mechanical age. I hope that two aspects of university life—that is, a high increase in technology and a great broadening of the human aspects of the

university—can be kept in mind. I hope that the time will come when a majority of our population will receive an education of at least the standard which our university gives at present. That will cost a lot of money but I fully support that line of action. However, I do not approve of its being done in the manner proposed under this Bill and therefore I oppose the measure.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [8.15]: I, too, support the Bill. It was pointed out by the Premier when introducing the measure that the £250,000 that will be provided under the Act will not constitute the whole of the requirements of the university. I do not agree with the member for Leederville because I think, whether we like it or not, the Budget speech is likely to be a matter of party politics, and the more we can keep party politics, or related matters, away from the university, the better it will be both for the member for Leederville and for every other member of this House.

While I agree with the hon. member as to the importance of the university, its importance, of course, can be equal only to the reputation and ability of those who occupy the teaching positions in the institution. It is regrettable, therefore, in my view, that the teachers in the university here should be asked to accept salaries of a lesser amount than those paid to men of like qualifications in other Australian universities. In university status, it should be the desire of all States, including Western Australia, to have a standard equal to the best, and those who have the highest qualifications are usually tempted to seek the positions that give them the greatest reward. That is the principle acted upon in New South Wales. I understand there is a university in New England, and the New South Wales Government feels that if there is to be a second university in that State, the qualifications of the teachers at that second university should not be less than those of the teachers at the University of Sydney, and that therefore the salaries paid to professors and other teachers at the smaller university should not be less than those paid in Sydney.

It will be a pity if too much weight is given to the teachers in the medical school if it results in forgetting the importance of the other teachers. Those advocating the medical school have not hesitated to suggest and advise—and I think rightly so —that it is no good establishing a medical school unless we obtain teachers with the highest qualifications in Australia for that institution.

Mr. Brady: Do you think population and revenue should have any bearing?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: In this case, I do not think so. I have a feeling that that is the point of view of the Government, because I understand the Government has put that attitude forward to the university authorities already. The attitude seems to be that, because our population is less, those who teach should receive less remuneration and accordingly have lower qualifications. I admit that perhaps Australia as a whole could not compete with the wealth of the universities of America, or perhaps those of England, but I do say we should have an Australian standard, and that the remuneration paid to professors in Western Australia should be the same as that paid in any other university in Australia. Otherwise, the result will be that those who command the highest remuneration by virtue of their having the highest qualifications, will naturally drift to those universities that pay the highest amount. I think that is wrong.

Mr. Court: The Australian standard to which you refer should be a world standard.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Perhaps the hon. member is correct, but I will not be dogmatic about that. I cannot see how the Grants Commission can raise any objection to it. I think it would recognise that Western Australia is entitled to spend on its professors a like amount to that expended in the non-claimant States of Victoria and New South Wales. That principle should not only apply to those members of the teaching profession in the university in relation to medicine, but should apply to every other aspect. I hope the Government will adopt that attitude, and will not merely give way on the medical side and feel that so far as the medical school is concerned we must have the very best, to the exclusion of the other faculties.

Other sciences and other faculties in the university are entitled to equal consideration. That was the point I desired to make and stress while debating this Bill. I tender it to Ministers for consideration and I hope the Government will find itself able to provide an amount greater than the £250,000 in order that professors and teachers at the university may receive a remuneration commensurate with their qualifications and similar to that which would be paid to them in other universities of Australia.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [8.22]: I have tonight listened to some very interesting speeches on this subject, all of which I support very heartily, with the possible exception of some reference to the vote being opposed. I would not like the vote to be opposed. It has occurred to me that ever since universities have been instituted, mankind has been faced with an evil which it has not been able to overcome, in spite of its learning. I refer, of course, to the evil of war.

It is true that for the last hundred years there has been free education in the world in many places. Western Australia is one such instance where free

education is being applied in the university—we have a free university. I am reminded of remarks made here some years ago during the debate on the Education Vote, when it was said that a hundred years of free education in the world has only brought us from the burning of witches to the bombing of babies. That remark was repeated in a later session, and it was equally true then.

Professor Toynbee, who is a world authority, has been trying for many years behind the scenes to obtain some method by which the sovereignties could be curbed to the extent of a universal Parliament or a federation of nations, and it has occurred to me that the universities themselves could play a large part in the application of this principle. When we think of this university of ours, and of all the other great universities—I had the honour myself to be a member of one of them some years ago—we realise the attachment and affection which they engender; yet throughout hundreds of years we have had the scourge of war!

How much do we find that people and students are impressed by the cost of war to the world in the past and today? All our life in the past, and the public life of every one of us, has been overshadowed by the burden of war. It has interfered with taxes, caused inflation and other evils. In the atmosphere in which we are living today, where we hear about Big Four conferences and other moves in the world, it has occurred to me that there might be established a chair of peace in the university, in which the faculty could deal with the costs of war and the costs of continuing war in the future.

It is not enough for me to think that people should be so adept in different compartments of knowledge when all the time they are overshadowed by this burden which can ruin the work of years. It happens over and over again, and yet they go on doing their work. Accordingly, if a chair of peace could be established in universities, there would be brought before students in their most impressionable years the great expense which war has been in the past, and the fact that it has gone on for centuries. Great works have been written in this regard and the history students would know all about that.

The Minister for Health: Do you think the world would be as advanced as it is without wars?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Ethically, yes.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: That is a great question, but the fact remains that we want the world to last a little longer. We do not want to move too fast towards our destiny. It is well known that in a hundred years from now there will be no phosphorus on the earth, and many of our vital elements are also being depleted. We are reaching the stage when there will be only one power left, and that is the sun, because all the others will have been exhausted, including uranium.

The question is a vital one and if a chair of peace were established at the highest point of learning in the land, it would be a great thing. Going back hundreds of years, even before Egypt, we know that there has been war after war, and this faculty of the chair of peace could deal with all aspects of war. In supporting this measure, I am very grateful for the increase that the Government has made in the vote, and will conclude my remarks by saying that in the international climate we are in today, the suggestions I have made might well be considered.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [8.28]: I was rather surprised to hear the member for Leederville suggest that the proper course would be to carry on as we have been doing and that the university grant should run the gauntlet of criticism in this House to an even greater extent than it has done.

Mr. Johnson: The secondary schools do.

Mr. PERKINS: The interjection made by the member for Leederville is the real basis of my criticism of the point of view he put up in his speech. Members who were here in 1944 will recall that we had a lengthy debate on a Bill which was brought down by the then Premier, Mr. Wilcock, I think it was, to fix the statutory grant at £40,000, at which it has stood for a long period. Of course, the grant has never been limited to that statutory amount because it has always been necessary for the Treasurer to make additional money available to help the university to carry on in a satisfactory manner.

As was then pointed out, it is hardly fair to the University Senate that the position should be left more uncertain than it need be, or that it should be made more difficult for the University Senate to plan the activities of that very vital institution. During the debate in 1944 the university was compared with many other educational bodies. The member for Leederville tonight compared it with a secondary school. At that time one of the members representing the Goldfields compared it with the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie, and very much to the detriment of the university. Members who take such a viewpoint must have lost sight of the purpose of the university.

It is a wrong approach for members to contend that the work and activities of the university must be of a pattern agreeable to themselves, before it can justify a certain grant. One phase of the work done by the university is the research that is carried out. Some of it may be of immediate benefit to the community. On the other hand, some research is encouraged at most progressive universities which to the ordinary man does not seem

to serve any useful purpose. This abstract type of research is necessary if the community is to make ultimate progress.

If we are to compel the University Senate continually to justify its activities to Parliament before funds can be made available to carry on the necessary work on a proper level, then we will not get the best response from the university. From what I have heard, with the funds made available there is very great danger of the University of Western Australia meeting with difficulties in maintaining the level of the professorships at the present standard which compare favourably with the situation respecting other universities.

With the great opportunities open to professors for higher learning in these times, it is obvious that unless the university in this State can offer reasonable rewards for their services, it will be difficult to attract and retain people of the highest calibre to provide the necessary spearhead for research and teaching in that institution. While we seem to be beating the air during this debate in trying to determine the sum of money to be made available to the university, I consider that the Government is adopting the proper course in increasing the statutory grant and bringing it up to the level at which the university can function in a satisfactory manner.

If it probes the position carefully, I expect that the Government will find that the university grant must be increased considerably over any amount it has received in the past, if it is to attract professors with the suitable qualifications in order to maintain a high standard in the several faculties. For that reason I support the Bill, but I would also urge consideration of the other points I made.

On motion by Mr. Brady, debate adjourned.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate adjourned from 25th August.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [8.36]: After examining this Bill closely and reading the remarks of the Minister during his second reading speech, I agree that a fair statement of the purpose of the measure has been made. It appears to be more or less a technical measure, but to the layman the objective seems to be laudable in that it seeks to strengthen the power of the Police Force in dealing with undesirables or with difficult criminals who migrate from the other States of the Commonwealth and from other countries.

The police experience difficulty in dealing with them until some crime has been proved against them. Of course, prevention is better than cure. If undesirable persons or criminals have a greater chance of living in Western Australia than in the other States, unless some crime is proved against them, then it seems only right to amend our laws to give the Police Force here greater powers, similar to those possessed by officers of the law in other States.

There is only one other observation I wish to make: With such legislation it is to be hoped that the provisions will be administered with some discretion by the police. In the past we have generally found that the Police Force has shouldered its responsibilities and has not abused any of the measures passed by Parliament.

Unfortunately there have been one or two happenings recently that have drawn sharp criticism from the public and even from the bench. In a case not long ago, a constable seemed to have treated a taxi-driver in a manner one would not have expected of a member of our Police Force, a man who had not been convicted of any offence and was afterwards found to be not guilty. Fortunately such instances are rare, and I hope that the Minister will impress upon the commissioner the desirability of maintaining the reputation that the force has built up over the years.

It is pleasing to note that when such instances do occur, the necessary disciplinary action is taken against the individual who has abused the power put into his hands. Although this measure goes somewhat further than our existing laws provide, it seems necessary that the police in this State should be clothed with as much power as the police in the other States have for dealing with the criminal element. 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—SPEAR-GUNS CONTROL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [8.45]: I think most members will agree that the introduction of a Bill to control the use of spear-guns on our beaches is warranted and not before its time. Investigations made by me over the past few days indicate that not only does the trade give complete approval to the measure but also that the spear-fishermen generally want some measure of control so that they will not be penalised for the actions of those not capable of handling a weapon such as a spear-gun.

The art of spear-gun fishing has grown to huge proportions in Australia. Although the Minister mentioned that there are in this State 10,000 spear-guns, they are not held by the same number of individuals.

Quite a number of people have a dozen, and so the 10,000 spear-guns might be in the hands of only 1,000 people. In the association that has been formed in the various States of the Commonwealth, there are 10,000 members, of whom 400 are registered in Western Australia. It is estimated that within five years 100,000 spear-guns will be in use in Australia, so rapidly is this sport growing.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! There is too much loud talking in the Chamber.

Mr. YATES: Because of the thrill that an individual gets out of using a spear-gun under water, aided by a snorkel or other breathing apparatus, with flippers on the feet for propelling the body through the water at great speed, many more young people are buying equipment for the face and the feet and spear-guns for use by the hands. The only danger is that, if they are not controlled and if the more popular fishing resorts are not protected, they will be denuded, and such places as Rottnest and the vicinity of Fremantle will probably in ten years' time reach a stage where line fishermen will have to sit for hours without getting a bite.

I consider that the control by regulation of the area in which spear-guns may be used is a wise provision. During the week several letters have appeared in the Press by correspondents who usually have a grizzle against control and against anything done for the ultimate good of the people generally, and I was tickled by one criticism to the effect that Parliament should not interfere in a matter such as this. Someone had to call a halt to happenings that were not in the best interests of the people, and I would say that if spear-guns continue to be sold at the present rate, they are a dangerous weapon used indiscriminately by people who know nothing of their use, and thus we would have a potential not only for killing people but also for maiming many of them. Consequently, the Bill, which is mainly for control and not for very rigid control, should be acceptable to all sections of the community.

There is one provision in the measure with which I am not in agreement and I hope to prove to the Minister that it could be altered to the satisfaction of all concerned. I refer to the trigger pressure required on a spear-gun. The Minister is asking us to stipulate a pressure of 5 lb. I have had 27 years' experience of all types of weapons and can be classified as an expert on any one of them. I have passed through various military schools in all the States of the Commonwealth and have handled all the various types of weapons used by the infantry during World War II from beginning to end. On occasions I was called in to give advice on the use of weapons and the misuse of them by certain soldiers.

Because of that experience, plus my prewar experience in the army and since, I claim to have as good a knowledge of the use of weapons as the expert in the firearms branch of the Police Department. Let us take the rifle which has been in use for 30 years or more. It is standardised both in England and Australia. Lately we have heard of its being replaced by a smaller weapon. The standard army rifle weighs 9 lb. 12 oz. and it has two prestures on the trigger. The first trigger pressure is from 3 lb. to 4 lb.

There is a distinct stop at the end of the first pressure. When the second pressure is applied, it requires a total pressure of between 5 lb. and 6 lb. before the bullet can be fired. The experts have worked that out according to the weight of the rifle. An average man can be trained to use that rifle efficiently in a very short space of time. Let us move to the army pistol, the Webley .38. This weapon weighs 1 lb. 14¾ oz., but it requires a 12 lb. pressure to fire it, and that is why only one man in 50 can become really proficient in its use; and why there are a lot of injuries to people from these pistols.

Because of the great pressure to shoot a light weapon, men cannot manipulate it correctly. With an automatic pistol there is practically no pressure at all, the first being the only one required. These pressures vary in the different types of automatic pistols; they vary from 1 lb. to 6 lb. After the first pressure is applied, no further pressure is needed while the trigger is depressed, because the bullets keep going out, and with each pressing in of the trigger, the gas does the rest of the work.

We cannot compare an automatic pistol with an actual rifle, or with the other type of pistol called a revolver where a distinct pressure has to be applied for each shot fired. I would say that a Webley .38 revolver—it is still called a pistol in the army—is a dangerous weapon in the hands of a person not knowing how to use it or to apply the pressure. It is not a very accurate weapon because of the very heavy pressure required. Because it is not accurate over a very long range, a person has to become most proficient in its use before he is an expert marksman.

So, in Australia today we would find very few people, either in the army or out of it, who are expert in the use of this pistol. But there is a big difference with the rifle. I would say that nine out of 10 of the men who come into the army become quite expert in its use because of its ease in handling and its well-balanced trigger pressures. Let us move on to the L.M.G. The most popular, light machine-gun in the British and Australian armies is the Bren. It has been in use since 1939, and it weighs 22 lb. Its pressures vary in each gun, and each gun has its

own characteristics. I have put seven guns in a line and tested them and found each to have a different trigger pressure. They are not as consistent as an ordinary rifle.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It would not be a wide variation though.

Mr. YATES: No, not a very wide range. It averages 7½lb. The pressure on the L.M.G. is very similar to that of an automatic pistol because the L.M.G. has automatic firing and repetition firing. With the manipulation of a small handle on the gun, it can be fired automatically, or, with a light pressure on the trigger after each action, the used gas throws back the recoiling system and the gun is again ready for firing.

Thus, with these weapons we have different pressures and I would say that the pressure of the L.M.G. is one of the lightest of them all. I have here the weights of different spear-guns. One weighs 3 lb. 4 oz.; another 2 lb. 8 oz.; another 1 lb. 10 oz.; and another 2 lb. 12 oz. There is a new make called the Alcedo on the market which works by compressed air. It has been approved by the fire-arms branch. This gun has a safety-catch and other features that suggest to the branch that it is quite a suitable weapon for spear fishing, and so they have no objection to it.

The Alcedo is a heavier weapon than any of the other makes; it weighs 6¾ lb. So, we have these guns going from 1 lb. 10 oz. to 6¾ lb. in weight. I would say from my knowledge of this type of weapon —this does not have to fire a bullet but only a spear—that the pressure on the trigger should not be greater than 3 lb. If we increase the pressure on the trigger of so light a weapon, it becomes dangerous. As I pointed out in regard to the Webley revolver, a youth of 14, with only a small hand, would find it difficult to fire because of the pressure.

With a very light weapon the tendency is for it to waver, by having a heavy trigger pressure, especially if it is to be used in the water and on the beaches. Therefore, there would be more danger with a light weapon with a heavy pressure on the trigger than if the pressure were reduced to 3 lb. I would like the Minister to give consideration to this aspect because I have gone into the question of the pressures of these weapons and spear-guns quite carefully in the last few days, and I think I can claim that I know what I am talking about in connection with the pressures of the many makes of rifles, revolvers and automatic machine-guns, and also the Owen machine-gun which we used successfully in New Guinea. That machine-gun had practically no pressure at all. It was a very light weapon which could be carried long distances without the soldier tiring.

The reason why the Department of the Army supplied that weapon was its ease of handling, its high rate of fire ,and the fact that more of the ammunition could be carried by the soldier than of the .303 ammunition which was bigger, and therefore heavier. The army, before it introduces a new type of weapon, puts it through all the different tests. The pressures, weights and balances are gone into carefully by the experts to allow for all eventualities, including that of safety, so that once a weapon is introduced into the army, very few changes are later made in it.

During the 30-odd years that the Lee-Enfield rifle was used in the Australian army, few alterations were made in it. In fact, a large number of the men in my battalion used rifles that had been manufactured in 1915 and there was very little change in any of the later types manufactured during the intervening years.

The Minister for Justice: What is the trigger pressure of a .303 rifle?

Mr. YATES: There are two pressures—from 3 lb. to 4 lb. and from 5 lb. to 6 lb.

The Minister for Police: It is 7 lb. under the N.R.A. rules.

Mr. YATES: That is so. They file down the sharp edge of the sear so that there is a lighter pressure. They reduce the pressure until the slightest touch will set the rifle off. They reduce the pressure to about 1½ lb. while the regulation rifle has a trigger pressure from 3 lb. to 4 lb. or from 5 lb. to 6 lb., but we are attempting to formulate not only the best policy but also rules from a safety angle for spear-gun fishing, and I think we should leave the pressure at 3 lb.

If any manufacturer makes spear-guns with a pressure up to 5 lb. we will not have to worry because they will be above the minimum required, but do not let us make the minimum 5 lb. and then have manufacturers making spear-guns which require over that pressure because youths of 14 to 15 would find it harder to manipulate that pressure than an adult would, say, a 7 lb. to 9 lb. pressure. That is important as the Minister stated that most of the youths using these weapons would be in the 14-18 year age group, and they are the ones we have to protect.

If the Minister will agree to a minimum pressure of 3 lb. I can assure him he will ultimately be doing a lot of good to the users of these weapons. Another point is that many young lads use in the river weapons that are known as gidgies. They are the same type of weapon as will be used in spear-guns and I would like to know whether it is the intention of the Government that youths be precluded from using gidgies.

Hon. L. Thorn: Are they used by hand?

Mr. YATES: Yes.

The Minister for Police: The Bill will not apply unless the spear is a fixture in the gun.

Mr. YATES: Then they will be allowed to use them, if they have no guns?

The Minister for Police: Yes.

Mr. YATES: Then that is satisfactory. I contacted the president of the Skin Diving Fishermen's Association in this State. They have a federation that looks after the interest of the State branches and their rules, I believe, are similar throughout the Commonwealth. Although there is no legislation in the other States similar to this, they have legislation which gives control to the Minister for Fisheries in various States over the areas to be used, more than the weapons. I am of the opinion that the other States will follow our lead when they find that we have introduced a measure of this nature which will be of advantage to the general public and for the good of the youths, in their thousands, who will in future use these weapons. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [9.5]: This is a most important measure and one that it is necessary to have on our statute book. We all know that the sport of spear-gun fishing has grown to large dimensions in the last two or three years until now we frequently see young men with spear-guns on our beaches, some factory-made weapons and others home-made. The time has arrived when the use of spear-guns should be controlled and on the inquiries I have made and the approaches made to me by other people, I feel sure that those concerned are satisfied with this measure.

In support of what was said by the member for South Perth, I might add that I also have been informed that a 5 lb. pressure is considered a bit high by the young men who use these weapons. They feel that 3 lb. would be more suitable. Subject to the one or two alterations suggested by the member for South Perth, I have pleasure in supporting the measure.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie—in reply) [9.7]: I have listened with interest to the member for South Perth speaking in connection with the proposed alterations to the trigger pressure of spear-guns. Candidly, I say it was more or less at random that we set the 5 lb. pressure because we had nothing to go on. At that time we had the inspector of the fire-arms branch of the Police Department and also the president of the Spear Fishermen's Association with us and I distinctly recollect that as we had no data to go on in this regard, we decided that as the N.R.A. set a pressure of 7 lb. for service rifles and the army varied it from 5 lb. to 7 lb., we would set the pressure for these spear-guns at 5 lb.

If the member for South Perth is certain that the average pressure required is only 3 lb., I will be prepared to agree to give it a trial and see how it works, if he will move an amendment when we come to that clause. As regards the spears, it is not intended to apply to a spear propelled by hand the provisions of this measure. The definition of "spear" in the Bill is a spear "capable of being discharged from a spear-gun." On looking again at that, I think it would be possible to interpret it to mean any spear which would fit into a spear-gun and so that provision may also have to be amended so that it will not apply to spears used by hand.

Mr. Norton: Would not a spear used by hand be just as dangerous if it were thrown on a crowded beach?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I am afraid of that. If we altered the Bill so that it did not apply to a hand spear without an effective guard for the barb, such a spear could be just as dangerous if carried in a public transport or on a crowded beach, as if it were attached to a spear-gun. I think we must be very careful to see that we do not destroy the real object for which the Bill has been prepared. One of the most important parts of the Bill is to see that these fearsome barbs attached to spears are covered by an adequate guard when carried in public or in public transport. I undertake to advise the inspector in charge of the fire-arms branch of the Police Department that I have given an assurance to this House that the measure is not intended to apply to boys using gidgies on our river beaches, unless the boys are fishing in places where children are swimming or are carrying them in a crowd in such a way that they are likely to be dangerous.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do not you think it should apply to them, too? You see some of these youngsters with spears that have deadly barbs.

Mr. Yates: All gidgies have barbs.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I think they should be covered.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: The spears used to catch cobblers and crabs need a barb so that the crab or cobbler, as the case may be, cannot get away when the spear is driven through it.

Mr. Yates: I think they are dangerous only if they are thrown indiscriminately.

Hon. L. Thorn: That is so, definitely. Gidgies have been used for generations, and I do not think you will hear of any accidents.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I have not heard of any where boys have been looking for cobblers or crabs.

Hon. L. Thorn: Neither have I.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: There is no doubt that these guns, up to a distance of 15 to 20 feet—although it was reported

in the Press that I said 15 to 20 yards—are lethal. They would not be effective at 20 yards, but according to the president of the Spear Fishermen's Association, they are definitely lethal and would kill human beings if hit in a vital spot from 15 or 20 feet away. I understand that the spear fishermen endeavour to get to within a few feet of their objective when under water.

Mr. Yates: Their lethal range when underwater is 15 to 25ft.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE. That is so, but they try to get within about 10ft.

Mr. Yates: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: They do that for the purpose of impaling fish. I thank members for the way in which they have received the Bill and, as I said on the second reading, it is only an experimental measure and may not be as effective as we would like it to be. I believe it covers the main features and will make it safer for people on our beaches. We do not want to prohibit the use of spearguns but beaches such as Cottesloe, South Beach, Scarborough and other places will be regarded as crowded beaches and will be declared prohibited areas. The use of these guns will not be permitted in such places. The measure will safeguard the public, and, thanks to the president of the Spear Fishermen's Association and the Police Department, the Bill has been evolved. Not only will it safeguard the public but also spear fishermen themselves and will not do away with the pleasure which so many of them derive from the sport.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Police in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Offences:

Mr. YATES: This clause deals with offences and contains a table setting out offences and punishments. Paragraph (1) on page 3 sets out the pressure for the trigger of the gun. I would like to strike out the "five pounds" shown in subparagraph (i) and insert in lieu "three pounds," because I think that adequately covers the position. I move an amendment—

> That the word "five" in line 2 of subparagraph (i) of paragraph (1) in the Table of Offences, page 3, be struck out, and the word "three" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 5 to 8, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [9.20]: In this Bill to amend the Medical Act there is nothing to which I object and I have ascertained from the Western Australian branch of the British Medical Association and the Medical Board that, so far as their members are concerned, the measure has a clean bill of health. Indeed, it would seem that the Medical Board was largely responsible for its introduction. It would appear that the Bill seeks to protect the public from the type of medical practitioner who is not worthy to have his name placed on the register of the Medical Board.

The Minister for Health: One could almost call it a protection Bill so far as the public is concerned.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: As far as I can see, it is a Bill to protect the people and to preserve the good name held by medical practitioners. Firstly, it provides that a medical practitioner must make application to the board to have his name restored to its register after he has returned to the State following his absence for a period of six months.

Such medical practitioner is also required to pay the fee prescribed in the rules and further, that following his name being erased from the register as a result of his absenting himself from the State, he must satisfy the board that he has not been found guilty of any infamous conduct or of any crime or misdemeanour that would preclude his name from being added to the register.

There is yet another clause which provides that the name of a medical practitioner be struck from the register if he is found guilty of some crime or misdemeanour committed by him during his absence from this State. I was able to ascertain that in one instance a medical practitioner returned to Western Australia after a period of more than two years and subsequently it was found that during his absence he had been found guilty of improper conduct. The provisions of this Bill will now mean that in the future such a man will be precluded from having his name added to the register of medical practitioners.

Another provision ensures that if a medical practitioner has been absent from the State for a period of two years or more he is not able, on his return, to have his name placed automatically on the register. He must first satisfy the Medical Board that, in the interim, he has done nothing to which the board could object. I have much pleasure in supporting 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—ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 25th August.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [9.26]: I support the Bill. I think it acknowledges the growing importance of some of our country districts and is a type of development to ensure that the local Press can be used to publicise matters relating to the incorporation of associations. After all is said and done, the activities of the associations concerned will be carried out in those districts and I think it is desirable that we should acknowledge the increasing importance of the districts themselves and the increasing importance of the newspapers that have a circulation in those districts.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

House adjourned at 9.29 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 31st August, 1955.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

RAILWAYS.

Canteen Service, Geraldton.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

Is there any truth in the report that the Railway Department intends to start a canteen service in Geraldton?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

No. Railway employees have expressed a desire to do so and are investigating the matter.

URANIUM ORE.

Kimberley Deposits.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) Is he aware that on page 14 of "The West Australian" of the 30th August, reference is made to the discovery of uranium ore in the Kimberleys as follows:—

> The only uranium area now being tested is in the Kimberley district where several finds have been made?

(2) Will he state whether these claims are correct and give the House full details as to these discoveries, if any?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The general nature of these occurrences is known to the Mines Department, and is being examined by one of its geologists at the present time. There is nothing disclosed to date to prove deposits of economic importance.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1) £17,000,000.

MOTION—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT.

To Disallow Petrol Pumps By-laws.

Debate resumed from the previous day on the following motion by Hon. L. A. Logan:—

> That amendments to Road Districts (Petrol Pumps) By-laws, 1934, made by the Department of Local Government under the Road Districts Act, 1919-1951, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 27th May, 1955, and laid on the Table of the House on the 9th August, 1955, be and are hereby disallowed.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [4.39]: I support the motion moved by Mr. Logan. Under Section 201 of the Road Districts Act a local authority is empowered to make by-laws for the purpose of regulating the erection and use of petrol pumps for the supply of petrol to the public, in or near any street or way, and for granting licences authorising the erection of such petrol pumps, and prescribing fees