

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 1st October, 1952.

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

QUESTIONS.

STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.

As to Loan Flotation.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Treasurer:

Relative to the S.E.C. Loan—

(1) Have arrangements been made to give a preference in subscriptions to Western Australia?

(2) Is the underwriter handling this loan also handling a debenture issue at a higher rate and for a larger amount for a private firm?

(3) Does he anticipate any difficulty in filling the loan?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) If the loan is over-subscribed, preference will be given to subscriptions from Western Australian investors.

(2) I do not know.

(3) No.

EDUCATION.

(a) As to Departmental Expenditure.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What has been the total expenditure of the Education Department in Western Australia for each of the last seven years?

(2) What was the total expenditure on education in Australia last year?

The MINISTER replied:

	£
(1) 1945-46	1,002,520
1946-47	1,223,746
1947-48	1,648,768
1948-49	1,759,635
1949-50	2,079,781
1950-51	2,634,461
1951-52	3,630,893

(2) For the latest year available, i.e., 1950-51, the total expenditure of the Education Departments in the Eastern States was £36,596,000.

(b) As to Septic Tank, Burracoppin School.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Works:

Can he advise what is the present position with regard to the installation of a septic tank at the Burracoppin State school?

The MINISTER replied:

Contractor is unable to proceed with the work and the contract is now being cancelled.

Tenders will be re-invited.

WATER SUPPLIES.

(a) As to Increasing Capacity of Goldfields Main.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Works:

Has consideration been given to the necessity and advisability of duplicating or increasing the size of the Goldfields Water Supply main from Mundaring to Merredin, or alternatively, to Kellerberrin, and if so, how does the matter now stand?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes. The plans for the northern section of the comprehensive scheme included provision for some sections of enlargement and some sections of duplication of the G.W.S. main.

To date some 10 miles have been treated and the most vital sections now requiring early treatment are between Mundaring Weir and Sawyers Valley, and a two-mile section just east of Cunderdin. Steel for portion of these two sections has already been obtained.

(b) As to Completion of Port Hedland Scheme.

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Minister for the North-West:

(1) How many miles of pipes are required to complete the main Port Hedland water supply?

(2) Have any deliveries of these pipes yet been made by the contractors?

(3) Will regular deliveries be made in future, and at what rate?

(4) Seeing that he promised in Parliament to give his personal attention to this matter, have regular firm bookings been made for space on ships for these pipes?

(5) If State ships are unable to provide space, will he see what can be done by other shipping companies?

(6) Has all other water supply work in Port Hedland area been completed so that no further delay will occur when all pipes are received?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Ten miles.

(2) Manufacture in progress. First deliveries ex Welshpool early next week, commencing 6th October.

(3) Manufacturers guarantee 250 pipes per week (3,250 feet)—completing contract in 16-17 weeks. This is subject to satisfactory plant behaviour.

(4) First shipment will be on the "Koolinda," and this will be followed by regular shipments on State ships.

(5) Answered by (4).

(6) As pipes are received they will be laid immediately. Other work in connection with the pipeline is in hand and there should be no delay. Following a thorough try-out of the whole scheme, alterations will be made to the town reticulation, but this will not cause any serious inconvenience.

TRAFFIC.

As to Accidents, Shepperton Road.

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Police:

How many accidents have occurred in Shepperton Road since it was declared a major highway?

The MINISTER replied:

Shepperton Road was declared a major road on the 19th July, 1946, but itemised information is not available until 1949.

From the 1st January, 1949, to date, 288 accidents occurred in Shepperton Road.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Overhaul of Locomotives.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is the overhaul of railway engines much more thorough at the present time, and therefore taking longer periods to complete, than was the practice before the metal trades strike started?

(2) If so, what is the reason for this new procedure?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by (1).

(b) As to Metropolitan Passenger Trains.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Did the Government recently override the Railways Commission regarding the number of passenger trains to be run in the metropolitan area starting on the 6th inst?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

Yes, in so far as off-peak services only are concerned.

(c) As to Loss on Metropolitan Passenger Services.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Will he lay upon the Table of the House the figures used to ascertain the losses incurred in the running of passenger train services in the metropolitan area for the year ended the 30th June, 1952?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

The Hon. Minister for Railways would be glad to provide an opportunity to the hon. member to peruse, at his office, the whole of the schedules used in arriving at the figures in question.

HOUSING INFORMATION MOTION.

(a) As to Tabling Public Service Commissioner's Approval.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

Will he table the written approval of the Public Service Commissioner covering the motion and the terms of the motion as moved in the House last week against the member for Melville by the Deputy Premier?

The PREMIER replied:

There was no written approval. As stated by the Deputy Premier in his speech, after the report which has been tabled was received from the Public Service Commissioner, he was called to

Cabinet to discuss the matter and was then and there advised of the motion it was proposed should be moved and he expressed his approval of it.

(b) *As to Report on Previous Occurrences.*

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

Will he obtain a report from the Public Service Commissioner and lay it upon the Table of the House, covering the statement made in the House by the Minister for Education on Thursday last that "there is, unfortunately, a strong suspicion in the mind of the Public Service Commissioner that it is not the first time", this having reference to a suggestion that the member for Melville had taken an action which, to say the very least of it, was distinctly unworthy of him?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes, report herewith.

CEMENT.

As to Manufacturing in South-West.

Mr. GUTHRIE asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) Did the investigation made by the Government disclose that cement manufacture could be operated economically in the South-West, particularly near Bunbury?

(2) What steps has the department taken to foster industry in areas other than in close proximity to the metropolitan area?

(3) Will he state results of the analysis of the commodities in the Bunbury area required for cement making?

(4) What is deficient that prevents successful cement making?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Every available opportunity is taken to interest companies to establish new industries in areas that might be suitable not in close proximity to Perth. However, the final decision naturally rests with the company concerned.

(3) and (4) The analysis of the raw materials indicates that the only deposits of sufficient magnitude in the vicinity of Bunbury are of poor quality, containing too little calcium carbonate and an excess of silica.

Investigations by an expert employed by private interests confirmed this conclusion.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Rentals for Homes, Roebourne.*

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it a fact that rentals of £5 per week each have been fixed for two Commonwealth-State houses in Roebourne recently occupied by tenants?

(2) Does he think that the average worker can possibly pay this luxury rent?

(3) What does he propose to do about having these rents reduced to a reasonable figure?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No, and for that reason special representations have been made to the Commonwealth to provide for a reduced rental on all North-West housing.

(3) Both tenants have been circularised regarding their eligibility for rebate of rent. The rebate allowable in these two instances on the income stated by the tenants on their applications would reduce the rentals to £3 4s. 6d. and £3 15s. per week respectively.

(b) *As to Three-unit Family, Fremantle.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Housing:

Is he aware that a Mr. and Mrs. Capel and son, who are being evicted from their home in Fremantle, have been refused any assistance from the State Housing Commission because of the fact that they are only a three-unit family?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes. Assistance has been refused because it is felt this adult family should be in a position to help themselves.

(c) *As to Accommodation for Fremantle Family.*

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

If within the next few hours, as seems very likely, the Capel family will be put out on to the footpath, will he do his best with the Railway Department to secure a loan of tarpaulins so that the family's goods and chattels may not be destroyed, and will he endeavour to secure the loan of a railway carriage for their accommodation so that they will be protected from the weather?

The MINISTER replied:

I have no knowledge of the family referred to other than that arising out of the question the hon. member has asked. I will ascertain from the State Housing Commission what, if anything, can be done for those concerned.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about the successful housing achievements?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: And about cases being considered on their merits?

BILL—LAND AGENTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT AMENDMENT.*Message.*

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

BILL—PUNISHMENT BY WHIPPING ABOLITION.

Introduced by Mr. Graham, and read a first time.

BILLS (3)—THIRD READING.

1, Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment (Continuance).

2, Health Act Amendment (No. 1).

3, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—PHARMACY AND POISONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.*Recommittal.*

On motion by Mr. Nalder, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 2.

In Committee.

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

Clause 2—Section 61 amended:

Mr. NALDER: I move an amendment:

That all the words after the word "by" in line 2 be struck out and the words "deleting the words 'twenty pounds' in lines three and four substitute the words 'an amount decided by the board and approved of by the Minister within thirty days of the beginning of each financial year'" inserted in lieu.

I regret having to bring this matter before members again, but I was under a misapprehension last night. The position has now been clarified, and I trust members will agree to the amendment. Legislation has been introduced on several occasions to amend the Act with respect to the amount to be paid to producers who suffer loss because their stock has to be destroyed after being condemned. The successive Bills have been necessary because of the constantly increasing price of animals. The amendment will have the effect of striking out the provision for a specified amount, with a view to providing that the amount to be paid may be decided by the board, and the amount must be approved by the Minister within 30 days of the commencement of each financial year.

The board will have full knowledge of the value of cattle and at the commencement of each financial year will be able to agree upon a reasonable amount to be paid to the producers by way of compensation. I hope the Minister will favourably consider the amendment, which is in the best

interests of the industry. If there were a case in which an agreement might be reached on an amount and it was not considered in the best interests of the industry, that regulation could be disallowed by Parliament and an amending Bill introduced to bring it into line with the position at the time.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment. The hon. member says the measure comes before Parliament each year, but that is not so. The last time it was considered was in 1949. Contributions have been reduced and the State finds half the money on a £ for £ basis. Why should we allow the Milk Board to decide what the compensation should be each year? Why should not Parliament fix the maximum? That maximum has been fixed at £35, which is a pretty high figure. The board does not set out to pay the full value of a beast that may be slaughtered, but to compensate the producer to a certain degree.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Can the beast be used for consumption?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, it applies to T.B. tested dairy cattle.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It could not be used for human consumption?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Does the hon. member mean as beef?

Hon. E. Nulsen: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No.

Mr. Mann: Portions of destroyed cattle are used.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. But I understood the hon. member to be supposing that a herd of steers came along and they were affected. I do not think testing goes on in that case. But if a beast in a flock is slaughtered on account of having T.B. and the body is not infected, it can be used. A maximum of £35 compensation has been fixed, but the value of the majority of cows may be only £15 to £20.

Mr. Nalder: Not now.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know what I am talking about. If members saw some of the cows in these herds they would agree that their value was not more than £15 or £20. They are undersized and are poor beasts. There are all sorts of cows in dairy herds. The maximum compensation has been £20 to £35.

Mr. Hoar: What percentage payment is made now?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I could not tell the hon. member. A beast is slaughtered and the competent authority arrives at its value. It is understood that the owner is well and reasonably compensated. I do not know that we should give the Milk Board a free hand in deciding the maximum compensation to be payable each year.

The Premier: We have to find half the money.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There is a producer on the board and he could quite easily endeavour to influence it to fix a very high maximum.

Mr. Butcher: If a carcase is sold for beef, is the amount received deducted from the amount of compensation payable?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The compensation is fixed and paid, and if some of the carcase is sold as meat or goes into the digester the amount received is paid back into the fund.

Mr. HOAR: The Minister is opposing the amendment because he thinks Parliament will lose control over the situation. But from what I understood from his remarks, neither Parliament nor the Minister has any control over the price fixed by the board.

The Premier: There is a maximum amount.

Mr. HOAR: It is not necessarily reached, and consequently the Milk Board can fix the amount and does so without reference to the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: I was talking about the maximum.

Mr. HOAR: I know; but I am talking about actual everyday practice where neither the Minister nor Parliament comes into the picture at all.

The Minister for Lands: But the board cannot exceed the maximum.

Mr. HOAR: No; but at present it operates without reference to the Minister, unless the point is reached where it might require to exceed the maximum, in which case the Minister would have to secure an amendment of the Act. As it is now, I think it works very well. If the Minister reads the amendment, he will see that, if it is carried, every compensation paid from now on, whether a small or a large amount, will be subject to the approval of the Minister, which is not the case today, so that actually the amendment strengthens the Minister's hands.

The Premier: If you were Minister for Agriculture you would strenuously oppose this amendment.

Mr. HOAR: I do not think I would.

The Premier: I know you would.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Why did you allow the recommittal?

Mr. HOAR: I admit that I had some doubts about it when I saw it on the notice paper, but after having given the matter some thought and having heard the hon. member, I have none. There is another point. Now that we have a reduction in the amount of contribution to 1-8d. per gallon, I would like to know how many times a year that can be altered. When a

figure is fixed, does it remain for 12 months or can the board make an alteration in two months' time and does it still have to receive the Minister's approval? In this case we have men paying into a fund, and when introducing the Bill the Minister said the amount had been altered twice in two months. On whose authority was that done? I see no weakness in the amendment. If we leave the Milk Board and the Minister to arrive at an equitable figure we will both strengthen our own hand and safeguard the producer who loses his stock.

Mr. NALDER: The Minister said the Act was last amended in 1949 and I would remind him that the value of cattle three years ago was considerably less than it is today. When the compensation was fixed at £10 or £15 in 1948 I received support for an amendment that I moved to increase the amount. The present Minister for Works, then a private member, supported the amendment. I think some producers have had a raw deal, as the price of cattle has increased considerably since 1949.

The PREMIER: None of the several Governments in power since the Act was introduced in 1930 or 1931 has seen fit to depart from the principle that the maximum should be fixed.

Mr. Kelly: The price of cattle has altered a lot in that time.

The PREMIER: That is why the maximum has been raised from £20 to £35. The Treasury contributes substantially to the fund and surely we have a responsibility to say what should be the maximum. It would be a bad principle to let the board fix any amount it liked.

Mr. Hoar: The Minister could veto any suggestion of the board.

The PREMIER: Imagine a Minister being worried with a decision as to whether a cow was worth £40 or £45. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: When the Bill was previously before the House the member for Wagin had ample opportunity of debating it but did not do so, and the Bill went through Committee and was reported.

The Minister for Lands: He had his amendment on the notice paper but was absent from the Chamber at that time.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister knew the amendment was there.

The Minister for Lands: You would not expect me to move an amendment with which I did not agree.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the Minister wanted the member for Wagin to have the opportunity to move the amendment the Whip could have been availed of to see that the hon. member was in his place.

The Minister for Lands: You would not have done that had you been Minister.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think I might have, rather than adopt this method. If the member for Wagin lost his opportunity, that was his fault and he could not get the Bill recommitted without an understanding with the Minister and the Government.

The Minister for Lands: That is not so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister did not oppose it. There is no doubt that it is foolish of a Minister, having got a Bill through, to run into further trouble by allowing a recommitment. Recommitments are not granted because a member was absent when he should have been present.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Or when a Government is against a proposed further amendment.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The indication here is that not only the Minister for Agriculture—a member of the Country Party—is opposed to the proposal but also the Premier, the Leader of the Liberal Party, yet the House has agreed to a recommitment without opposition being indicated from the Government side.

The Premier: I missed the item on the notice paper and did not know the Bill was to be recommitted until the hon. member rose.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Surely the Minister did not agree to a recommitment without consulting his Leader!

The Premier: I was not consulted.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The proposition is that the Milk Board, charged with the responsibility for controlling and organising milk production and distribution, is asked to decide from time to time the appropriate compensation to be paid when cattle are slaughtered under the T.B. eradication scheme. The figure decided on by the board does not become operative unless approved by the Minister within a certain time. Whether there is danger in that depends largely on the Minister. If he were given a free hand by the Treasurer of the day—that was never done in my time—all sorts of things could happen should pressure be put on the Minister and should he not be a strong man. The proposal has to go to the Treasurer and the Minister for Agriculture would not agree to the recommendation of the board without referring the matter to the Treasurer. I have no doubt that the state of the compensation fund would be considered by both Minister and Treasurer before approval was given if a substantial increase in compensation were recommended.

The Premier: God help the Treasurer if he has to attend to all those things.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: How often would it be done?

The Premier: Pretty often, I imagine.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: When this compensation legislation was originally under debate, members now on the Government

side were endeavouring to secure a larger sum for compensation than I was prepared to agree to, and the Premier was one of them.

The Premier: I think I was.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There was no question then of considering what money the Treasurer would have to find but only a desire—on the part of members representing dairying areas—to show their constituents that they were anxious to provide more compensation than the Government would agree to, and there was no safeguard in that. If it had been possible to secure a majority in favour of that point of view at the time Parliament would have decided the figure without leaving it to the Treasurer or the Minister. The proposal of the member for Wagin is not that Parliament shall fix the figure, and after all Parliament may not be the body best informed on such a subject.

The Attorney General: This would almost amount to an appropriation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Crown Law Department might well have looked at the legal aspect before this, as the amendment has been on the notice paper. The Government can examine that aspect later. It knew full well all about the amendment the member for Wagin was going to move and allowed the recommitment for that purpose. The amendment proposes that instead of Parliament being called upon from time to time to agree to a figure the question shall be left to the board to decide, with the safeguard that the Minister must approve the figure. I can visualise what would happen in this connection under a Labour Government. The Minister for Agriculture would send his recommendation to the Treasurer, either supporting the figure proposed by the board or giving reasons against it, and the main criterion would then be the state of the compensation fund. The point would be whether the fund could bear the greater expense and whether the amount recommended as compensation was reasonable having regard to the value of animals.

The Premier: There could be nothing less satisfactory to producers than the payment of compensation according to the state of the fund.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That will always be the case.

The Premier: No, here the maximum is fixed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Even under the terms of the amendment, the maximum will always be fixed, until it is altered. There is no argument about that. The figure which the board fixes at one year will be the figure used until the Minister agrees to an alteration, or until the Treasurer does so. As the Government did not oppose the recommitment, and was prepared to allow the hon. member to see

how he could get on with his proposal. I am prepared to support it. I can see no danger in it so long as the Minister for Agriculture is strong enough to do his job.

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

Ayes	21
Noes	14

Majority for 7

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Needham
Mr. Butcher	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Owen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Moir	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Nalder	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Hutchinson
Mr. Brand	Mr. Manning
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. McLarty
Mr. Doney	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Grayden

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Read	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. May	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Ackland
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. Yates

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Bill again reported with an amendment.

MOTION—GOLDMINING INDUSTRY.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [5.20]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to investigate and report upon the difficulties facing those engaged in producing gold, with particular reference to the effect of freights, water and other charges upon such operations, and to make recommendations by the use of which the Commonwealth and State Governments could assist and encourage the greater production of gold, including production by prospectors.

I am moving this motion with the earnest desire that this House will see fit to agree to it. The time is long overdue when such an inquiry as this should be held so that we may be informed of the difficulties with which gold producers are confronted at the moment, and also in order that recommendations may be made to alleviate those difficulties and encourage the production of gold. It is not my intention to indulge in any criticism of what may have been done and what should not have been done for the industry, but I hope by placing facts and figures before the House to make members realise that all is not well with this industry, which has played and will continue to play an important part in the development and economy of this State.

It will need no words of mine to remind members of the part the industry has played, even back as far as the early discoveries of gold. Large fields have been opened up and, as a result, those areas have become populated which, but for the discovery of gold, would not have been the case. When we consider the importance of this industry in the past and the way in which it has deteriorated, we must feel a great deal of concern. For instance, I have some figures taken from the report of the annual general meeting of the Western Australian Chamber of Mines, held at Kalgoorlie on Thursday, the 29th May, and one of the tables presented gives the statistics for the mining industry.

In 1903, when gold was worth £4.25 an ounce, the value of the yield was £9,920,248, in Australian currency, and 20,716 men were employed. In 1951, when the price of gold was £15.49 an ounce, the value of production in Australian currency was £10,042,392, and 6,766 men were employed. Over that period there have been many ups and downs, and I would like to read a list of the towns, some of them used to be flourishing, which came into being because of the discovery of gold, but which went out of existence before 1939. The towns are as follows:—

Comet Vale.
Davyhurst.
Mulline.
Kookynie.
Bulong.
Kanowna.
Mt. Sir Samuel.
Day Dawn.
Tuckanara.
Carbine.
Mulwarrie.
Evanston.
Kurnalpi.
Niagara.
Morgans.
Lawlers.
Mt. Malcolm.
Lake Austin.

and a number of others. Since 1939, a number of other towns have gone out of existence, notably—

Riverina.
Reedy's.
Youanmi.
Menzies.
Wiluna.
Sandstone.
Agnew.
Mt. Palmer.
Porphyry.
Westonia.
Edjudina.

Also, Laverton's population has been sadly depleted. We must ask ourselves what are the reasons for this decline. In some instances the reason would be that nearly all the gold has been mined and there is insufficient in the district to warrant the continuation of the mines. It could

also be that development has not been carried out as it should have been and further ore bodies have not been proved; and consequently, the mines have come to the end of their production. But anyone who knows the Goldfields realises that it is not possible to have a continuance of mining unless a proper programme of prospecting and mining is carried out. There is one problem with which we are confronted today—and this is referred to in the motion—namely, the falling production from prospectors.

It is necessary to prospect for gold before mining is commenced. When a mine has been developed, it is also necessary to continue prospecting, either on the surface or by an underground developmental programme. At present, that is done by a system of diamond drilling, but if that is not going on to the extent that it should be, the known ore reserves being mined are being depleted and the mine or field is gradually dying. So consideration must be given to encouraging prospectors and small mine-owners. Mining syndicates and the small mining companies should be encouraged because on them depends quite a lot whether the big mines are to be developed or not. Even the working of very small mines is greatly adding to the economy of the State by virtue of the gold they produce.

I would say that, in the main, large mining companies are not in the same position; they are not confronted with difficulties to the same extent that the prospectors and small companies are. While costs, of course, do bear heavily on them—and we know that costs have risen out of all knowledge in the last few years—they have been able to take steps—and some of them have taken very effective steps—to mine their ore more cheaply than they did before. They have thus been able to absorb some of the large amount of cost rises with which they have been confronted. The large companies have introduced very efficient methods of mining; they have mechanised mines and have taken advantage of new types of machinery which have come to light in the last few years, thus enabling them to obtain a greater production at less cost.

I would like to refer to one of the methods adopted on most of the large mines, that is the changing from the older type of rock-breaking machines to the new machine they have at present, known as jack-leg machines. These are very light machines and in conjunction with them a steel bit tipped with tungsten carbide is used. That is faster and does not require anywhere near the amount of sharpening that the older type of bit needed. Consequently, today, miners are able to break out more ore and to develop more footage than could be done with the older type of machine. That has had a great effect on reducing the cost to the industry insofar as the large companies are concerned.

The prospector, of course, has not behind him the money backing that is necessary to take advantage of these things. He first has to find his mine and then develop it.

Hon. E. Nulsen: He is a very essential and important individual.

Mr. MOIR: He is, and I propose to show how important he is regarded in the industry by quoting from the report of the President of the Chamber of Mines which he submitted at the annual meeting. I also wish to point out that the mining industry is in the fortunate position of having very little industrial trouble in its midst today. As we know, there has been no trouble for some time. We find that other industries are experiencing all sorts of trouble, which means that costs are being added to because of stoppages and the other impacts that are suffered in consequence. While workers in the mining industry insist on their rights of being as well paid as, if not better paid than, people in other industries, they do have a sense of responsibility and can get together with the employer and resolve their difficulties without resorting to drastic action. As an instance of that, I will quote the words of the President of the Chamber of Mines in his annual report. With reference to industrial relations he says—

I am happy to be able to state again that we have had a very satisfactory year as regards our relations with the industrial unions. I feel that the unions appreciate the difficulties under which we are labouring and are showing that spirit of co-operation which has always prevailed on these Goldfields. The employees are well protected under their various awards and in conferences with the union which have been held during the year there has been no lack of that spirit of understanding of the other side's problems which has always characterised discussions between the unions and the Chamber of Mines.

I mention that in passing so that members will be fully aware of the fact that the industry is not confronted with the same industrial problems as are other industries. The following is what the President of the Chamber of Mines has to say in regard to prospectors:—

Though prospectors have in a few instances during the year discovered rich patches of gold, prospecting is still at a very low ebb. In an industry such as ours all producing mines must eventually come to the time when they are worked out, and if the industry is to continue to play its part in the national economy as it has done for so many years, then other deposits must be found to take the place of those mines which have become exhausted. I think it is in the interest of the State Government, there-

fore, that the prospectors, or rather the prospecting side of the industry, should be given more attention than it receives at present. Not only should the genuine type of prospector be encouraged to get out into the bush but if he unearths anything of promise then he should be assisted by the Government with all facilities towards determining whether his discovery is of sufficient importance to warrant taking up by a large development company which would in turn be in a position to bring it to the producing stage. The money is not available by the mining companies today to take the risks that were taken in past years, and little money is forthcoming from outside investors for this purpose. I feel, therefore, it has now become a function of Government to help the industry to replace its casualties by assisting in bringing new finds up to the stage of proving whether a deposit is worthwhile or not. The present-day prospector, or those few of them who are still seeking gold, are almost invariably looking for rich patches and not large lower grade deposits.

That will indicate the value that is placed on prospecting by the President of the Chamber of Mines. If we are to rejuvenate this industry special attention will have to be given to prospectors. I have here some figures which will indicate the tremendous decline in prospecting. I wish to draw a comparison between the year 1939—because that was the peak year before the war interrupted operations—and that of 1951.

As members know, the mining industry was very hard hit by the war because, of course, everything had to give way to the urgent necessity of defending our nation. In 1939 there were 1,776 prospecting areas of a total acreage of 34,786. In 1951 they had dropped to 390 prospecting areas of a total acreage of 6,437. This is quite a serious drop. On the other hand, goldmining leases for that period have fallen from 1,574 with a total acreage of 27,037 to 1,410 with an acreage of 25,939. It will be noted that there is not the same drop in leases as there is in the prospecting areas because certain large mining companies have taken up a large number of leases.

I have not the figures showing the number of prospectors engaged in the industry in 1939 but I will quote the number of prospectors who in 1948 were members of the Amalgamated Prospectors' Association—and practically all prospectors belong to that association. The number of prospectors in 1948 was 513; in 1951 the number had dropped to 204—a decline of 309. In 1951 there were only 204 prospectors engaged in the industry and we can assume that there has since been a further decline in their number. We should, of course, realise that a lot of

these men would not be full-time prospectors but would be engaged in mining, go out at the week-ends or for certain periods of the year, do their prospecting, and then return to the mining industry. So it can be seen that there has been a very serious decline in the number of prospectors. Where previously I suppose there would have been thousands of men engaged in prospecting now we have a couple of hundred at the very most.

One of the problems confronting the prospector today is the tremendous increase in the price of explosives. We all know that one does not dig very far without using explosives. So, if there is one thing the Government can do to assist the prospector it is by subsidising to a certain extent the cost to him of explosives. When we examine the position of mining companies we find that in 1939 the principal gold producers in Western Australia numbered 33; that was in the big mines then operating. Today out of that 33 which operated in 1939, 21 are out of production. The principal gold producers in 1939 and their production were as follows:—

PRINCIPAL GOLD PRODUCERS IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA, 1939.

Name of Company.	Ore Treated.	Gold therefrom.	Dwts.
	long tons.	fine ozs.	per ton.
Lake View & Star, Ltd.	604,340	171,823	5.68
Wiluna Gold Mines, Ltd.	581,245	90,169	3.10
Great Boulder Pty., Ltd.	358,364	110,325	6.16
Big Bell Mines, Ltd.	447,322	59,727	2.67
Sons of Gwalia, Ltd.	136,114	45,617	6.70
Boulder Perseverance, Ltd.	114,539	37,581	6.58
North Kalgoorlie (1912), Ltd.	139,206	49,476	7.11
South Kalgoorlie Consolidated, Ltd.	89,405	24,836	5.56
Norseman Gold Mines, N.L.	123,404	31,046	5.03
Broken Hill Pty., Ltd. (Hannans North)	37,162	17,022	9.16
Ingliston Consols Extended	17,107	3,035	3.55
Lancefield (W.A.) G.M., N.L.	128,343	32,041	4.99
Mt. Magnet Gold Mines, Ltd.	60,019	7,091	2.36
Triton Gold Mines, N.L.	107,201	33,776	6.30
Ora Banda Amalgamated, N.L.	18,955	8,020	8.46
Gold Mines of Kalgoorlie, Ltd.	104,052	34,419	6.62
Yellowknife Gold Development, N.L.	47,534	23,703	9.98
Cox's Find (Western Mining Corporation, Ltd.)	17,615	12,657	14.37
Central Norseman Gold Corporation, N.L.	88,313	35,255	7.96
Moonlight Wiluna, Ltd.	95,805	28,816	5.60
Younambi Gold Mines, Ltd.	77,221	20,696	5.86
Paringa Mining & Exploration Co., Ltd.	78,676	18,749	4.77
First Hit Gold Mine, N.L.	7,949	5,034	12.67
Comet Gold Mines, Ltd.	5,872	5,564	18.95
Hill 50 Gold Mine, N.L.	24,764	7,912	6.39
Riverina Gold Mines, Ltd.	2,424	932	7.69
Lady Shenton Gold Mines, N.L.	927	664	14.32
Kalgoorlie Enterprise, Ltd.	59,336	19,274	6.40
Emu Gold Mines, Ltd.	48,542	12,649	5.21
Edna May Amalgamated G.M.'s., N.L.	15,822	5,970	7.55
Blue Bird, N.L.	1,169	4,004	68.50
Consolidated G.M.'s. of Coolgardie, Ltd.	43,106	8,764	4.07
Gladsthorpe Gold Mines, Ltd.	24,169	6,760	5.49
Remainder (small mine-owners and prospectors)	389,186	216,979	11.15
Total	4,095,257	1,188,236	5.80

The mining companies operating today, together with the number of men employed, are as follows:—

Name of Company.	No. Men Employed.	Ore Treated.	Gold therefrom.	Average dwts.
		long tons.	fine ozs.	per ton.
Big Bell Mines, Ltd.	470	389,412.00	49,726.30	2.692
Hill 50 Gold Mine, N.L.	103	28,352.00	7,557.21	5.331
Sons of Gwalia, Ltd.	250	73,825.00	19,185.81	5.198
Moonlight Wiluna, Ltd. (Timoni Leases)	84	23,976.00	11,402.13	9.511
Boulder Perseverance, Ltd.	274	135,474.62	33,125.94	4.890
Gold Mines of Kalgoorlie, Ltd.	372	167,899.00	46,843.03	5.580
Gt. Boulder Pty. G.M.'s, Ltd.	665	325,924.00	86,985.60	5.338
Kalgoorlie Enterprise Mines, Ltd.	93	56,049.53	16,897.37	6.029
Lake View & Star, Ltd.	1,009	614,051.00	145,680.51 (a)	4.745
North Kalgoorlie (1912), Ltd.	481	255,314.69	69,395.49	4.653
Paringa Mining & Exploration Co., Ltd.	93	8,231.00	2,811.11	6.830
South Kalgoorlie Cons., Ltd.	180	98,594.86	24,425.57	4.955
Broken Hill Pty. Co., Ltd.	25	9,824.00	3,326.78 (c)	7.136
New Coolgardie G.M.'s, N.L. (Hampton Plains)	221	41,766.00	20,913.79	10.017
Central Norseman Gold Corporation, N.L.	374	151,322.00	43,868.05	5.798
Western Mining Corporation, Ltd. (New Callion Leases)	...	10,140.00	4,283.47	9.435
Golden Horsehoe (New), Ltd.	(b) 6,559.09	...
Kalgoorlie Ore Treatment Co., Ltd.
Remainder	...	102,033.62	55,893.57	...
State Totals	...	2,471,679.32	648,244.81	5.245

(a) Also 9,364 fine ozs. from re-treatment of old sands.

(b) Sands re-treatment only.

(c) Includes 405.91 fine ozs. from 694 tons of clean-up material.

I should explain that the Paringa Company has gone out of production and has been let to tributaries; the Broken Hill Proprietary Company has gone out of production, the New Coolgardie (Hampton Plains) is a new mine that has come into production since 1939 and the Western Mining Corporation is a new mine that has been opened up only in the last few years. Those figures show that the total production in 1939 was 1,188,286 ounces, whereas the production last year was only 648,244.81 ounces. That shows how very serious the drop in the production of gold has been. The number of principal mines operating at present is only 17, compared with 33 in 1939.

I should like to show what the industry means to the towns where these mines operate. This information was kindly supplied to me by the Secretary of the Chamber of Mines, Kalgoorlie. In the Kalgoorlie and Boulder areas, exclusive of

the Kalgoorlie Power Corporation, the amount of wages paid in the 12 months was £3,015,100. That is a considerable sum, and it not only circulates in those towns but also benefits other parts of the State. Last year the total amount paid by the industry in wages was £4,340,123, out of a total production value of £9,041,923, so that the wages paid by the whole of the goldmining industry last year amounted to 48 per cent. of the total.

The industry has provided employment for a large number of men. In 1939 the total employed in the industry was 15,216, whereas last year it was only 6,766, thus showing a loss to the industry of 8,450 men. Those figures indicate the big drop in employment on the deep mines. The industry was given a flip in 1949 when, owing to the revaluation of sterling, the price of gold rose to £15 9s. 10d. an ounce. It is interesting to note the gradual increase in the price of gold over the years as follows:—

Weighted average price of gold per fine ounce paid at the Perth branch of the Royal Mint.

	£	s.	d.
1929	4	4	11½
1930	4	9	4
1931	5	17	5
1932	7	5	5
1933	7	13	4
1934	8	10	8
1935	8	15	8½
1936	8	14	3
1937	8	14	8
1938	8	17	6
1939	9	15	2
1940	10	13	1½
1941	10	13	8
1942	10	9	0
1943	10	9	0
1944	10	10	2
1945	10	13	10
1946	10	15	3

(From 9/6/1945)

1947	10	15	3
1948	10	15	3
1949	12	5	7
1950	15	9	10

(From 19/9/1949)

1951	15	9	10
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The increased price for gold enabled the industry to contemplate the future with greater confidence, but since 1950, costs have risen so alarmingly that the benefits derived from the increased price have been almost completely swallowed up. Mining companies are confronted with rising costs, not only on account of the inflationary spiral, but also because the Government found it necessary to increase railway freights. To show the effect of the heavier freights, I propose to read an extract from a letter from the Secretary of the Chamber of Mines as follows:—

Freights: Prior to the increase of railway freights in May, 1951, the freights paid during one year by gold

mining companies in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder area and the Kalgoorlie Electric Power and Lighting Corporation Ltd. amounted to £158,705. The increased railages paid as a result of the general increase in 1951 for the year ended 30th June, 1952, covering the main items only of fuel oil, firewood, mining timber and explosives, amounted to £36,337. It is estimated that increased railage which will be paid on firewood and coal carried on the Government lines after the Power Corporation changes over from firewood, ex Lakewood Firewood Co. Pty. Ltd., to coal fuel, will amount to £34,650. Thus when this change-over does eventuate the total increases to freights as a result of the increase in May, 1951, on the major items mentioned above and, for mines in the Kalgoorlie and Boulder area only, will amount to £70,987.

Hence the increase in railway freights has imposed that added burden on the mining companies. There have been other increases that have raised the costs borne by mining companies. I do not propose to enumerate them all, but will quote a reference in the same letter to fuel oil, as follows:—

Fuel Oil: Increases in fuel oil are somewhat difficult to arrive at but over a period of two years the increase on the purchase price of fuel oil consumed by one company amounts to £80,640. If the whole of this had been purchased at present day prices there would have been a further considerable increase. As you are aware, prices are continually rising.

The Attorney General: They received a reduction the other day.

Mr. MOIR: I am not aware of it.

The Attorney General: Well, they did.

Mr. MOIR: It would need to have been a very substantial reduction to be of any real benefit.

The Attorney General: It was substantial—£1 per ton on fuel oil.

Mr. Butcher: And 10s. on Diesel oil.

Mr. MOIR: One of the problems besetting the mining industry is that, unlike other industries, it does not sell its product, in the main, to the highest bidder. Since the formation of the International Monetary Fund, the price of gold has been governed by the decisions of that body, and America as the purchasing country is prepared to pay only 35 dollars an ounce for gold. Of course, there is little that this country could do about that matter, but it is interesting to note what it means to the industry.

Last year, the International Monetary Fund, upon representations being made to it, agreed that a certain amount of Australia's gold production might be sold on

the premium market. I might say there has been a market outside of the International Monetary Fund on which people were prepared to pay more than the 35 dollars an oz., but owing to the restrictions placed on the sale of gold by the International Monetary Fund, the producers could not avail themselves of it. In the first instance, South Africa was granted permission to sell a certain proportion of its gold production on that market, provided it was sold as industrial gold. I would like to read the remarks relating to the International Monetary Fund, made by Sir Walter Massy-Greene, Chairman of Directors of the Western Mining Corporation Ltd., at the annual meeting of the company, held on the 4th September, 1952—

Last September the I.M.F. was confronted with the fact, despite all its efforts and those of the countries which slavishly tried to adhere to the principles on which the I.M.F. was mistakenly founded, that the gold policy of the I.M.F. was breaking down. Indeed it had in fact broken down. It was known that under the pretence of ultimate manufacture very large quantities of gold were being disposed of at varying premiums throughout the world, both legally and illegally. Comparatively little was finding its way into the national reserves. Bowing to the pressure of the realities of the situation the controllers of the I.M.F. somersaulted on their previous policy and gave to their members what amounted to an open licence to sell whatever new gold any member country produced on the free market.

After this decision by the I.M.F. this company, in conjunction with the Chamber of Mines in Kalgoorlie, immediately made application to and obtained from the Commonwealth Government permission to take advantage of the change in I.M.F. policy, so allowing us to sell the whole of the gold on the free markets of the world. For this purpose a co-operative Gold Producers' Association Ltd. was formed. All the gold is for all practical purposes pooled on a fine gold basis: a small quantity is retained by the Commonwealth Bank to meet the needs of local manufacturers. The rest is sold on the "Free" market for premiums which vary both up and down, and, though relatively small, as the Government insists on all sales being made for dollars, are nevertheless, most welcome in these days of rising costs, as a small but useful setoff against the rising prices of everything we use and of the labour we employ. The limitation which compels us to make all sales for dollars prevents us obtaining the higher premium available in non-dollar currencies.

For the first nine months during which sales on the "Free" market were permissible the Government insisted on the debasement of the gold from fine gold, in which state we purchase it from the Commonwealth Bank, to a lower carat content before the dealers, to whom we sell, were allowed to export the metal. This caused us quite unnecessary expense. As everyone connected with the business knew, the debasement was insisted on to create the impression that the gold was being used in industry, whereas by far the greater part was being hoarded and held as a hedge against the ever diminishing value of money as prices of commodities continued to rise and the purchasing power of paper money continued to fall.

To the 19th August, the amount of gold released by the Commonwealth Bank to the Gold Producers' Association for sale on the free market totalled 773,369 fine ounces. This figure includes gold delivered by members to the end of July only.

The premium realised by the Gold Producers' Association on the sale of this gold amounted to £830,317, equivalent to £1/1/5.67 per fine ounce, from which selling expenses and cost of administration are deductible prior to distribution to members.

Two distributions have been made by the Gold Producers' Association to its members. The first was in respect of gold delivered by members in the three months, November, 1951, to January, 1952, on which the weighted average of the premium received by members was £1/7/10 per fine ounce. The second covered gold delivered in the three months, February to April, 1952, on which the weighted average of the premium received was 16/8d. per fine ounce.

The weighted average of the premium for the six months was £1/2/6d. per fine ounce.

So members can see that this decision enabled gold producers to get a little more for their product. The President of the Chamber of Mines, in his annual report delivered on the 29th May, 1952, had this to say about premium gold—

The free market, as you can well imagine, is dependent on factors quite outside our control and depending on these factors the extra amount to be gained by these sales fluctuates widely and cannot be estimated in advance with any degree of certainty. The first gold to be sold was that lodged with the Mints, Banks or other Commonwealth agencies during the month of November, and since then gold has been regularly sold at roughly monthly intervals. The price has fluctuated

quite considerably and sales to date have varied from as high as 34s. 9d. to 12s. 6d. per ounce premium.

While the amount received from The Gold Producers' Association is a welcome addition to the revenue of gold mining companies, it is felt that the real solution to our present difficulties is only to be found in a rise in the dollar price of gold. It is considered that this must take place eventually but it is, of course, impossible to predict just when. There has been no change whatever in the attitude of Governments towards the production of gold. Gold is still desired by all Governments though none of them has as yet taken any steps to adjust the price in a way which will secure its continued production.

So there has been a certain amount of benefit gained by the companies, and the small producers, too, through being allowed to sell their gold on the premium market. But the position is such today, with the ever-increasing costs and the various difficulties with which mining companies and other producers of gold are confronted, that even the major companies will be in serious difficulty unless we can find some solution to their problems and adopt some methods which will assist them, and this applies particularly to the small mine-owner, the small mining syndicate and the prospector for gold.

The prospector is not concerned only with gold, because he is a man of wide knowledge, and is prepared to work any payable mineral that he finds. After all, he is not searching for gold just because he is very fond of gold, but because of the monetary return he can get from the sale of it. Certainly gold has an appeal, and because from time to time spectacular rises have been made by prospectors and small mining companies who have discovered large quantities of it, it will continue to be attractive. We have had this experience quite recently in the camel paddock at Coolgardie. Last year two prospectors, Brown and Hart, discovered a very rich show there which was aptly named "Brown's Eldorado". From this show about £48,000 worth of gold was taken in a few months.

Hon. E. Nulsen: That find was made by a prospector.

Mr. MOIR: Yes. The previous year a very rich show which, unfortunately, did not live down to depth, and so did not last long, was discovered at Gwalla. That was the Jessy Alma mine from which many thousands of pounds worth of gold were taken in a few months. These finds have been made in areas that have been prospected, probably by thousands of men over a period of 50 years, and in the case of Coolgardie, 60 years. This proves that it does not matter how many discoveries are made on a mining field, there are still more to be made.

I feel there should be some scheme for prospecting these areas, and Government assistance given where the work entailed is beyond the capacity of the small man. This industry is too important for us just to stand by and watch it slowly fade away. Fortunately some of the larger mining companies have the courage to spend money on the development of the areas under their control; and here I want to refer particularly to the Western Mining Corporation. This company is prepared to take up large areas of land and to prospect them in an effort to prove its theories in regard to their gold content.

Hon. E. Nulsen: It has done a wonderful job. It really made Norseman.

Mr. MOIR: Yes. The Western Mining Corporation operates, through its subsidiary companies, at Fimlston, Norseman, Coolgardie and Callion. It is rejuvenating Bullfinch which, only a few years ago, amounted to nothing more than an abandoned minefield. The company has rebuilt the whole town there and provided homes for the people. When I say that the company rebuilt the town, I mean it provided the incentive. It laid down the foundation for a thriving community to work and live there, and to advance themselves in all material ways. This has happened in an area that was looked on only a few years ago as being played out. The company has spent a large amount of money on the development of the area, and on machinery for working what will be one of the major mines in the State.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. MOIR: I had mentioned the fact that the Great Western Mining Corporation, which operates on the Goldfields today, has a great influence in the gold-mining world. That company has shown lots of confidence in the future of the industry inasmuch as it is prepared to spend large sums of money in exploring, prospecting and developing country for the purpose of mining. Over the past few years this company has held the opinion that there is a southward extension of the Golden Mile. At present the mine which works the most southerly portion of that area is the Hannan's Star, one of the Lake View and Star group of mines.

The Western Mining Corporation has formed a subsidiary company and has taken up a large area of country running southwards from Hannan's Lake. The company has done a considerable amount of deep drilling in the area. I do not know the extent of the drilling but they have a machine that is capable of drilling to 7,000ft. and I believe the company has had encouraging results from its exploratory work. As an indication of the encouragement the company has received from this drilling, there appears in the "Kalgoorlie Miner" of the 13th September, the following:—

Western Mining Corporation Limited has lodged with the Kalgoorlie Mines Department applications for 158 gold mining leases, each of approximately 24 acres or a total of about 3,778 acres, located at the extreme southern end of the leases now held by Kalgoorlie Southern Gold Mines, N.L.

The tract of country is roughly 3½ miles long by 2 miles wide and the new southern extremity is now down beyond and east of Mt. Hunt.

This large group is believed to be the greatest number of applications taken in any one day at a mining registrar's office in this State.

This latest development would indicate that the field operations of the Kalgoorlie southern group of leases have given encouragement.

It will be recalled that over a week ago, in Melbourne, Sir Walter Massy-Greene, the chairman of directors of Western Mining Corporation Limited, which acts as general managers for Kalgoorlie Southern Gold Mines, N.L., told the annual meeting of the company that "encouraging results" had been obtained in the diamond drilling of the northern section of the area of possible interest.

Earlier, the technical managing director of Western Mining Corporation Limited, Mr. G. Lindesay Clark, had reported that the prospects of Kalgoorlie Southern Gold Mines, N.L., gave every encouragement to persevere with prospecting. Drilling to date, he said, indicated that the structure of the Kalgoorlie goldfields was continuing south in the manner anticipated from the geological and geophysical survey. Drilling showed that gold mineralisation was extending south.

To a certain extent that proves that the company has been justified in its development programme. While we have companies with large resources and the courage and initiative to search for new gold areas, if conditions continue as in the past, with sharply-rising costs, this initiative will be of no avail unless they strike some fabulously rich ore-bearing country. Even though that company is carrying out a programme of searching for ore, which may be thousands of feet beneath the overburden, it would require a tremendous sum of money to open up mines. Consequently, in these days of rising costs, a company must give serious consideration to any proposition, no matter how good it may appear, before it expends enormous sums of money to sink shafts which may have to go 2,000 or 3,000ft. deep. Also there is the heavy cost of development that must take place before one ton of ore can be raised to the surface to be treated.

In the past other companies have had faith in the future of the industry, and I refer in particular to the Lake View & Star Company which is the largest operator in this State and employs about 1,000 men on its mines at Fimiston. That company entered the industry when it was in the doldrums and took over a group of what could be classed as derelict mines. By introducing new methods that had not been used in Australia it was able successfully to rejuvenate the mines, and develop them to the extent that today the firm produces more gold than any other in this State. However, the position is different today because these companies are confronted with all sorts of difficulties which could become so much worse in the future if something is not done to remedy the position.

A few years ago a company set out to develop a mine at Porphyry. It spent a considerable sum of money and employed a fair number of men to develop that mine on a large scale. A small but complete township sprang up with good houses, formed roads, mining buildings, and a considerable amount of underground development work was done before a shortage of labour caused a suspension of operations when they were on the verge of reaching the production stage. Since that time costs have risen to such an extent that the development is still suspended, notwithstanding the fact that the labour position has reversed because, instead of there being a shortage, there is now a surplus of skilled men.

It can be readily appreciated that the men employed in the goldmining industry are highly skilled. A miner does not become fully proficient within a few months or a few years. Some men, of course, may be peculiarly suited to mining and pick up the rudiments of the industry more quickly than others, but the general opinion is that the average miner requires long experience before he becomes highly skilled and because of that his services are eagerly sought after. Men who have become efficient at mining in the goldmines of this State can be found working in other States, South Africa and even in the United States of America, and some of them hold extremely high positions in mining ventures.

I consider that the School of Mines at Kalgoorlie cannot be equalled by any other similar organisation in Australia. At that school opportunity is given to young men to pursue their studies and to qualify as expert mining engineers, geologists and in other occupations associated with the goldmining industry. As I have said, the graduates from that school have found employment not only in this State and in other parts of the Commonwealth, but also all over the world. If circumstances arise—and I sincerely hope they will not—that will mean the decline of the mining industry in this area where it is rea-

sonably prosperous at present, it would represent a major catastrophe to the people dependent on the industry and indeed to the whole of the State.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Mr. MOIR: I say that because the goldmining industry is a major factor in the economic life of the State, even in those times when we are fairly prosperous, on account of the high prices that are received for our primary products. It is just as important to our economy when, unfortunately, we have not been receiving even reasonable prices for our primary products. My mind goes back to the early 1930's when thousands of people were unemployed and, if the mining industry had not been able to absorb a large number of those people, the State would have faced a greater crisis than it did.

I do not want to labour the point, but I consider that the troubles which beset the industry and the people in it, right down from the large companies to the small ones and even to the individual who goes out prospecting for gold, should be the subject of investigation and inquiry in order that we may hear the views of people who are thoroughly acquainted with the industry and expert at dealing with its problems, and who could possibly tell us of some methods by which we can alleviate the difficulties that are being faced by those engaged in the industry today.

I know that Governments cannot perform the impossible. There are some things which are right outside the scope of this Government and even the Commonwealth Government in regard to the production of gold, and as to which they cannot do much. However, I consider that there are quite a number of ways in which we could render assistance to this important industry, and we would be entirely lacking in our duty as representatives of the people if we allowed things to go on as they are without endeavouring to get to the root of the trouble and effecting a remedy. I therefore appeal to the House to give earnest consideration to the case I have put forward, and agree to a committee being appointed to hold an investigation and take evidence to ascertain whether there are any means that lie within our scope by which the industry can be assisted and, if so, so that we can endeavour to put them into operation.

On motion by the Minister for Housing, debate adjourned.

MOTION—SUPERPHOSPHATE.

As to Inquiry into Production, Distribution, etc.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [7.50]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House a departmental inquiry should be held into the production, distribution, stor-

age and cost of superphosphate as affecting its use and the economy of this State.

As it affects the primary industries of this State, I believe that super is of national importance and should be treated on a national basis. Our main industries are primary producing in one form or another and it is to our primary producers that we look for our national wealth. Our soils are such that without the aid of super or artificial fertilisers they would soon become impoverished and practically useless from a producing point of view. Anything we can do with regard to adding to the phosphatic nature of our soil should be done. This applies both to our best soils and to our poorest soils.

We find on investigation in some of the well-established districts that farmers there use super in large quantities to keep their soils up to the standard of production. There is also the question of our light lands; lands about which we hear and talk so much. What are we doing to bring them into production? I do not think we are doing enough. Let us take a point north of Northampton at Ajana and cut right down to the coast at Esperance. We find there hundreds of thousands of acres of land that would be quite easy to cultivate and would be prolific in their production if treated in the right manner. The only way they can be treated is by the application of super in large quantities.

I consider this land should be developed as quickly as possible. If our State is to progress and we are to make the natural advancement expected of us as a part of the Commonwealth and part of the British nation, and if we are to assist in feeding the people of other countries who are less fortunately situated than we are, then this land should be developed in a practical and proper manner by men with practical experience who know their job. How can we expect them to develop it, however, if they are to be constantly worried by the thought that they cannot get the amount of super required for the job, and worried also with the high cost of super? I say that under such conditions it will not be possible for these men to develop the land.

Today we find the producers are very chary about going into this class of country because of the high incidence of taxation in the first place, and in the second because of the high price of super. I would advocate that a planning committee be set up for the production of this commodity with a view to increasing it by 50 per cent. Where necessary, larger storage facilities should be made available at the various works so that the super could be properly cured and dried before being sent out to producers. Should it be a matter of materials for these buildings

—materials like steel, cement and so on which are in short supply—I contend that the State Government should see that they are made available for such purposes. At present a lot of extra work and expense are caused to farmers who have to take their super on early orders.

I have had complaints from farmers who have had to take delivery of super before Christmas, that before the following May the super is so hard that it has to be broken up and in some cases re-bagged at great inconvenience and considerable cost. Something should be done to see that the commodity is properly cured and dried before it is sent out to the farmers. An effort should be made by the Government to have the price of super reduced; at the present time I consider it is excessive. On some farms on the Wongan line it costs £20 a ton delivered on the farm; that is far too dear for our primary producers.

It is quite easy for some people to say that farmers can afford to pay that price. I do not think they can. A few of them may be able to do so, but what about the man who is new in the industry; the man who is battling to establish pastures on light sandy soils and those who are expected to open up our sandplain country? What about the market gardener? To my mind the price is far too high for those people. All our producers need super and need it in large quantities if they are to keep our production up to a high level, and if they are to enrich our soils and leave them in a better state than they were when they found them.

It is the duty of any producer not to impoverish the soil, but to build it up. We can only do that by the use of super and artificial fertilisers. The Commonwealth Government should be approached to return the subsidy it took away a few years ago; if necessary it should increase that subsidy. That is why I say it is of national importance that something should be done to try to put the distribution and the price of the production costs of our super on a better level. To my mind the answer to the call for more production, about which we hear so much, lies in an increased supply of super and as I said before, for that reason it should be made cheaper.

So, firstly we should have a 50 per cent. increase in the production of super; secondly, better distribution to producers; thirdly, increased storage facilities at works for all super; and fourthly a substantial reduction in the price. If we could achieve these objectives, it would have a beneficial influence on the production and economy of the State. The reason why the motion asks for a departmental inquiry is that I believe, in the Department of Agriculture, we have officers who are very capable and could

conduct such an inquiry to the satisfaction of all concerned in the least possible time. I commend this motion to the House and wait with interest to hear the views of other speakers on this very important subject.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. SEWELL (Geraldton) [7.59] in moving the second reading said: This Bill seeks to rectify an omission that was made when the Licensing Act was amended last year. There are two licensed premises in this State—one at Geraldton—which come under this section of the Act and have an Australian wine and beer license. Under the amendment to the Act which was made last year these premises do not enjoy the privileges given to those premises with a publican's general license and a hotel license.

The Premier: Was it an omission?

MR. SEWELL: It was an omission so far as we are concerned.

Hon. E. Nulsen: I think it was.

MR. SEWELL: This relates to Sunday sessions provided for in the measure passed last year. There is no reason why this licensee should not enjoy the same privilege as has been extended to holders of publican's general licenses and hotel licenses. The house is well kept and well conducted.

MR. GRIFFITH: What is the name of the licensed premises to which you are referring?

MR. SEWELL: The Murchison Inn. The Bill proposes to insert in Subsection (2) (c) (i) of the amended Section 122 the words "or an Australian wine and beer license." If the Bill receives approval, it will remove an anomaly and place the holder of an Australian wine and beer license on the same footing as regards Sunday trading as the holder of a hotel license or a publican's general license. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

MOTION—WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 24th September on the following motion by Mr. Hoar:—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire and report upon all aspects of war service land settlement, as authorised under the War Service Land Settlement Agreement Act of 1945 and subsequent Acts and regulations.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [8.2]: The member for Warren, in his motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to inquire into aspects of soldier settlement, endeavoured to discredit the activities of the present Government in war service land settlement. Although he spoke at length, he dealt with only two matters. He covered quite a lot of ground in explaining that he did not want his criticism to be regarded in any way as political, and then proceeded to attack the Government for its failure to acquire a larger number of private properties, together with failure to resume estates compulsorily. He also claimed that the provisions of the agreement had been deliberately broken down by the Government.

I feel that it is necessary to go back a few years and remind members of the conditions that existed when the agreement was being framed. There were general fears of unemployment after the war, following demobilisation, and a Post-war Reconstruction Committee was appointed to examine the means for employing ex-Servicemen. There were also fears of over-production of primary produce, with a consequent slump in prices, and it was realised that the settlers must be safeguarded against this eventuality.

This led to the provisions of Clause (6) of the agreement in the 1945 Act regarding the valuation of farms on an economic basis, a matter that was stressed by the member for Warren. At that time no difficulty was expected in the rapid development of farms or the supply of materials and labour. It appeared that farms would be developed in readiness for ex-Servicemen. However, we know that the position changed rapidly and, instead of there being an abundance of materials and labour, both were almost unobtainable. This was brought about by the buoyant condition of finance and the demands of secondary industry, which was transferring to peace-time activities after the war.

The hon. member stated that 1,439 properties had been offered to the Land Purchase Board up to the 31st May, 1947. Of these, he said that 179 were recommended to the Commonwealth, 268 were awaiting valuation, and 300 were withdrawn by owners because they were tired of and disgusted at waiting for action. These farms total 767, or approximately only half of the 1,439 farms under offer. I point out that, of the 1,439 properties offered, a large proportion were obviously unsuitable for war service land settlement. The hon. member suggested about 50 per cent. They consisted of piggeries, poultry farms, small hill properties and farms generally that were obviously unsuitable.

Members will recall that, under the National Security Regulations and later under the Land Sales Control Act, 1948,

before a sale could be effected and a transfer completed, all rural lands had to be submitted to the Controller of Land Sales. These provisions resulted in large numbers of properties being submitted as perhaps suitable for soldier settlement which, while appearing in the records as submissions, were immediately released as being quite unsuitable. Some vendors withdrew their properties from sale, but a number of these properties were available to ex-Service men who were able to finance the purchase with their own capital and the £1,000 Commonwealth rehabilitation loan.

A mere statement that 320 owners withdrew their properties because they were tired of waiting for action prior to 1947, which really means prior to the present Government's coming into power, cannot be accepted by me. The hon. member, when pressed for his "reliable authority" for this information, evaded the question.

Mr. Hoar: I did nothing of the sort.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I still ask him to name that reliable authority.

Mr. Hoar: I gave it to you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It does not need an inquiry to prove that properties were not purchased as rapidly as they were offered during the earlier years of the scheme, particularly in 1946 and 1947. The Commonwealth insisted that valuations of farms should be made by officers of the Taxation Department. Although requests were made by the State for further valuers to be employed, the Commonwealth found it impossible to obtain trained men. This difficulty was gradually remedied and, during 1948, the lag in the inspection of properties was overcome. Members of the Land Purchase Board should be congratulated upon their efforts to purchase properties. The results achieved in spite of the difficulties compare more than favourably with the activities in other States.

Mr. Hoar: That is a very good write-up.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes; I intend to read every word of it, and give the House the correct information. Up to the 10th October, 1947, the total area in Western Australia purchased or approved for purchase by the Commonwealth was about 28 per cent. higher than the combined totals for Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. Up to the 30th June, 1949, a total of 412 properties had been purchased at a cost of £2,330,345. The hon. member referred to a challenge from the Soldier Settlers' Association that it would undertake to find within 12 months sufficient farms of approved standard to settle all applicants who had received approval up to that time. The number of suitable settlers with practical experience was then 1,536 and, as the member for Warren stated that the num-

ber of all properties under offer was only 1,439, the possibility of achievement was quite absurd.

Mr. Hoar: Why did you not accept the challenge of the Soldier Settlers' Association when it offered to provide you with farms?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is particularly the case, in view of the total number of properties that were purchased for war service land settlement up to the 30th June, 1952. These total 595, which will subdivide into 830 farms. This Government was very sincere in its efforts to speed up the purchase of farms and avoid delay through undue inspections that were necessary to obtain Commonwealth approval.

One of the difficulties was the necessity of obtaining approval from the Commonwealth in Sydney before the purchase could be finalised. The Commonwealth was most anxious to help, and approval was given for a system whereby properties considered suitable by the Land Purchase Board and the local representative of the Commonwealth could be purchased immediately under State guarantee. The State took the risk that the property would not prove suitable to the Commonwealth. This system undoubtedly enabled properties to be bought after land sales control regulations ceased to operate, as it placed the board on the same footing in bargaining as any private purchaser. This arrangement operated from May, 1949.

It has been claimed that large estates should have been resumed and that Labour would have embarked on resumption in 1947. Conditions in Western Australia are totally different from those in other States. There are few large estates suitable for subdivision, but we are now developing much good Crown land. The experience in cutting up large estates has been far from encouraging in Western Australia. That was evidenced in the first war. Some large estates are still being readjusted 25 years after their purchase.

Mr. Kelly: Whose fault would that be?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That of the Labour Governments. The Commonwealth always requires reasonable prospects of development without loss. I claim that we are achieving the same result without compulsion, as I will endeavour to show.

Mr. Hoar: That is silly.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member may be a judge of what is silly. A survey was made in 1946 and 1947 by the Director of the War Service Land Settlement Scheme. There was an investigation of 37 estates, each capable of being divided into more than four farms, and the owners were written to. There was a total subdivision into 231 farms. Such estates included Eulanda, Behn Ord, Riversdale, Koolberrin, Munthoola, Tootra,

Waddi Forrest, Jarramongup and many others, all of which have been purchased and subdivided. Very few suitable large estates remain. Opportunity for resumption may yet offer to the hon. member, when he may be sitting on this side of the House.

Mr. Hoar: Do you not believe in it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Believe in what?

Mr. Hoar: Compulsory acquisition in certain circumstances.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not.

Mr. Hoar: Now we know where we are. That is why you took no action.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We got sufficient estates voluntarily.

The Premier: He does not believe in confiscation.

Several members interjected.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Interjections are highly disorderly.

Mr. W. Hegney: The Government is confiscating land every week.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not believe in compulsory acquisition, in taking away land from people.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The State Housing Commission is doing it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member is talking about something different altogether. I am talking about rural land.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: It is the same principle.

Mr. Hoar: You are on wrong ground.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, I am not. Instead of dwelling on the past, why not look at the present and gauge the position as a whole? Individual complaints can be dealt with later.

Mr. Kelly: You said you looked into the past a few weeks ago.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. There have been complaints about the slowness of the scheme. With that I agree, when the matter is viewed in the light of the high hopes of 1945. Generally speaking, the position is satisfactory in comparison with other States with a greater industrial backing, or with other great public works in Western Australia suffering the same disabilities. In New South Wales only 10.7 per cent. of qualified applicants are on farms. Members have seen recent announcements that loans for development and for stock and plant have almost ceased. In Victoria about 12 per cent. of the applicants are on farms. In Western Australia there are 54 per cent. qualified applicants and a much higher percentage of applicants may be regarded as genuine. Farms have been allotted to 831 applicants and eight are

now being interviewed, making a total of 839. There are yet to be allotted 650 wheat and sheep or grazing properties and 45 dairying.

Mr. Hoar: After all this time!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This is the book position. But a recent survey by the allotment board indicated that only 300 wheat and sheep applicants are willing to assist in developing a farm from Crown lands. A large number of the remainder have never even applied for a farm since their initial classification.

Mr. Hoar: I should not think they have! They got tired of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The position with dairy farms is that only 30 applicants replied to letters, stating that they desired properties. More farms are actually being developed than are required for these men, which raises the much larger question of consideration of civilian settlement. I believe that, with regard to the overall job, some credit is due to the officers and employees as well as to the many ex-Servicemen who assisted in achieving what has been done so far.

I would like now to deal with individual complaints raised by the member for Warren. He claimed that the basis of providing a 40-cow farm before a settler could be regarded as established had been broken down. His speech would have created the impression that no dairy applicants were on 40-cow farms, certainly not in the lower South-West. Nothing could be more misleading.

Mr. Hoar: How many are there?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The earlier allotments of dairy farms were made prior to this Government assuming office, and it is as well to remind the hon. member that it is these earlier allotments which are proving the most difficult farms to establish to the full carrying capacity of 40 cows. It may be arguable whether these farms were not allotted too early, in view of the requirement for fencing, erection of milking sheds and living accommodation.

I do not propose to labour the question of the responsibility for the allotment of some farms, which at the time may have seemed reasonable, but for various reasons have proved more difficult than was anticipated, except to refute the statement that this Government is responsible for a breaking down of standards. I do not believe the aims for the establishment of dairy farms have been altered, but to the extent that the hon. member thinks they have, his Government should be prepared to assume its share of responsibility as evidenced by these early allotments.

Mr. Hoar: You said the previous Labour Government had done nothing at all about soldier settlement.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It had prepared the brochures for the first dairy farms. Certain areas are known to be proving more difficult in bringing pastures to higher production than others, the number of farms affected being about 25 per cent. in dairy districts. These special difficulties have been recognised, particularly that of maintenance where the full area for a 40-cow farm consisted principally of newly-developed pastures. Such farmers have not only been assisted in maintaining a portion of this area subject to their undertaking to carry out a reasonable programme themselves, but special concessional repayments based upon the carrying capacity of the farm, have been adopted with the approval of the Commonwealth. These concessional rentals are on a liberal scale and would compare very favourably with the commitments which private farmers are expected to pay with comparable size herds.

Mr. Hoar: Do you deny that most dairy farmers today are working on a 26-cow herd?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: As an indication—

Mr. Hoar: You do not believe in interjections?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I repeat, as an indication to members of these concessions, a farmer with a carrying capacity of 25 cows pays £23 per annum. This would include the use of the farm, a good house, and stock and plant, including a motor vehicle.

Mr. J. Hegney: Who prepared this for you? Let us hear something from you instead of hearing you read it. The member for Warren did not read what he had to tell us.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not half he did not! As the productivity of pasture increases, it is expected that carrying capacity will increase also. Certain areas are known to be proving—. I have already dealt with this.

Mr. Kelly: The needle is stuck on the record.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. After all, it is desired to give the House the correct information.

Mr. W. Hegney: What are you frightened of?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am not frightened of anything. The member for Geraldton just moved a motion, and he read every word he uttered. I do not blame him for that.

Mr. Sewell: No, he did not.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, he did. I watched him. Evidently members do not want the facts.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister for Lands is a veteran.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These farmers, it is claimed, are being treated liberally and should ultimately own a very valuable asset. The hon. member said the R. & I. Bank wanted to hand back all dairy farms to the Land Settlement Board. This is a mis-statement. I will admit it was said by a branch manager in the country, but this did not represent the view of the bank, officially. The position is that of the 70 farms transferred to the R. & I. Bank, all but 26 are paying full commitments and are, therefore, presumably on a 40-cow basis.

In speaking on the Address-in-reply, the member for Warren advocated this principle of the building up of a dairy farm by stages rather than by clearing a full area at the beginning. I hope he remembers that. This is the policy that has been adopted by the Land Settlement Board, and it has proved more satisfactory. Success, however, depends on progressively increasing the dairy herds rather than keeping cows static and increasing dry stock or steers. A farm running 25 cows might actually have a capacity for 30 cows. Very few farmers are not playing the game, but there will always be some who object when the department suggests running more cows and less other stock. I shall give a few examples because the hon. member, the other evening, dwelt on the lack of pasture and the possibility of these dairy farmers building up their herds to a 40-cow basis.

Mr. Hoar: Within a reasonable time, yes.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Here are a few examples of what is happening today, and the reason for it is the high price of beef:—

Examples:—

32 cows—22 heifers.
35 cows—15 heifers, 15 steers.
24 cows—10 heifers, 15 steers.
25 cows—22 heifers, 10 steers.
25 cows—20 heifers, 14 steers.
21 cows—26 heifers.
21 cows—23 mated heifers, 29 steers and heifers.

In these cases the carrying capacity is obviously greater than is shown by the number of cows.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: No bull?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member can work that out for himself. With his knowledge I have no doubt that would be his final conclusion, but the fact remains that he was complaining about these dairymen not being able to build their herds up to the 40-cow standard. How can they possibly do that while carrying so much dry stock? I know of examples that I investigated personally while on one trip and where all the dry stock was occupying the best pasture, the cows being left on the rough stuff, and yet

those people growled because the cows were not producing the necessary gallon-age.

Mr. Hoar: Do you say that is general throughout the dairying areas?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, but these are instances. The hon. member stated that the Commonwealth had been hoodwinked by the State Government, and referred to the amazement of the Commonwealth liaison officer when he found that areas mentioned as being cleared by the board were not cleared at all. He said this was the position in nearly every case.

I have ascertained from Brigadier Norman whether he made any statement similar to those attributed to him by the member for Warren. He stated that he would not have been so foolish as to make such a general statement, and in any case would not accept the actual areas cleared as being final, until after they had been checked by the valuer of the Taxation Department when a final valuation was being made. It is to be expected that areas will differ between records and actuality in some instances, but where these instances do occur, the full carrying capacity will be provided before a settler is expected to meet commitments on the 40-cow basis.

I would now like to deal with the allegation against the Government, and myself in particular that the basis of valuation has been altered from what was originally intended. The hon. member referred to the regulations published on the 9th May, 1947, and to the fact that a certain clause in the agreement had been omitted from the lease document. He claimed that Clause 6, Subclause (4) had been deliberately left out and that I had been responsible for striking out that important subclause without the approval of Parliament. The clause to which the hon. member referred is that which agrees that the Commonwealth and the State shall share in any write-off on properties in the proportion of three-fifths and two-fifths. I am unable to agree—

Mr. Hoar: Be careful. I have a copy of the lease here.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: —that who pays the write-off is of any importance to the lessee. What he is interested in is the actual write-off itself, which is provided in other clauses. However, I would like to make it quite clear to the House that if any offence has been committed, or any slight to the privilege of Parliament, it cannot be attributed to myself or to my Government. The regulations which embodied the lease were discussed for several months during 1946 and finally approved by the Commonwealth and the State in January, 1947, and by his Excellency the Lieutenant Gov-

ernor in Executive Council on the 21st March, 1947. We assumed office on the 1st April, 1947.

Members will therefore realise that the accusations made by the member for Warren regarding this Government deliberately breaking the agreement cannot be justified. He stated that when the 1951 amendment was being introduced I misled Parliament in advising it that the Bill was a validating measure providing also for freehold tenure and certain mineral rights. He mentioned that Clause 6, Subclause (4) relating to the sharing of write-off between the Commonwealth and the State had been altered. This is a wholly misleading statement.

During the last few days, I have received a copy of the conditions under which the Commonwealth is prepared to advance money for war service land settlement, and with your permission, Mr. Speaker, I will lay it on the Table of the House for perusal by members. It will be noted that these conditions follow almost word for word the clauses of the 1945 agreement, including Clause 6, Subclause (4), which the hon. member infers has been deleted.

Mr. Hoar: Do you deny that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are also other minor amendments, as I mentioned in my second reading speech when introducing the 1951 Bill, such as the widow of a settler now being an eligible person, and ex-Servicemen from the Korean War being eligible in due course. This document in no way affects the system of valuation which has been laid down by the Commonwealth. The hon. member stated that valuations of properties had been written up at a fantastic figure and that the cost of State administration had been included in the cost of the property. This latter statement is not according to fact, as approximately £58,000 per annum is spent by the State without being charged to the development of farms. This covers the activities of the Classification and Allotment Board, the Land Purchase Board, including the inspection of farms, the Land Settlement Board, accounts and general head office administration.

Mr. Hoar: What about supervision?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Does not that come into it? Every farm that has been finally valued can stand up to the economic test required in Clause 6, Subclause (7), of the agreement. Far from values being fantastic, or farmers being unable to meet their commitments should the prices of agricultural produce fall, the reverse is the case. Properties are most reasonable in value, and all settlers whose farms are finally valued have experienced the recent fantastic prices for wool, and could considerably reduce or probably completely repay advances for stock, plant, and structures. Many have done so already.

Some may prefer to invest money outside their farms rather than reduce their commitments by more than the statutory annual amount. The point I wish to make is that if agricultural prices fall these farmers may be required only to meet their rent. What are these rents which are claimed to be fantastic? Seventy wheat and sheep or grazing farmers have received their final valuations. The average rent for these 70 properties is only £162 6s. 10d. per annum. The highest rent so far assessed on any property is £275 4s.

Mr. Hoar: Is that based on cost of production?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: These rents include many subdivided estates where averaging has been adopted, which, as members know, is one of the points of objection. These rents also include the difference between the cost of structures and the 1946 value, which latter amount only is charged to the settler. Taking into account the present-day value of the pound, and any fall in the price of agricultural produce which members might care to consider as reasonable, would any of these farms appear to be fantastically high in valuation? Recently, the Parliamentary Under Secretary to the Minister for the Interior, Mr. L. W. Hamilton, M.P., together with the Director of War Service Land Settlement, visited this State and met a committee of settlers who were objecting to their final valuations at Wagin. At that meeting a clear explanation was made by the Commonwealth as to the method which it intended to follow and which was agreed to by the State for the valuing of farms. It was admitted that the principle of averaging was fair and equitable, but the complaint was made that farmers had not been told in advance. I propose to read to members the statement made by the Director, War Service Land Settlement, setting out the method of valuation, so that there may be no misunderstanding as to the position.

Mr. Hoar: This is at a recent meeting, is it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I now wish to read a letter from the Federal Minister, Mr. Kent Hughes. It is addressed to me and reads as follows:—

There appears to be a certain amount of misunderstanding among settlers under the War Service Land Settlement Scheme concerning the basis of valuation of holdings and this has resulted in objections to the values placed on holdings and considerable Press publicity on the subject.

I consider it is desirable that misapprehensions should be removed by a clear cut statement being made with regard to that method adopted for assessing commitments for farms which has been agreed upon and adopted by the Commonwealth and State.

The attached statement has therefore been prepared setting out those principles of the agreement dealing with valuation, the procedures used to put these into effect, and the means by which the actual capital value of the individual holding is assessed. This accords with the current arrangements between the Commonwealth and the State on the subject and copies of it might, I suggest, be freely distributed amongst those who are concerned so that any doubts with regard to valuation for leasehold purposes will be clarified and the position made quite clear.

Copies of the statement have been freely distributed among the settlers concerned.

Mr. Nalder: What is the date of the letter?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The 5th September. I understand that copies of the statement were taken to the meeting held at Wagin and were distributed among the settlers. The hon. member was there so he should be aware of it.

Mr. Nalder: I do not know of it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I understand they were taken down there and distributed. This is the circular—

The Commonwealth-State Agreement provides that a valuation shall be made of each holding (land and all improvements), having regard to the expectation of prices and yields for products over a long term, and that any excess of the total costs of acquiring and developing the holding over this valuation shall be "written off."

The valuation shall be accepted for determining the rental to be charged, and the structural improvements acquired or leased by the settler according to the current practice in the State.

Procedures to put these provisions into effect have been agreed upon by Commonwealth and State as follows:

Structural Improvements.

1. Settlers will be required to purchase structural improvements in accordance with the practice in Western Australia, at a price representing their estimated cost as at July, 1946, subject to paragraph (2) hereunder.

Rent.

2. Rental shall be 2½ per cent. of the valuation of the land and non-structural improvements and this valuation shall not exceed the total cost of acquisition and development including structures, less the sale price of structural improvements.

3. A budget analysis shall be used to determine whether it is reasonable to expect commitments on this valuation at a total cost to be borne, or whether and to what extent it is necessary to "write off" cost to comply with the provisions of the agreement.

Determination of Costs.

4. Costs shall be determined on a project or estate basis for holdings into which the project or estate is subdivided.
5. The total cost of acquisition and planned development of an estate or project, less the sale price of structures and unimproved capital value will be averaged between the holdings into which the estate or project is to be subdivided when the developmental programme is completed.
6. Prices conservative compared with current prices will be considered as complying with the "conservative estimates over the long term period of prices for products" referred to in the agreement.
7. Lessees will be given credit for work done at their own expense, which is part of the approved developmental programme.
8. Valuation will be undertaken when the holding has been developed to within a reasonable degree of the proposed planned works.

Valuation in actual practice is done by adding the total cost of acquisition and development to date to the estimated cost of additional development and improvement to be done to complete the developmental programme, then deducting the sale price to settlers of structural improvements and the unimproved land value of each holding, and averaging the balance between each of the holdings when development is completed.

A budgetary check is made to ascertain whether the prices necessary to bear the commitments on this valuation comply with Item 6 above.

If the prices for products required to meet commitments on costs are not conservative compared with current prices, costs are "written off" to the extent necessary to bring the capitalisation of the holding to a value which will comply with the economic test required by the agreement.

The valuation of each holding in the case of subdivided estates is then taken as the sale price of structures

thereon, plus the cost of land on an unimproved basis, plus a share of the balance of cost of the estate, less the agreed cost of any of the planned development or improvement effected by the settler himself; and the adjustment of cost necessary for the completion of planned works by agreement with the individual lessee.

I shall now place those documents on the Table of the House for the information of members. The member for Warren referred to great unrest among lessees as evidenced by a petition which had been signed at a meeting at Wagin recently. A copy of this petition was forwarded to the Leader of the Opposition and also to the Premier. There were certain aspects to this petition to which I would like to refer for the information of members. Before commenting upon the preamble to the signatures, I would draw attention to certain peculiarities regarding those attending the meeting. A Press statement in the "Wagin Argus" dated the 11th September, stated that 100 settlers attended the meeting and that all present signed the letter. There are only 55 signatures to the letter.

Mr. Hoar: That is all I said there were.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am referring to the Press statement.

Mr. Hoar: I thought you were referring to me.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, I am referring to the Press statement. Of those 55 men, only 12 have received final valuations.

Mr. Hoar: The others are scared.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member would know more about scabs than I would.

Mr. Hoar: I said the others are scared. I did not say anything about scabs.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I thought the hon. member said they were "scabs." Eight of the 12 settlers have been allotted the homestead farms and, therefore, are likely to obtain advantages if these homesteads do not share in the cost of the development of the estate in which they occur. Four signatories have lodged objections to their final valuations, and no doubt convened the meeting and presented the case from their points of view as being interested parties. One of the signatories received his valuation as long ago as the 12th December, 1951, and accepted this apparently with satisfaction. This farmer received very favourable treatment in the way of additions to his house when the farm was first allotted, because of his large family. One of the signatories has not yet been allotted the farm under lease conditions, and another who has not been allotted lease conditions was granted his

property only in March this year. Twenty-eight of the signatories are ex-Servicemen who are on subdivided estates and, as they are not on the homestead farm, this would necessarily cause their valuations to be increased when they are made if the averaging principle is not adopted.

I would like to make some comments at this stage. It is absolutely beyond my comprehension why men who have been allotted properties that required a considerable amount of development are not speaking up in their own interests, because it appears to me that those who are complaining most are the ones who were fortunate enough to have a homestead block allotted to them. They were able to bring their properties into production immediately and have enjoyed the benefits of high prices, and yet they are still complaining about their final valuations. Members will appreciate, too, that if the homestead farm had been separated from the balance of the property and valued separately, it might have been valued at a higher figure than it is today. If these farmers are allowed to get away with their protest as to the homestead farm valuations, it will only mean that the farmers who were allotted farms that had not been greatly developed will require to have their properties revalued. It is beyond my comprehension.

Mr. Hoar: I might tell you that it is beyond my comprehension, too.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member has had his say and I am having mine now, so I hope he will keep quiet.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister interjected a hundred and twenty times when the member for Warren was speaking—it might have been half that number.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I do not disagree with the Leader of the Opposition, but I was only trying to help the hon. member because he was so wide of the mark.

Mr. J. Hegney: Anyhow, stick to your book!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will, make no mistake about that!

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I bet you will!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It is well to recall the general views held by all sections of the community towards the end of the war, and during the period when the War Service Land Settlement Agreement was being discussed in Parliament. There was a general feeling that there would be large unemployment when the Armed Forces were demobilised, releasing approximately three-quarters of a million able-bodied people for civilian life. A survey was made in Western Australia by a departmental committee to ascertain how industry and agriculture could absorb the surplus labour. It was envisaged that materials would be readily

available for industry, including agriculture. The feeling towards the future of agricultural produce ran along similar lines, and the Commonwealth Government endeavoured to safeguard the position by means of stabilisation schemes, marketing boards and overseas contracts.

This tenor was reflected in the War Service Land Settlement Agreement, because fear of a regression in the prices of agricultural produce due to over-production was shown by the clause which required the final valuation of a property to withstand a budgetary test based on the prices of agricultural produce over a long period. Acting on the assumption that monetary values would remain reasonably constant, the original intention of the Commonwealth and the State was to determine some long-range figures for prices which might be reasonable to expect as a base for testing the revenue-earning capacity of farms, when compared with commitments farmers could stand.

Before farms were sufficiently developed for final valuation, however, two quite unforeseen and unpredictable events rendered the determination of a fixed price for agricultural produce in the future quite impractical. These events were the high price of wheat, but more so the astonishing price of wool, which has risen some threefold over the average price during the few years prior to the war. The great depreciation in the value of currency due to inflation must also be taken into account. The Commonwealth and the State agreed that it is impractical to forecast prices under existing conditions, which are also complicated by reason of various marketing arrangements for agricultural produce. However, neither the Commonwealth nor the State has departed from the original principle of requiring a farm to stand up to economic conditions provided in the agreement.

It should be remembered that the State is a minor partner in the Land Settlement Scheme, and that the Commonwealth may lay down conditions compatible with the agreement under which finance will be supplied for the acquisition and development of farms. In order to comply with this when finally valuing a farm, it is necessary to determine that the settler can meet all his commitments at prices of agricultural produce which are conservative with those ruling today.

Mr. Hoar: What price do you select for wool?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: With wool, for instance, it is thought that a conservative average price would be 45d. to 50d. per lb. and if wool fell below this price on grazing properties, not only would ex-Servicemen settlers be in difficulties but also many other older-established farmers. Ex-Servicemen also have a further safeguard over the private farmer. When discussing the provisions

of final valuation and the difficulty of determining a fixed price for agricultural produce, the Commonwealth Government considered that there should be a period beyond which the soldier settler should not normally expect State assistance. Ten years was considered to be a suitable period, during which time the settler would have paid off his stock and plant accounts, and also approximately one-third of the cost of his structures. If during this ten-year period there should be a serious regression in agricultural prices, making it difficult for him to meet his full commitments with normal industry and skill, there would be a strong case under the agreement for valuations to be reviewed.

After the ten-year period, ex-Servicemen should be able to meet the normal vicissitudes of farming quite as strongly as other farmers in the community. Any economic difficulty after this period would become one for the agricultural industry as a whole, and the ex-Servicemen would receive the same treatment as other private farmers. These principles have been borne in mind in all final valuations. Various complaints have been made, principally by the owners of homestead properties. First of all, I will deal with the complaint in regard to the excessive cost of clearing. Owing to lack of labour and equipment, the board, at the beginning of 1948, had to make an important decision. This was based on whether to continue development at a high cost and enable ex-Servicemen to share in the general prosperity of the agricultural industry or to play safe and carry out developmental work slowly, where this could be done at usual costs.

It should be borne in mind that at this stage price control was active, and ideas as far as costs were concerned were in terms of pre-war values. Strongly supported by ex-service applicants, the Land Settlement Board decided to continue development as rapidly as possible. The cost of clearing in some instances was very high, particularly in dairying districts. This has been taken into account in final valuations, and where the economic test required by the agreement indicates that the settler could not be expected to meet his commitments on that capitalisation, some of the debt is "written off." It is anticipated that in wheat and sheep areas very few farms will require to be written down after being submitted to the economic test owing to the low rent upon land and non-structures, which is only 2½ per cent.

As regards the structures, these are repaid by the settler over a period of 30 years at 3½ per cent. Owing to the unexpected rise in costs, it is obvious that the farmer who was fortunate enough to obtain his farm in 1947 or 1948 would have a very great advantage over those receiving farms in 1952. However, even with these increased costs there might not

be a case according to the agreement for a writing down. In order to place all ex-Servicemen on a similar basis as far as the purchase of structures is concerned, the Commonwealth, at a conference with the three agent States in April, 1948, agreed to charge all structures such as fences, dams, farm buildings and dwellings at the July, 1946, value.

At this time, prices were on the verge of an upward trend. This, however, did not mean that the difference between cost and the 1946 value would necessarily be written off. As an easement to the ex-Servicemen, this difference is transferred to the land and non-structural improvements, a portion of the valuation upon which rent is determined. The lease issued to earlier applicants does not contain this provision but, as it is entirely in the interests of the applicant, no objection was raised until the question of freehold arose. However, it has been made clear that the payment of the 1946 value for structures will entitle the lessee to ownership in the structures, provided he meets the rent including the portion of structures transferred. It has also been made clear that if the earlier lessees prefer the whole cost of structures to be charged to them upon which instalments and interest at 3½ per cent would be raised, the Commonwealth is agreeable to this arrangement.

Objection has been raised to the principle of averaging the costs of development of estates which are subdivided into more than one farm. The original intention was to develop farms to a stage where, within one year after occupation, the planned development to a standard holding would have been completed. This envisaged the availability of labour and materials to carry out the work. In practice, this policy was found to slow down the rate of development. The Commonwealth and the State Governments agreed that a reasonable arrangement would be that the homestead property should be allotted under lease conditions at an opening value corresponding approximately to that of acquisition.

In due course, as the remaining farms of the estate were developed or a reasonable indication of the cost of development obtained, final valuation of the homestead, and, if possible, of the other farms should be made. The view was taken that, if an endeavour had been made to purchase the developed homestead area, often with substantial buildings, the price would have been considerably higher than when the same homestead was purchased together with sometimes considerable areas of undeveloped land.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I do not think the Minister for Local Government agrees with that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The principle of averaging the cost of further development on the estate over all the farms in the estate appeared to be a reasonable one. In those cases where the farmer has carried out developmental work himself, whether on the land or on structures, then all credit would be given to him for the value of this work when the full finalisation was determined. The original lease was drawn up in 1946 under the broad assumptions of labour and materials mentioned before, and it is being claimed, particularly by those on homestead properties, that the form of this lease did not provide for averaging the cost of developing subdivided estates. This contention is conceded from the legal aspect, but can be strongly supported from the practical aspect and on grounds of equity. From the practical aspect, it would be difficult to keep accurate costs of the development of each individual farm in the break-up of an estate where the subdivisions may be as high as 25 farms in an estate.

There is, for instance, Tootra, which is divided into 25 farms and Waddi Forrest which is divided into 17. The Commonwealth, which is the major partner, has now publicly announced that the policy of averaging the costs of development of subdivided estates will be adopted. The result does mean an additional sum being placed upon the final valuation of most homesteads. I have documents here that I am quite prepared to lay on the Table of the House which show that when these farms were allotted to the tenants, and the leases were sent out, warnings were issued to the settlers and they were told that it was not a final valuation.

Mr. Hoar: We are not arguing about that.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: This final valuation, however, is still generally favourable in comparison with the remainder of farms on the estate, and certainly will stand the requirements of the economic provisions in Clause (6) of the Agreement. At the meeting of the committee organising objections to the system of valuation at Wagin, it was accepted that the averaging system was equitable, but it was claimed that farmers did not understand that averaging would be adopted for the final valuation, which might have affected their decision to accept a farm if they had been advised when the properties were being advertised.

The Commonwealth has clearly stated that any sums which it may be necessary to re-adjust, because of the legal interpretation of the lease, are still considered a portion of the cost of development, and, rather than penalise lessees on the non-homestead farm, this amount will remain in the books as a charge against the homestead farm, bearing interest at $3\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. compound interest per annum, and would

be brought into account if ever the freehold of the property should be acquired. In cases where the final valuation represents the full cost of developing a property as determined by the Commonwealth, then this valuation will be accepted as the option value for freehold.

Mr. Hoar: You know what the settler said to that suggestion, do you not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In conclusion, it can be said that there has been no departure either in spirit or deed from the original basis of the War Service Land Settlement Agreement, and any administrative action taken has been in the interests of equity rather than in permitting a few "plums" to be handed out on a plate on the score of legal technicalities.

Speaking generally on the scheme I would like to say I have watched development right through the piece. I have taken many opportunities of visiting the different areas and I must say that the soldier settlers are being provided with very fine properties. I assure them that neither this Government, the Commonwealth Government nor anybody associated with soldier settlement has any desire whatsoever to put anything over them.

Mr. Hoar: Not much!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: After all, these men who served their country were made a promise by the Commonwealth Government that they would be rehabilitated and the soldier settlement scheme is one of the methods adopted to do that.

Hon. E. Nulsen: In quite a number of cases, the capitalisation is very high, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, it is very low. Without entering into details of many properties, let me mention one in particular allotted to a man who is complaining. His property is valued by the Commonwealth Taxation Department at £24,500 and it has been written up to the soldier at £11,250. This should indicate to members that the valuations are certainly not high.

All of those associated with the scheme are ex-Servicemen. The members of the board, the field supervisors and practically all engaged in the scheme are returned men who are imbued with one desire, namely, to carry out the promises made to the allottees and give them as good a deal as possible. There is no reason whatever why we should do anything that is at all unfavourable to these men and it would be only a biased lunatic who would attempt to do anything against their interests. They are all getting a fair deal and, generally speaking, are contented.

Mr. Hoar: That is not true. At last I have caught your ear.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Not so. The projects at Mt. Manypeaks and Rocky Gully are progressing very satisfactorily.

There, in order to get on with the development, it was found necessary to call for applications from ex-Servicemen who were willing to assist in the development of those areas. We received many applications, selections were made, and those men are working in the scheme. I was a soldier settler in 1919 and these men are only doing what we did. We used to meet at night and discuss the problems confronting us and, like these men, we decided that we were better able to run the scheme than those who were in authority.

When I met the settlers at Mt. Many-peaks recently, in company with the member for Albany and the Deputy Premier—the latter was there on educational matters and attended the discussions—the men brought forward their complaints, which were more or less of a minor nature. I said to them, "I want you to be quite frank with me. Are there any two of you who could agree as to how your property should be developed?" They replied, "No." That is the answer to it. We must have a policy for development of this sort and the policy of the board must be put into effect.

Mr. Hoar: Then why depart from it?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No two of them, I repeat, could agree on the methods that should be adopted for the development of their properties. Recently I received a letter from the Federal Minister, Mr. W. S. Kent Hughes, that I should like to read. I think on this the member for Warren will agree with me because I feel sure he must support what the Federal Minister has said.

Mr. Hoar: I have not agreed with much of what you have said tonight.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I did not expect to find the hon. member in agreement. The letter reads—

Minister for the Interior,

Parliament House, Canberra, A.C.T.,
5th September, 1952.

Dear Mr. Minister,

I have followed with considerable interest the progress of the War Service Land Settlement Scheme in your State and have appreciated the work which has been involved in the development and allotment of farms.

On various occasions, adverse criticism has been publicly directed against the administration and the officers engaged in the work. My investigation into this, however, has always confirmed the conviction I held, that the officers concerned were enthusiastic and capable in the performance of their duties. It is, of course, only human to make some mistakes, especially in an undertaking of this magnitude, but emphasis on these is quite misleading in the assessment of the overall picture.

I would like to take this opportunity, therefore, to express to you, and through you to all your officers and staff, my appreciation of the manner in which they are so well carrying out, under difficult conditions, this great work of development and re-establishment in which we both have such a great interest.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) W. S. KENT HUGHES.

The Hon. L. Thorn, M.L.A.,

Minister for Lands,

PERTH, Western Australia.

Mr. Hoar: What do we do now, cheer?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member may please himself, but I felt sure that he would appreciate the letter and agree with its contents. Thus the Federal Minister in charge of this great undertaking has expressed his appreciation of the good work that is being done in this State.

The Premier: I wish the Leader of the Opposition would write me a letter like that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: If I did, perhaps you would use it in an election pamphlet.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Federal Minister's letter should satisfy members that the scheme is progressing favourably. We are getting the men on the land; 839 of them have been settled in roughly five years, which is a tremendous achievement. I think the member for Warren must appreciate the great efforts of the Government and its success in settling these ex-Servicemen on the land.

Mr. Hoar: What are you going to do about the 2,000?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I believe that members must be firmly convinced that the scheme is progressing satisfactorily and that there is not the slightest need for an inquiry. This move by the hon. member is in line with the activities of other people. I have known for quite a long time that some individuals have been trying to create doubts in the minds of the soldier settlers. It has been indicated to them that they had better be quiet or there would be victimisation. Efforts have been made to disturb and unsettle them. There is no question at all of victimisation. I invited questions from these men; I asked them to state their complaints, but I added that where they could deal through their field supervisor—a returned man in full sympathy with them and desirous of helping them in every way—they should do so. I invited them to make known their complaints because many of them were only trivial and could be rectified. If this motion is carried it can have only one effect and that is to disturb the minds of these men.

Mr. Hoar: They have been asking for an inquiry for years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It will also lead them to believe that there is something wrong.

Mr. Mann: That is an extraordinary statement to make.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I need not reply to that interjection beyond saying that my statement is quite a genuine one. Until a few months ago these men were perfectly contented, perfectly satisfied.

Mr. Hoar: Which men are you talking about?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Does the hon. member not know?

Mr. Hoar: I am asking you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member should know whom I am talking about.

Mr. Hoar: The dairymen have not been satisfied for years.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Everything was going nicely until a few individuals tried to stir up trouble. All this motion will do is to create some doubt in the minds of these men as to whether things are going as well as they might. The motion is quite unnecessary and undesirable, and I hope it will be rejected.

On motion by Mr. Cornell, debate adjourned.

MOTION—FREMANTLE RAILWAY BRIDGE.

As to Replacement and Site.

Debate resumed from the 24th September on the following motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman:—

That, in the opinion of this House, for the safety of the travelling railway public, the Government should immediately proceed with the rebuilding of the Fremantle Railway Bridge, and as it has been announced that it is to be a temporary structure, when it is erected it should be built near enough to the present railway bridge to preserve the industries and business centre of North Fremantle."

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. D. Brand—Greenough) [9.21]: In moving the motion, the hon. member said he did not desire to take up a great deal of time and delay the House. I also want to pay that compliment in replying to his remarks. The motion places emphasis on the fact that the bridge is dangerous and should be replaced. I agree that the bridge should be replaced; but, though it has been in existence for a very long time, it has been strengthened, and I am quite certain that it complies with safety requirements; otherwise the Railway Department would have taken further action to see that it was made secure.

On making certain inquiries from the Railway Department, I have been informed by Mr. McCullough, Chief Engineer, that action is being taken to renew the trusses and that a certain sum of money, originally £20,000, had been allowed for the strengthening of the bridge.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They have started work on it now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. They were waiting for the settlement of the strike in order to proceed with the work. That indicates that the Railway Department is aware of the situation, and is taking the necessary action to ensure that the bridge is safe for the further life that may be required of it. As the House is aware, plans have been prepared for certain development of the Fremantle harbour which will, in any case, no matter what plan is accepted, involve a new railway bridge. Therefore it is quite reasonable and logical that we should spend some money on reinforcing the existing bridge and extending its life for a few more years.

Following the decision of the Government to proceed with the upriver development of Fremantle harbour as recommended by Col. Tydeman in his report, two motions were defeated in this House by the Government, which said it would adhere definitely to its original decision. In the meantime, it was announced that the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company had decided to establish its project on the shores of Cockburn Sound. Naturally that decision had a very material effect on any of the important works proceeding in that area. In order that we might be well advised, the Government appointed a committee, consisting of Mr. Dumas, Director of Works, and Mr. Brisbane, an engineer and ex-manager of the Midland Railway Company, to investigate the effect of the Anglo-Iranian project on such developments as were taking place in the Fremantle area, and to advise the Government.

Several meetings were held and Mr. Dumas then left for the Old Country. He will return on the 9th October, and I feel sure that the committee will meet and come to a final decision as to its recommendation. It has been said in this House that we should not proceed with the upriver development. I am not certain whether the Government will be advised to adhere to its original decision, the alternative being that a wooden railway bridge be constructed near the existing road bridge, limiting upriver development to that point and allowing for three berths to be established. Any further extensions would go seaward to Cockburn Sound, where it has been suggested that certain bulkhandling facilities and facilities for handling coal, oil, phosphates and so on should be established, thus relieving the existing harbour.

Because of all the developments, Mr. Dumas, during his visit to England was requested to call upon the firm of Sir Alexander Gibb and Partners, which firm was making, under contract, the necessary technical investigations and surveys in connection with the Government's decision to proceed upstream. The company was making surveys as to the bridge alignment, the type of bridge to be built, the alignment of the railway and the various works which would be associated with the alterations that would take place. It was thought necessary and advisable, seeing that there was a possibility we would not proceed upstream, to have alternative schemes investigated by the company while they were here, seeing that they were experts in their job. I have an airmail letter from Mr. Dumas advising that he discussed with Mr. Guthrie Brown, a director of the company, the various aspects of Fremantle harbour development. Mr. Dumas writes:

Surveys have been completed to a sufficient degree to enable three alternatives to be worked out by the consultants:

(a) Move the railway bridge to the downstream side of the existing highway bridge, and build the new railway bridge in timber or the equal. Railway bridge clearance to be 30ft., the same as the highway bridge.

(b) Move the railway bridge to Pt. Brown and erect as temporary structure—30ft. clearance.

I might explain that it was envisaged we would erect a permanent structure of steel at an estimated cost of £3,000,000 or £4,000,000. Evidently it was thought by Mr. Dumas that an alternative at least would be a wooden structure. He continues—

(c) Move the railway bridge upstream of Pt. Brown and erect as temporary structure—30 ft. clearance.

These plans, covering three alternatives, will be available to us in mid-October. He goes on to say that certain diagrams will accompany the plans, and that this will enable him and Mr. Brisbane to make a definite decision based on sound information provided by someone who knows something about the work. Therefore, whilst I agree that it is necessary to replace the railway bridge, I am quite sure that it is not necessary to agree to the motion, but that any further action in respect to the development of Fremantle, involving the replacement of this bridge, should at least be delayed until this committee can meet and make a decision on the very technical information which will then be available from the firm in England.

The hon. member referred to a statement I made in regard to the seaward development of the harbour when he remarked that I said it would not be going

where he thought it would be. I believe I was quite right. He, no doubt, will tell me that that was not so.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You can see it in "Hansard" if you want to.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The development of Cockburn Sound as part of the Tydeman plan would have meant there would be a wholesale transfer of Fremantle interests, warehouses and other establishments to Cockburn Sound. The seaward extension which the hon. member had in mind—and I trust I am not being unfair in saying so—was one just around the corner of the mouth of the river.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Yes, but not the oil ships.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I say that by way of explanation. The advent of Kwinana, and the opening of Cockburn Sound, which will proceed immediately, has enabled us, almost by chance, to take advantage of that harbour by providing bulk facilities, leaving Fremantle proper for general cargo. I hope the House will not agree to the motion as I feel it is not necessary.

On motion by Mr. Styants, debate adjourned.

MOTION—EDUCATION ACT.

To Disallow Propaganda Regulation.

Debate resumed from the 24th September on the following motion by Hon. J. T. Tonkin:—

That the new regulation 72 made under Section 28 of the Education Act, 1928-1943, published in the "Government Gazette" of the 29th August, 1952, and laid upon the Table of the Legislative Assembly on the 4th September, 1952, be and is hereby disallowed.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville—in reply) [9.33]: The other evening when speaking to the case I put up for the disallowance of the regulation, the Minister said that the amended regulation was the result of complaints which had been made against one or two teachers. As there are over 2,500 teachers in the service, it is most remarkable that upon complaints being received against one or two, it is found necessary to rush in with a regulation of this kind. The Minister said that there really was not a case for disallowance; that we would not anticipate that the officers of the Education Department would complain against any teacher who was quite properly teaching social studies or history; and that there was no danger in the regulation. But after having tried to convey to the House that there was no case, he said he anticipated that I would deal with the matter in a certain way, thus proving that there did

exist another point of view, and that he knew what it was. Not only did he know the other point of view in advance of my speaking in connection with the motion, but in anticipation of what I was going to say, before the case was put up, he submitted the question to the Director of Education and got him to give an answer.

The Minister for Education: It was the only obvious objection I could imagine your making. I could not imagine your wanting political propaganda, as I understood it, being taught in the schools.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No, but the Minister realised that a case could be put up. He submitted the question to the Director of Education and asked for his comments. That the Minister dealt with the aspect I have raised, indicates that there are solid grounds for the view I expressed. So, instead of there being no case at all against the regulations, there is a case which the Minister anticipated, and which the Director of Education also anticipated, and to which the Director replied before he had heard it put up. This emphasises very considerably the fact that I did have solid grounds for my complaints against the regulation.

The Director was in error when he said that the only alteration in the regulations, apart from changing from one voice to another, was that there had been included a prohibition against political propaganda. That is not so because something was included in the regulation that was not there before, namely, that it was an offence if an attempt was made to inculcate propaganda. The regulation, as it existed previously, provided that it was an offence if anyone inculcated propaganda, but the new regulation included the expression "any attempt to inculcate." This makes the regulation much wider, and makes it easier to get a conviction against a person, if that is what is desired. The Attorney General will appreciate that fact.

It is much harder to prove that a person has done a certain thing than to prove that he has attempted to do it. So, by extending the regulation in that way—something which the Director completely overlooked—there was, having regard to another offence which was included, a real danger that a teacher might be framed if it was somebody's business to get rid of him or her. As the regulation was worded, it would have been possible for a teacher to be carpeted for attempting to inculcate political propaganda. Any teacher dealing with the question of history or social studies would, when dealing with such subjects, be open practically all the time to a charge of attempting to inculcate political propaganda.

If an inspector wished to have a teacher punished, it would be the simplest thing in the world to do so with the regulation framed in that way. It was for that reason

and with the full knowledge of officers of the Teachers' Union, that I raised objection to the regulation in this House. We suggested that what was really being aimed at was the attempt that might be made, and could be made, to inculcate party political propaganda. The Minister for Education apparently realised that there was considerable strength in that contention, and has intimated to me that he is prepared to have a fresh amendment drafted in order to meet the objections which we raised, and at the same time meet the requirements of the department. He has indicated to me that he intends to have inserted the word "party" so that the regulation will give power to deal with any teacher—if there be any—who attempts to inculcate party political propaganda.

The Minister for Education: That is quite true, and the papers for Executive Council have already been prepared.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In view of the assurance which the Minister for Education has given, I do not propose to persist with my motion. I have answered the case which was put up against it, and I think we had solid grounds for the action we took from this side of the House. I now ask your permission, Mr. Speaker, to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 24th September.

THE ATTORNEY GENERAL (Hon. A. V. R. Abbott—Mt. Lawley) [9.42]: The Government is largely in agreement with the provisions of this Bill because, with small exception, it incorporates what was submitted to the House by me, on behalf of the then Government, in 1948. This measure provides that the Act should be amended to enable members of another place to be elected at the age of 21 years instead of 30 years. I do not agree with that provision. The next amendment contained in the Bill seeks to enable the wife or husband of the householder, as the case may be, to vote. The next provision to which I desire to refer is that the elector with the qualification to vote in more than one province shall be bound to select the province in respect of which he or she shall vote, and vote for one province only. I must agree to these provisions as I advocated them in 1948.

A still further provision puts into modern language the disqualification of an elector because of unsound mind or the taint of treason, and there can be no objection to that, but I do object to the suggestion that this is but a half-way measure, the provisions of which are not really satisfactory, and that there should

be no distinction between the electoral qualifications for this Chamber and those for another place. With that I do not agree. If it were not for political reasons, I feel sure the undoubted wisdom of the Leader of the Opposition would make him admit that that suggestion is not wise. I could advance many reasons why I believe his acumen and natural ability must lead him to decide in my favour in that regard.

The recent period has been one of youth. There has been a reaction from the Victorian age, which was one of seniority and perhaps of stability. We have had in our lifetime many wars, with the result that there has been necessity for the advancement of adventure, courage and anything but stability. We have not had stability during the last 25 years. There has been one change after another during that period, and I think we have gone far enough.

Hon. E. Nulsen: I do not think there has ever been stability.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Not for many years, but there was a more balanced point of view in the Victorian age. Perhaps it is my senior years that make me feel there is some advantage in experience and something to be gained by living and having to face the difficulties of life, because at 21 years of age one has not faced them. At that age, life is, for the majority, a matter of adventure, of taking risks and gambling—lose or win—with very few responsibilities apart from one's own life, so why not chance that? But a little later on, when one has the responsibility of one's self and also of people who are dear to one, then a change must necessarily occur and there must be a greater sense of responsibility. When I say that, I am speaking of the average man who has a wife and family. At 21, what does it matter; everything is an adventure, everything is exciting. But later on one must have a sense of responsibility. That is why I say that when one reaches the age of the Leader of the Opposition one must have a sense of responsibility.

Consequently I think those members of the community who are forced to have that sense of responsibility should be given some distinctive right to have their points of view placed before the people so that they can have some weight in the community. In my view that should be the job of the Upper House; it should be able to express a collective opinion for the men who are forced to have a sense of responsibility. Such men have no direct say in the administrative duties of the State because that is placed, and rightly so, in the hands of those who have attained the age of 21.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What point is the Attorney General arguing at the moment?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Had the hon. member maintained his argument purely in support of the provisions of his Bill I would not be talking like this. But the hon. member did not; he went outside of that and argued that the main object of his Bill was a half-way stopping place to altering the franchise. He said that he thought it should be a universal one.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I am trying to ascertain from the Attorney General whether he is now arguing against the enrolment of persons of 21 or 22 years of age for the Legislative Council, or whether he is arguing against the provisions in the Bill to allow persons under 30 years of age to nominate for the Council.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am arguing on the more general principle of enrolment. While I am in full agreement with the provisions of this Bill, with the exceptions to which I have referred, I do not regard it as a half-way measure as no doubt the member for Mt. Hawthorn would. In my opinion it is not an abuse of democracy, but an essential of it to give a particular class the opportunity it now has in the Legislative Council.

Mr. J. Hegney called attention to the state of the House.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Although the leader of the Opposition said that he regards this as a half-way advance, I believe that he does not really support that intention.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Would the Attorney General tell us whether, at present, there is any local prohibition regarding enrolment for the Legislative Council of persons who are only 21 years of age?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No, there is not.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Then there is no logic in the argument you have been putting up.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I am pointing out that the decisive factor in the election of members to the Upper House is the result of the opinion of those who have the greatest responsibility.

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

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes it is—the householders, the supporters of the families, those who have children relying upon them.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: What about the mothers?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: And the mothers, too.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: But they cannot vote.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: And they have responsibilities.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: Yes, I entirely agree and that is what we are going to amend. We are going to give the mothers the right to vote; in my opinion they should have it. But I think members will agree that the advance in the responsibility of mothers has been only during the last generation.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Do you believe in the constitution of the Senate of Australia?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: No: I will be perfectly frank about that; I think it could be greatly improved. However, that is the protest I wanted to make because of the repeated utterances of the member for Mt. Hawthorn, which, in my opinion, are absolutely without reason. With those remarks, I support the second reading of the Bill.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) [9.57]: I am glad the Attorney General, at the conclusion of his speech, indicated that he supported the measure. To my mind that was the only remark of a cogent nature that he made. I want to say that the Bill has my unqualified support, but I do not think it goes far enough. The Leader of the Opposition, in his wisdom and having had experience of Bills of a similar nature on previous occasions, introduced it in the hope that some measure of liberalisation for enfranchisement for the Legislative Council would be effected.

I make no apology for supporting a Bill of this character and, as a citizen and more particularly a member of this Parliament, I will continue to support measures of this nature. I will also endeavour to focus public attention on the present inequitable system of franchise for the Legislative Council. The Attorney General referred to the Victorian age and said that there was more stability in that era than has been evident over the last 25 years. He indicated further that the mothers now have a responsibility which was non-existent some years ago.

The Attorney General: No, I did not.

MR. W. HEGNEY: That was my interpretation of the Attorney General's remarks.

The Attorney General: No, they have always had responsibilities.

MR. W. HEGNEY: They have always had the same responsibilities.

The Attorney General: But now that is recognised.

MR. W. HEGNEY: But the responsibility was there whether it was recognised or not.

The Attorney General: Of course it was.

MR. W. HEGNEY: There are many alleged democrats today who still refuse to recognise the responsibilities of mother-

hood. Let me deal firstly with the main provisions of the Bill and then I will comment on one or two remarks made by the Attorney General. In the first instance, the Bill seeks to alter a provision in the Constitution which requires a citizen of this State to be 30 years of age before he or she can take his or her seat in the Legislative Council. The Bill seeks to alter the figure of 30 and make it 21 and the Attorney General says that he does not agree with the provision. He is entitled to his opinion, but for the last 51 years adult franchise has prevailed for the Commonwealth Parliament, which has jurisdiction over international affairs and whose authority is paramount where State and Commonwealth Constitutions clash, which can wage war on behalf of the people of the country, and which has complete powers in regard to defence, immigration and matters of a national and international character. Any man who faces up to the simple requirements of the Commonwealth Constitution can take a seat in the Commonwealth Parliament and anybody over the age of 21 years is entitled to participate in the election of members to the Commonwealth legislature.

The Attorney General: Do you think that the Commonwealth Senate has been an entirely satisfactory house?

MR. W. HEGNEY: I will deal with that point in a moment. The Attorney General says that he does not favour the amendment. You, Mr. Speaker, have been a student of constitutional history and you know, as well as the Attorney General knows, that a provision, requiring a person to be 30 years of age, was written into the State Constitution nearer 100 years ago than 20, when there was no compulsory education in this country and when many of the pioneers had no chance of being educated. However, today we have compulsory education for children from the time they are five or six years of age until they are 14, and there are numerous facilities for young people to inform their minds on the requirements of the Constitution. The Attorney General said that the Legislative Council should be a House where responsibility should be the deciding factor and that men of 21 years of age did not have that responsibility.

The Attorney General: I said that they did not have the experience.

MR. W. HEGNEY: I can tell the Attorney General, and I defy contradiction, that there were hundreds of thousands of young men and many thousands of young women under the age of 21 and over the age of 18 who had to accept responsibility from 1914 to 1918 and from 1939 to 1945, and many men were oversea before they reached the age of 21.

The Attorney General: That was not a sense of responsibility on their part and I was one of them.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Attorney General says that young men and women of 21 years of age do not have a sense of responsibility but I repeat that thousands of them did possess a sense of responsibility, and I will go further and say that men of 21 years in 1914 who are now 55 or 56 and men who were 21 when the last war broke out and who are now 34 or 35 years of age unless they own property to the value of £50 and pay rent to the value of £17 per annum are not entitled to vote for members of the Legislative Council, according to the Attorney General. That is the tenor of his argument. The Commonwealth Constitution provides for adult franchise and for the last 51 years people of this country over 21 years of age have enjoyed the right to elect members to the Commonwealth Parliament.

I will now deal briefly with what the Attorney General mentioned a moment ago by way of interjection. I understood him to say that the constitution of the Senate was not a success. He knows that when that constitution was adopted the Senate was to be a States' House. That is one of the reasons why there is equal representation from the six States. It was constituted for the protection of those States from the point of view of isolation and meagre population. That is one of the factors that permeated the viewpoint of States such as Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania when they entered the Commonwealth Federation, but over the years the Commonwealth Senate has developed into a party House to the same degree as the House of Representatives. I think the Attorney General or any other member of this House will agree that the Legislative Council in this State, which is supposed to be a House of Review, a House of Checks, a House to prevent hasty legislation by the commoners, is just as much a party House as is this one.

The Attorney General: Oh, no!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Why is it, then, that every member of the Legislative Council is either a member of the Labour Party, the Country and Democratic League or the Liberal Party? Why is each member of that House a follower of one of those parties? Does not that make it a party House? I am not speaking in a derogatory sense because they are entitled to belong to a party. Why do members of the Legislative Council, if they are supposed to belong to a non-party House, attend meetings of the Labour Party, the C.D.L. and the Liberal Party? It is because they subscribe to the policies of their respective parties. That is the reason.

Let me tell the Attorney General, when he indicates that he is opposed to granting a citizen of 21 years of age the right to

be elected to the Legislative Council, that it is a blot on our educational system because, as I indicated a few moments ago, there are many young citizens in this State who are eligible to qualify for a seat in the Legislative Council. I go further and say that if it is permissible and equitable under the Commonwealth Constitution for men and women of 21 years of age to be entitled to take a seat in the Commonwealth House of Representatives or the Senate it should apply with greater force to the State Legislative Council. The other provision in the Bill refers to the extension of the franchise to the wife or husband of the household.

As the Constitution now stands, the householder is entitled to a vote, but the wife of a householder is not so entitled unless she is recognised as the householder. Even if the Bill be passed and it extends the right of franchise to many thousands who are now denied the vote, there would still be many thousands excluded from the franchise. An illustration has often been quoted, but it can be quoted again. I suppose there may be still a few homes in the South-West where the rents do not amount to £17 a year which are occupied by timber workers and their families.

The Attorney General: No.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The point I make is that if they are not paying any rent and living in their own home and are not able to fulfil the requirements of the Constitution, the timber workers are not entitled to a vote at present no matter what size their families may be.

The Attorney General: Any house would be worth £50 a year, would it not?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: There may be some workers living in shacks to a value of less than £50.

The Attorney General: No.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am glad of that interjection because I want to make this illustration. There are plenty of men who have built up this country; who have built the railways and the roads. They may live in quarters a little more comfortable than tents, but they are not entitled to a vote in a Legislative Council election unless they own property. The time is overripe for the franchise to be amended to permit every person over 21 years of age to vote for members of the Legislative Council. I am not sure that all the provisions of the Bill will be carried, but this will not be the last occasion on which we will make an attempt to liberalise the franchise. I have been in this House for some few years and there have been attempts to widen the franchise for the Legislative Council. As a matter of fact, for years the Labour Party has tried to bring the franchise for the Council more into line with modern-day requirements. We have introduced Bills more liberal in

their nature than the one before the House this evening; we have introduced a Bill for a referendum to be taken of the people of Western Australia to determine whether they wanted a wider franchise or not but, because of its unique power, the Legislative Council threw the Bills out at the second reading stage, or so emasculated them that they were made completely harmless and useless.

Mention has been made of opposition by the United Nations and their fight against dictatorship. I will take a lot of convincing, however, that although we say we are a democratic Government there is not a very strong measure of dictatorship that influences our legislation. In the Legislative Council 15 men can at any stage block any legislation that this House passes, even though it may have been passed unanimously by this Chamber. The legislation can be blocked in another Chamber by a majority of one vote and, no matter how many times we in this Chamber may pass legislation, the Legislative Council can veto the measure on each and every occasion and the people of Western Australia have no redress.

Mr. Manning: Of course they have.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Is that not a form of dictatorship? I say the people of Western Australia have no redress and I reiterate it, because when the members of the Legislative Council go before the people they only go before a minority of the people. They are not subject to the votes or decisions of the adult population of this State but only to the votes of those who own property or pay rent to the extent of 7s. 9d. per week. Thousands of ex-Servicemen who have been overseas for years and have returned, because they happen to be sons living with their parents or living in rooms, are not entitled to vote for the Legislative Council. If a man or a woman is old enough to fight for his or her country and old enough to pay taxes and be subject to the laws of the country, he or she should be given full enfranchisement.

I make no apology for advocating full adult franchise for the people of this State. Those are the main provisions of the Bill and I hope it will be passed in its entirety. I want to refer to the question of plural voting over which the Attorney General very tactfully skated, if I may say so. At the present time the Constitution provides that if a person owns—I will put it as clearly as I can—10 blocks of land in 10 different provinces and each block is worth at least £50 unimproved value, he can exercise 10 votes. We seek to abolish that provision and if the person owns a property in the 10 provinces he or she must elect the province for which he or she will be enrolled.

The Attorney General: No-one has spoken against that.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: But the tenor of the Attorney General's remarks indicated that that particular provision should continue.

The Attorney General: No, they did not.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Very well, I accept that. Here again I would point out how inconsistent and undemocratic that provision is because, though a person may own 10 blocks of vacant land in various provinces and be entitled to a vote, one who owns half of Hay-st., sells his property and puts the whole of the proceeds into Commonwealth bonds or the State Electricity Commission loan would be disqualified from exercising a vote in the Legislative Council. So this is only another occasion on which the Leader of the Opposition, acting on behalf of his party, has endeavoured to focus attention on the iniquity of the present Constitution; he has sincerely put forward a proposition such as is contained in the Bill in the hope that it will be adopted by this Chamber, and that some measure as to the widening of the franchise for the Legislative Council will be adopted by that Chamber.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam—in reply) [10.15]: All I want to say in reply to the speech of the Attorney General is that he was arguing really against the principle which operates under the existing law. The Attorney General argued in favour of age and experience.

The Attorney General: In favour of responsibility, I think.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE: He added responsibility later. The present qualifications for the right of enrolment for the Legislative Council are such as to prohibit in no way at all the enrolment of a person only on the ground that that person is 21 years of age, 22 years of age, 23 years of age or any age for that matter above 21 years of age. If a person under the existing law is only 21 years of age but pays rent of 7s. 9d. a week or more, then that person has a complete legal right to be enrolled for the Legislative Council and to vote for the Council. So the existing law allows that procedure. It does not lay down that a person shall not be enrolled for the Legislative Council because the person is 21 years of age or because that person is too young. There is nothing at all in the existing Constitution on that point.

The Constitution allows the free enrolment for the Legislative Council elections of a person who is 21 years of age or over, provided that person pays rent to the extent of 7s. 9d. a week or more, or has an equity in freehold land to the value of £50 or more. So actually the point upon which the Attorney General concentrated for the greater part of his speech was one that is allowed by the existing law. It seems to me, therefore, that the Attorney Gen-

eral, if he really believes in the principle and argument that he put forward, should later in this session bring down a Bill to prohibit the enrolment of any person for the Legislative Council unless that person has reached at least 50 years of age.

Mr. Manning: Be reasonable.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Very well. Say 40 years of age.

The Attorney General: Would you agree to that?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Most certainly not.

The Attorney General: I thought we would both qualify. That was all.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We might qualify on the ground of age. However, I appreciate the response the House has given to the Bill.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no dissentient voice, I declare the motion carried by a constitutional majority.

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Hon. A. R. G. Hawke in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 7:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I oppose the clause. The Upper House should be one consisting of members who have the greater responsibility. Had the Leader of the Opposition sought to amend the section by providing that only those who were qualified to vote in the Legislative Council should be qualified to sit, I would have given him my support. However, he merely proposes to alter the age. Members will agree that an individual possesses more balance and experience at 30 than he does at 21 years of age.

Mr. W. Hegney: Do not you think the member for Nedlands would be a satisfactory member of the Upper House?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I would prefer to see him in this House, but I do not wish to say anything against him. Even members of the Opposition will agree that with a little more experience he will be an extremely valuable member of this Chamber.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you consider that the members of the Council are more capable of considering legislation than we are?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I believe that people possess more balance, are wiser in their judgment, and capable of arriving at better decisions when they are 30 rather than when they are 21 years of age. I may use my own experience in expressing that opinion, because whatever I

am now I certainly did not possess the experience of life and judgment when I was 21 that I do now. Just imagine the average boy of 21!

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Pitt was Prime Minister of England at 21 years of age.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: And how many Pitts are there?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: There is a gravel pit at Welshpool!

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: That is what I think about it too. I suggest members would be well advised to leave well alone. Over the years the Legislative Council has rendered valuable service as it is now constituted. No good reasons have been advanced why we should alter those conditions as suggested in the clause.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There might be some force in the Minister's contention if the election of a person to the Legislative Council at the age of 21 or at some age between that and 30 years were to be automatic if the Bill became law, but that will not be the setup at all. If the Bill is agreed to, a person between 21 and 30 years of age will be able to secure election to the Legislative Council only at a properly conducted election. In other words, he will have to be elected by a majority of the people voting at the election.

Mr. Manning: The member for Mt. Hawthorn will not agree with that argument.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Surely the Attorney General does not take any exception to that principle. He admitted during the second reading debate that all persons now enrolled for the Legislative Council and all the additional persons to be enrolled under the provisions of the Bill, would be possessed of responsibility and experience.

The Attorney General: I did not mention experience, but said they would have responsibility placed upon them.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Surely the Attorney General would not be afraid to trust the people voting at an election to make the right decision. Surely if two candidates were standing for, say, the Metropolitan Province, one being 30 years of age and the other 22 years, he would not be afraid to trust the electors to make their own choice. Why should the Minister seek to limit the choice of the electors who, in his own words, would carry the responsibility?

The Minister for Education: He really would not do so.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am sure he would not deny the electors the right to make their own choice, and that is all the Bill proposes. I have never been able to understand the justification for prohibiting a man or woman who is over

21 years of age or of any age up to 30 from having even the right to offer for election to the Council. That is not a democratic procedure nor is it commonsense. I do not think the choice of electors should be limited at all.

The Attorney General: You do not approve of that system.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Which system?

The Attorney General: Free election.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The electors should be free to choose if they prefer the younger candidate.

The Attorney General: But you do not approve of that. You have your pre-election ballot. You select your candidate and do not allow any person at all to stand if he has not secured the selection.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Do you not have pre-selection on your side?

The Attorney General: But an individual is not liable to expulsion. You answer that one!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Attorney General is now opening up an almost unlimited field of discussion.

The Minister for Education: And it has nothing to do with the Bill.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Quite so.

The Minister for Education: And is therefore out of order.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Any person in the Labour Party who is not endorsed could stand for Parliament, but would run the risk of losing his membership of that party. I could recite what happened in Nedlands recently in connection with the Liberal endorsement, but to do so would be out of order. The Bill merely proposes to give a person between 21 and 30 years of age the right to nominate at Legislative Council elections.

Mr. GRAYDEN: I support the clause for reasons that are fairly obvious. The Attorney General argued that at the age of 30 a man is far more responsible than is a man of 29 or 28. If the argument is sound, it should apply also to candidates for election to this House. The people are the ones to decide who their member shall be. There is very little risk of their electing anyone, of whatever age, who showed signs of being irresponsible. In recent years, many younger men have been elected to the Parliaments, and I have not heard of an instance where anyone of them has acted in an irresponsible fashion.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 15:

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of paragraph (2), the word "that" be struck out and the word "if" inserted in lieu.

The Parliamentary Draftsman has advised that this alteration would improve the wording.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

On motions by the Attorney General, line 3 of paragraph (e) amended by striking out the quote marks after the word "householder," by striking out the word "any" and inserting in lieu the word "a", by inserting quote marks after the word "dwelling-house," and by striking out of line 6 the words "at such" and inserting in lieu the word "the."

Clause, as amended, put and passed.

Clause 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.42 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 2nd October, 1952.

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