

Ivanhoe rather sarcastically referred to university students learning how to spend their leisure. I see nothing wrong with that. It is a pity more of us did not learn how to spend our leisure to the best advantage. To devote our leisure to intelligent discussion or reading is much better than to spend that leisure in the manner indulged in by so many in the community today. The member for Canning mentioned that in the report by the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Justice Wolff, in connection with university matters, reference was made to the amount of money spent on expensive equipment. Without the advantage of expensive equipment students could not be trained properly.

Mr. Cross: Mr. Justice Wolff said that the same material could have been bought considerably cheaper.

Mr. OWEN: A carpenter does not learn his trade with an axe; the same thing applies to students at the University; they must have accurately made equipment if they are to receive the full benefit of the education given to them. The member for Mt. Hawthorn said that a raw university graduate is not a ball of knowledge. I quite agree with him. The graduate needs practical experience and the practical application of his theoretical knowledge before he is fully educated. I have come in contact with many undergraduates and graduates, as I was for five years—and I am proud to say it—a part-time lecturer at the University.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. OWEN: I hope I instilled some knowledge in my students. I point out that members of Convocation are graduates and that many of them have had years of practical experience. Many of such members are successful business men in this and other States, and I feel that they should play a big part in the conduct of the University. The Bill aims at reducing the number of members of Convocation to six. I consider that number too small. Criticism has been levelled against the members of Convocation because it is said they do not attend meetings regularly. That is easily understandable, when one realises that they are distributed over this large State, and although many reside in Perth they are not always free to attend meetings at a specified time, as they have their business to attend to. The fact that they do not attend a particular meeting, how-

ever, is not evidence that they are not interested in the University. I believe the fact that 500 recorded their votes—many of them postal votes—is an indication that members of Convocation do take an interest in university affairs. I do not propose to delay the House further. I shall vote for the second reading, but I also propose to vote for the amendment increasing the number of members of Convocation.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUILDERS' REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.45 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 1st November, 1944.

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

QUESTION—WOOL.

As to Railway Freight Paid by Commonwealth.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) What amount was paid or payable by the Commonwealth Government to the Railway Department in respect of wool from the outer Albany Zone railed to Fremantle during the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1944?

(ii) What amount was paid or payable by the Commonwealth Government to the Railway Department in respect of wool appraised at Albany, and subsequently, under instructions from the Central Wool

Committee, sailed to Fremantle for shipment or treatment during the year ended the 30th June, 1944?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

- (i) £4,970.
- (ii) £5,288.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £1,400,000.

Standing Orders Suspension.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.41]: I move—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable the Supply Bill to pass through its remaining stages at this sitting.

Question put and passed.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [4.42] in moving the second reading said: This is the second Supply Bill brought forward this session, and it seeks further supply pending the passing of the Estimates and the Appropriation Bill. In the previous Bill submitted Supply was granted as follows:

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	2,200,000
General Loan Fund ..	200,000
Advance to Treasurer ..	300,000
	<u>2,700,000</u>

Under the authority granted by that Bill, the expenditure for the first three months of this financial year was—

	£
Consolidated Revenue Fund ..	2,200,000
General Loan Fund ..	94,000

As this Bill sets out in the long title, the additional Supply asked for is £1,400,000 from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. This amount should be sufficient to finance the Government's requirements until the Appropriation Bill is passed. So far as the General Loan Fund is concerned, no further Supply is required as the balance already authorised will be sufficient. I propose to give to members the expenditure for the first three months of this financial year. It is as follows:—

	£
Special Acts	1,159,812
Governmental	990,462
Public Utilities	1,210,083
	<u>3,360,357</u>

Interest and Sinking Fund included under Special Acts, amounted to £1,029,650. Payments to the Hospital Fund, amounting to £68,937, and representing the proportion due for three months out of the Commonwealth income tax reimbursements, is included under the heading of governmental. Revenue collected for the first three months of this financial year is as follows:—

	£
Taxation	726,232
Territorial	95,567
Law Courts	13,648
Departmental	272,968
Mint	17,884
Commonwealth	330,859
Public Utilities	1,755,408
Trading Concerns	5,366
	<u>3,217,942</u>

The deficit for the first three months of this financial year amounted to £142,415, compared with £242,270 for the first three months of last financial year, an improvement of £99,855. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central): I would be grateful if I am allowed to explain the position in which I found myself yesterday, because I feel that it is necessary to clarify matters. Knowing that this Bill would deal with the expenditure of public money and having some criticism to offer regarding that expenditure, I sought advice as to whether I would be in order in making the references I had in mind on the measure that was before us yesterday—the Natives (Citizenship Rights) Bill. I was informed that the extended references I desired to make on native affairs would not be in order under that measure. Therefore I had no alternative to availing myself of the opportunity given to members under the Supply Bill to discuss finance and the expenditure of public money. That was my reason for not offering the criticism concerning natives on the Bill that was before the House yesterday.

This House is known—and properly so—as a House of Review. I am not going to voice my views as to whether this Chamber has any authority or control over the expenditure of public money, because I do not consider it worth while to do so. However, so long as this House of Review continues in existence, it is the duty of members to avail themselves of every possible

opportunity to review acts of administration, especially when those acts have to do with the expenditure of public money. On the 21st September, the Minister for Native Affairs, according to a report in the Press, was asked some questions regarding the grave statements that had been made reflecting on the administration. I have waited patiently for the reply, which I think the whole of the people of the State are entitled to have, but have waited in vain. Incomprehensible as it may seem, a reply has not been made by the responsible Minister. Meanwhile the people who have made the statements against the administration and others have flooded the State—it is no exaggeration to use the word “flooded”—with shocking statements which I hesitate to believe are capable of being substantiated.

I have before me two pamphlets issued by the Native Welfare Council of Western Australia, and I am given to understand on good authority that some thousands of copies of these pamphlets have been issued. I do not know whether members have received copies, but I consider that the honour of the State is at stake. The pamphlets have been in circulation for several weeks, and still we are waiting for some reply from the Minister whose duty it is either to bring the people responsible for the statements to book, or to clear the name of the State from the shocking reflections cast upon it. Yesterday morning I was handed some evidence, which I was asked to place before the House. I at once replied, “I am afraid that the rules of the House will not permit me to use that evidence on the Natives (Citizenship Rights) Bill.” The only chance of dealing with those matters is under the Supply Bill and so I am bringing them forward this afternoon. I ask members to be patient with me, though I shall be as brief as I can in dealing with these very important matters.

Let me preface my remarks by saying that I am not particularly anxious to impress members of this Chamber with the Christian point of view. That might or might not appeal to a majority of members, but what I think will appeal to most of them is the financial side of the question. On the 2nd September, 1943, a report appeared in “The West Australian” of a deputation that waited on the Minister in

connection with native affairs. I was one of that deputation. It was introduced by the then member for Avon (Mr. Boyle), and there were present representatives of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, Women Justices' Association, Women's Service Guild and Modern Women's Club. In replying to the deputation, the Hon. A. A. M. Coverley was reported as follows:—

The administration of native affairs has shown a marked and steady improvement. During the past three and a half to four years the grant had been increased from £27,000 to £52,000 annually. Three new settlements had been established and that at Carrolup rebuilt. Two travelling inspectors had been appointed, and new regulations and amendments to the Act gazetted. Children were taken from their parents only when it was in the interests of the children's hygiene or education.

I call attention to the increase in the amount of the grant; it has nearly doubled. There are many business men in this Chamber and I ask them to consider this point. In any private business, when they spend extra money, do they make any real attempt to ensure that the increased outlay will be judiciously spent with a view to securing improved results? Of course they do. So the Government must be given credit, according to the Minister for Native Affairs, for increasing the amount. In the pamphlet it is stated that the expenditure jumped from £28,000 to £56,000. The figures which I obtained today from the Commissioner of Native Affairs are as follows:—

	£
Expenditure for year ended the 30th June, 1934	28,340
Expenditure for year ended the 30th June, 1943	51,597

The Minister for Native Affairs was pretty near the mark when he gave the deputation that information. Extra money has been voted by the Government and extra money has been spent by the administration. What members have to satisfy themselves about is, surely, this: Has the money been wisely expended? In other words, is the administration efficient? Members must make up their minds for themselves on that matter.

I shall quote briefly from a report which has been referred to many times in this Chamber. It is the report of a Royal Commissioner, Mr. H. D. Moseley, who was appointed to inquire into what I must admit is an exceedingly difficult subject—native affairs. Mr. Moseley received his commission on the 21st February, 1934, and his

report was completed and handed in on the 24th January, 1935. Dealing with the Moore River Settlement, this is what Mr. Moseley had to say, at page 11—

The institution at Moore River has been referred to by the Chief Protector in his evidence as a "Native Settlement" and I have already submitted an interim report on this place. I understand from the Chief Protector that certain improvements have been effected since that report was submitted.

My report, dated the 19th April, 1934, was as follows:—

Pursuant to the Royal Commission issued to me on the 21st February, 1934, to investigate, report, and advise upon matters in relation to the condition and treatment of aborigines, I have the honour to submit an interim report upon this subject.

Although, doubtless, no report is expected of me until such time as my inquiries relative to aborigines have been completed, I feel that I shall not be exceeding my duty if at this stage I refer to my recent visit to the Native Settlement at Moore River, during which I was confronted with many matters which in my view called for urgent attention. Were it not for the very strong feeling I have as to the urgency of these matters, I should be well content to postpone my comments until my report on the whole question referred to me is prepared.

It is not my intention in this minute to do more than make passing comment on the apparent poverty of the land on which the settlement is placed. The reason for the selection of such a site does not at the moment concern me. I mention the matter merely as one of the many difficulties with which the Superintendent and his staff are faced.

Taking the settlement, however, as I found it, and for the time assuming that there was some good reason for selecting its location, it forms, in my view, a woeful spectacle.

Constitution of the Settlement.—The settlement comprises—

1. A compound at which are located young people sent there for a variety of causes, and people taken from their parents sent to the settlement for education and protection.
2. A camp for indigent natives and their families, situated some 300 yards from the compound.

There is a compound for the young people, and a camp 300 yards away for the indigent! The report continues—

The Compound. Accommodation.—The dormitories present from the outside a dilapidated appearance. Inside, at the present time, there appears to be adequate

room, but, remembering the numbers who, at this time of the year, sleep on the verandahs, I should say that, during the winter months, the rooms are far too crowded. Dr. Maunsell, of New Norcia, who frequently visits the settlement professionally agrees with this.

The dormitories are vermin-ridden to an extent which I suspect makes eradication impossible. Assuming that the settlement remains on its present site, the sooner new dormitories are constructed, and constructed of some material which will offer less scope for vermin, the better for the health and comfort of the inmates and for the reputation of the department.

There are no means of keeping the inmates in the dormitories at night. The doors are locked, but latticed walls are easily broken and many cases are on record of the girls visiting the camp, a few hundred yards from the compound, after they are placed in the dormitories for the night. Later I shall have something to write of the camp. While it remains part of the settlement, it should be made impossible for the inmates of the compound to have any communication with it. At New Norcia Mission I noticed that all openings to the dormitories were guarded by strong, link, mesh netting. I was told that this is effective, and a similar expedient for Moore River was suggested by the Superintendent, Mr. Neal, in his evidence. It should, in my opinion, be attended to at once, and the compound should be patrolled at night by a responsible person—not a native policeman. At the present time all the inmates of the compound go to the football ground adjacent to the camp and, although under the supervision of a white assistant, no doubt many opportunities are afforded for arranging clandestine meetings and, as I have said, the girls find no difficulty in the way of keeping their appointments. In addition, although the Superintendent told me that no camp people are allowed in the compound after dark, this must be in theory only for I myself saw on the night I was at Moore River many of the camp inmates, if not all of them, at a concert and dance held in the compound dining-room.

There is no accommodation for the compound children during rainy days other than the dormitories. Those of school age cannot in wet weather use the bough shed, which in the summer is used as a class room, and the church hall is far too small to accommodate them all. I noticed some timber which I was informed had been sent up for the purpose of building a shed or something of that nature. Its appearance suggested that a most efficient tradesman would find difficulty in utilising it to any great advantage. The head teacher spoke feelingly of her difficulties because of inadequate school accommoda-

tion, and the matter, in my view, requires urgent attention.

The missionary at the settlement, a very keen and enthusiastic worker, and doing, as I see it, very valuable work on the social side, should be provided with a room for her own use. She is not really a departmental officer, but recognition might in this way be made of the good she is doing at the settlement.

The Camp.—It seems obvious to me that this should be removed to some other site immediately. Nothing more detrimental to the work of the settlement can, in my view, be imagined. Many of the inmates are, in the Superintendent's opinion, useless, and they seem to be, with few exceptions, of the poorest type. I was unable to obtain the number of inmates at the camp, but 102 full rations are issued daily, a child receiving half a ration.

The inmates of the compound are admitted for education and protection, and I found them living within a few hundred yards of a collection of useless, loafing natives, content to do nothing and always ready to entice the compound girls to the camp. It would be better that the grown-up people should be sent away and the children taken from their parents and put in the compound than that the inmates of the compound should be under such a contaminating influence. It is in my opinion, and in the opinion of the staff at Moore River, a menace to the settlement. I am surprised that new camps are being erected as it shows, firstly, an intention to continue the camp and, secondly, that money is being spent which could so much more usefully be used in the compound.

It is not my purpose at this stage to comment on the departmental administration of the settlement. It may be that difficulties, of which at the moment I know nothing, have materially hampered the Chief Protector in attending to those matters which to me have seemed so obviously to require attention. I have found it difficult, however, to reconcile an annual expenditure of £5,000 with the present condition of the settlement.

My report on the Moore River Settlement will have conveyed my opinion that the place is not suitable. It will be of no practical value, unless means are found of employing the inmates fully. If there is suitable land adjoining the present settlement, it should be used. If not, then the location of the settlement should be changed. As it is, I can see no hope of success.

That was in 1935. Before the Hon. A. M. M. Coverley became a Minister of the Crown, he appeared before the Royal Commission, and I will quote some of his remarks. He had given an instance of a case and said—

I instance such cases to show that whoever was responsible for the administration of the

Act should not administer it from an office in Perth but should get out amongst the aborigines themselves either in the southern area or in the northern area to obtain some idea of the job ahead of him.

Later on, that hon. gentleman said—

The object of the department should be to look after the welfare and upkeep of the native races, but in actual practice the administration is driving the natives out of employment and making them a burden on the taxpayers of the State.

The department's administration is resulting in the natives being brought up as good for nothing.

When discussing the provisions of a Bill to amend the Aborigines Act, Mr. Coverley said—

I understood that the Aborigines Department was created for the purpose of uplifting the aboriginal race. I have known 10 or 12 half-castes to make application to the department, under the present Chief Protector, for exemption from the Aborigines Act. I believe I can truthfully say that I have never known one application to be successful—why I do not know.

In conclusion, Mr. Coverley said—

The matters I have referred to show clearly that there are many directions in which the present administration might be changed.

The Hon. A. M. M. Coverley has been in office for some years but the Commissioner of Native Affairs is still administering the department from his office in Perth, notwithstanding what the present Ministerial head said in 1936. I now wish to quote from an article written by Mary Durack in "The West Australian" on the 21st October. I do not know the lady myself, but the name "Durack" is well known to all of us in this State as being the name of people who have had a lot to do with natives, especially in the North-West. The lady had this to say—

We have at last reached the stage wherein everyone agrees that there is "something wrong somewhere" with our native administration and is indignantly passing the blame on to someone else.

Every year in which things are allowed to proceed in the present manner the situation is becoming more difficult to handle. The rapidly growing native population is an ever-increasing source of liability to the country.

I do not think Mary Durack is a missionary, but, whether or no, she maintains that "there is something wrong somewhere."

Hon. G. W. Miles: She is a woman of sound commonsense.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: In this democratic country people are continually crying out that we should hand matters over to the control of the Commonwealth Government. What, therefore, can we expect? Are we not to have proper government of Western Australia? A very high ecclesiastical gentleman told me only this morning that he was in favour of handing over the control of the Native Affairs Department to the Commonwealth Government. What then can we expect when we look for better things for our native population? Mary Durack referred to "the ever-increasing source of liability to the country." She went on to say—

Gradually, by the consistent policy of neglect and apathy, by a failure to assist him towards citizenship and a respected place in our exclusive society, we have turned him into a liability. Even in the North, where up to date, he has supplied probably 90 per cent. of the labour available, he is gradually ceasing to be regarded as an asset. It is a long, sad story and an interesting one, but there is no space here in which to trace the history of this deterioration. Suffice it to say that soon the station people of the North will be turning most of their erstwhile native employees over to the Government, a further strain upon the nation's revenue.

That is deplorable.

It is an interesting point, and one of which we might do well to remind ourselves, that when Western Australia took over care of the natives in 1897 it was only by solemnly undertaking to set aside not less than one per cent. of the gross revenue for their advancement and their ultimate attainment of equal citizenship. It was justly pointed out that this should be the first charge on the State. For only by these people having been deprived of their land was there any State to tax. This figure has been so reduced by successive legislation that a comparison of the amount to which the natives were entitled under this agreement and the pitiful sum actually provided for their welfare presents a shameful revelation.

Quite a lot of what has been referred to as "gushy" Christianity has been heard from people who have no time in which to consider giving decent conditions to our natives. Here is something that should appeal to hard-headed business men: In a Perth newspaper on the 6th April I found the following:—

"When we took up our jobs at Moore River," said Mr. Henry, "we found many causes for complaint.

"The store was swarming with cockroaches and mice. There was no school, no teacher,

and the ground under the schoolhouse was being used as an open lavatory.

"In the compound, where the women and children (including boys up to 14) were housed, prostitutes mingled freely with others.

" 'Big House,' the residence of the superintendent and his wife, were getting as much as 5 lbs. of butter a week out of native rations, the excuse being that 'they had to entertain a lot of people.' In a period of two weeks, Matron brought up five of the ten cartons of cigarettes which I requisitioned for the natives.

"In this period, the natives only got 20 packets of cigarettes and 2 lbs. of tobacco. And aboriginal children were getting dripping instead of butter on their bread because the butter (which is part of a child endowment allowance made in foodstuffs instead of cash) was going elsewhere.

"I based the tobacco requisition on reasonable requirements. The order, out of which the natives got this paltry amount, was 10 cartons of cigarettes and 11 lbs. 4 ozs. of pipe and cigarette tobacco.

"When I arrived there, I found that part of my duties as storekeeper was to assist in treating the V.D. patients, women as well as men.

"Some officials in the Department of Native Affairs seemed rather surprised when I pointed out that in my view, this hardly came under the heading of storekeeping.

"To our knowledge, there were 14 V.D. cases in the settlement. Although the infected natives are sent to isolation wards, it is possible for them to get out at night, and of course they do.

"When we began to clean up the store," said Mr. Henry, "we found five bags of rotten potatoes, and also rotting pumpkins and turnips. Yet for the next three weeks, there wasn't an onion in the compound for the use of the kitchens.

"Mice were so bad that 15 to 20 loaves of bread would be eaten right through every night. Everywhere we looked, we found evidence of neglect and incompetence. For instance, transporting of supplies from the railways was always done by truck. Yet the settlement has six wagons and mules, and using them would save petrol. The wagons need a bit of simple repair work—and, as for the mules, they just wander around, like the native dogs."

"How about food supplies?" we asked.

"There's plenty of food," says Mrs. Henry. "Trouble is the incompetent way it is distributed. For instance, we've told you about the bags of rotten vegetables. As far as meat is concerned, the settlement slaughters its own. But the slaughterers give away a lot of the meat to native children hanging round the back door of the slaughterhouse, so that the distribution is completely unsupervised and haphazard.

"We tried to introduce an orderly system of meat distribution but, as with everything else where we tried to make some improvement, we met with only resistance and indifference."

That is what happened in a Perth newspaper on the 6th April of this year. Members have heard the Royal Commissioner's remarks of 1936. In anything I say this afternoon I have the permission of various people to give their names. I have here a signed statement by a nurse, dated the 20th December, 1943. It is a copy of a report on the Carrolup Native Settlement, by Nurse M. Spence, a lady I do not know. She said—

The conditions in the dormitories were bad, I "relieved" the attendant one day a week. The sanitary arrangements were awful. There were no lights in either dormitory, and the children were very crowded. The beds were double-decker single, and often two children had to sleep in one bed. They slept on dark-coloured rugs and were covered by one rug. Where the children had ring-worm and other skin ailments this was very irritating to their skins. Their pillows were used only for show purposes in the day-time. Both very young and older girls were locked up between 5.30 and 6 p.m. There was no supervision. After they were locked up the attendant was off duty. If there was any trouble and a big enough noise we would hear them and go and see what was wrong. The conditions were the same with the boys. They had no recreation at all. The kitchen girls, whose ages might be from 15 to 17, had nothing but drudgery. They were called at six o'clock and went into the kitchen where they scrubbed and cleaned and helped to prepare the food. They had about one and a half hours off after dinner time. At four o'clock they started work again and whenever tea was over and cleaned up, they were "put to bed" just the same as the school children, except any favoured few who were selected to attend our evening meals. No wonder those girls were always running away. They did not receive any reward like the young men who got a few shillings per month and could spend it at the store.

There was no place for children to go on a wet day and no room for the older girls to sit about on their hour off duty. They were not allowed in the dormitory in case they untidied their beds. Much could be done to improve the lot of those young people, most of whom are there because the parents have had to come to the settlement, not because they are delinquent children.

In support of that statement, I have another communication from Miss Jones, the daughter of a Presbyterian clergyman. She is at present at the Presbyterian Children's Home at Byford. This is what Miss Jones wrote—

I spent from March 7 to May 7, 1943, at the Carrolup Native Settlement and the following is what happened there during my stay: I arrived at Katanning about 5 p.m. and was met at the station by the settlement truck. Before leaving the town we called at

the police station to pick up a girl of 19 who had been charged with seducing a boy of 16 and was fined £4. The girl's mother paid the fine and so the girl was released. The superintendent was incensed because she was not imprisoned and he said to the dormitory attendant in my hearing that he was going to flog her and put her in the cells for 14 days and that another man on the staff would hold her while he did it. The girl was of slight build, about 7 stone in weight.

Sick with horror, I asked the school-teacher (Miss Dannatt) if that kind of thing went on there. It was too horrible for anything, and I would not be able to stand it. She assured me she had not known Mr. Leeming (the Superintendent) to do it—his wife usually did the girls. This I found to be a deliberate lie as it happened often in the two months I was there. Every time a girl ran away—caught and brought back—she was flogged and put in the cells for 14 days.

The weather was bitterly cold and wet—yet the poor kiddies only had one change of clothes each and thin short sleeved cotton frocks or cotton shirts or trousers. Apart from a horrible flannel singlet which itched them, they had no warm clothing.

There are no sheets on the beds. They sleep on the bare mattress and have two blankets on each bed. There are pillows with pillow-cases on them on the beds for show purposes in the daytime, but they are removed at night. There is no waterproof sheeting on the children's beds and no drying facilities at all, so wet beds are simply made up and remain wet.

There was only one attendant for all these kiddies so you can imagine how much care even a conscientious woman could give them. This means that the babies and toddlers had to be left to the uncertain care of the bigger girls.

With the exception of a dance for the older ones held sometimes every three weeks, there are no pleasures. They are locked up like fowls after an early tea every night, winter and summer—no light, no fire, no recreation at all—just an animal existence.

In wet weather there is nowhere for them to go for shelter except a narrow verandah by the dormitories or under a tank. They are not allowed in the dormitories as they would make them dirty and visitors might come!

Can you wonder then that the older girls run away and often with men whenever they have opportunity? The police are sent after them, the men are imprisoned, the girls flogged and put in the cells for 14 days. The cells are filthy dark places and often for days on end the girls have told me they are not allowed out for exercise, except for a few minutes in the morning while they have a wash and sweep the cells. They measure 6 ft. x 4 ft. and are infested by rats. A thin straw mattress and two rugs on the bed.

A girl about 20 years of age who was only waiting for a bed to go to Woorloo was flogged on the upper part of her legs until

it drew blood. I saw and bathed the wounds myself that night. The matron (Mrs. Leeming) yells and bawls at the girls and this morning a girl answered her back. She went and struck the girl who turned on her. The storeman who saw it all, took the girl to the cells but refused to flog her there and then as the matron demanded, because he said the matron was to blame and he would have struck her himself had he been in the girl's place. Leeming was at home with 'flu but he came down and flogged the girl.

One morning two girls were sent to the boys' dormitory to make the beds. Some boys were found there and the girls were charged with seducing. The girls denied it to me, saying they had been told to get the beds done before breakfast—the dormitory attendant said that part was true. The girls were flogged and imprisoned. The superintendent told me what the girls had done and said he was going to flog them, and asked what I thought about it. I said it was ghastly in a civilised country. He said he had no alternative, the girl was a sex pervert. I said in that case she needed medical treatment—flogging would not cure her. He said it would be six months before the department would move to have her treated and what was to be done in the meantime. However, he added, that if "my religion" could do anything for them, I was welcome to try. So I arranged then to visit the cells each day.

I stayed with them as long as I could. The stench of the place was overpowering and made me feel ill.

The t.b. girl previously mentioned was in great pain one night with cramp—great lumps could be felt in her legs. The matron came at long last, felt her pulse, declared there was nothing wrong with her and that she would send some castor oil. One of the men brought it down later neat. There were oranges and plenty of milk on the settlement. She could easily have been more humane about giving it.

These older girls and young women are congregated there, untaught, just drudges. They wash clothes, scrub tables, and floors, and wash dishes, and such-like jobs, but have no domestic training, sewing, or knitting.

Late into the night the two-up ring is going. I complained to Mr. McBeath (Deputy Commissioner) and he said he would have them removed to the dormitory. The big boys' dormitory leads into the small boys' dormitory. The big boys often threaten the little ones with a belting at night. There is no one anywhere near them and they have every opportunity. Also one of the staff told me all kinds of filth went on there at night. What else can they expect—big boys of 15 and 16 shut up at 5.30 every night in the dark, with nothing whatever to occupy them. I have never seen kiddies with such dull, unhappy eyes, hang-dog expressions and surly looks. It is veritable prison to them. Surely if it is necessary to deprive these poor kiddies of mother love, they could at least have

more humane treatment and conditions. I do hope you will be able to do something. If only some women would go and ask some leading questions and ask to have some beds stripped, or else go out without warning. I sometimes wish I had stayed there for the kiddies' sake and have even offered to go back in an honorary capacity and provide games and give the children something in the evening and teach handicrafts, but was told there was no accommodation.

Hon. G. B. Wood: To whom did Miss Jones write that letter?

Hon. E. H. H. HALL: To Mr. Powell of the Native Welfare Council. Here are some further comments from a lady who may be known to metropolitan members; I do not know her. She was for years the matron in charge of the Anglican Orphanage in Adelaide-terrace. I refer to Miss Jean M. Birt who in her letter dated the 20th February, 1944, said—

The State has little or no policy on this, so-called, welfare work among coloured children. Consequently these children suffer. There is little or no standard of cleanliness, personal or otherwise, no standard of behaviour or morals. They just live from day to day being whipped into shape when certain members of the staff think occasion demands. Sister Eileen at Moore River is throwing herself heart and soul into the work for the betterment and happiness of the children and for the adults, with scarcely anything but opposition from those in authority. Among the white staff (men) at the Moore River Native Settlement there was much drinking going on. I have seen the then storekeeper too drunk at the settlement to stand. Other responsible members of the staff were frequently likewise. I have had both teaching and child welfare training and for some years until 1938 was matron, Perth Girls' Orphanage, Adelaide-terrace. With this experience I do not hesitate to make comments upon matters at both Moore River and Carrolup.

Miss Birt added a postscript to her letter as follows:—

I might mention that while at Moore River I sent to the Commissioner an account of the state of things there. I have a copy of the same to the then Superintendent. No notice was taken. When I left Moore River I sent a detailed report of same to the Premier and I was interviewed by the responsible Cabinet Minister, and there the matter ended.

There is more from Miss Birt, but it is practically a repetition of what I have already read. It is not my desire to champion the work that the missions are doing, but facts are stubborn things. This particular mission was some years ago very much in the public eye, so I shall ask the House to bear with me while I read some extracts from a pamphlet entitled "Calling Australia" which was issued by the Mount Margaret Mission

Branch of the United Aborigines Mission. Here is one extract—

We have always realised the need of industry for our people. We have the Native Department on one side, who consider that the natives do not need Bible teaching, and on the other side some Christians who think that we should do nothing else. We have tried to strike the happy medium. All our industries are in abeyance till after the war. Meanwhile, our men whom we taught mining are working on mines and sand plants in the district getting white men's wages because of their ability. Others, because of mind and body being catered for at the Mission, are the sought after ones for the stations. Over 100 are out working. When any native or native couple are home because their job is finished, or change of job, or for a holiday, the men being good with carpentering and other tools, do all kinds of jobs for us at 1s. an hour and the womenfolk just settle down to do some of the arts and crafts which they know so well. This work, however, has to be rationed because of shortage of material. The fact remains that the teaching of industry makes them better workers when away at work, and self-reliant when out of work.

That refers to a mission station. The Moore River and Carrolup native settlements are run by the Government, by the people of the State. I shall next refer to a booklet or leaflet issued in connection with the Mt. Margaret Mission Station in order to place some further facts before members. In years gone by mining operations proceeded at Morgans where the native mission was conducted by Mr. and Mrs. Schenk, who were the superintendents. The report contains the following—

To the foresight of the missionaries in establishing industries much of the success of the settlement is due. The gold-bearing rock is not rich enough to pay white people to work it nor will it stand the expense of crushing in a public battery. But the natives crush their own ore with the result that during the first year they won £349; next year £668, then £960, £1,641 and £1,520. This last year the return was only £1,010, conditions being such that good workers made more money hiring themselves out owing to the dearth of labour caused by the war.

The policy of the missionaries has been to build up a native village community, self-contained and independent, and they have succeeded beyond measure. This is their village, their store, their church, their school, their hospital, their matron, their home. Supposing the missionaries had not come here, what would have been the story? This self-respecting community would be non-existent, the units would be scattered around the outskirts of civilisation, hanging on to the outsiders in the mining towns, half-starved and degraded. The men compelled by force of circumstances to trade their womenfolk to undesirable whites, little children brought into a life of misery and

sin. Thank God for the splendid and devoted staff of missionaries at the Mt. Margaret Mission.

As one surveys the work here, the thought presses, how is the finance arranged? For it can be readily imagined that where there are heavy general expenses and the personal needs of the missionaries have also to be provided for, unless there is some recognised system, endless confusion may arise. But here again there is a well-ordered plan. Each missionary is responsible for his or her own personal needs. No missionary, whether superintendent or others, receives money unless specially earmarked. Over and above the personal needs of each missionary there is the heavy expenditure on the upkeep of the station. This Mr. Schenk, the superintendent, accepts as his responsibility. Sanitation, electric light, water supply laid on to each missionary's house, transport, battery expenses, and the ever-present need for providing work for the bush natives, all total a considerable sum which has to be provided weekly. How are the expenses raised? They are not raised. The missionaries are all too busy to devote time to the raising of money. They have accepted the fact that where God orders a work to be done he will provide the necessary money. They do not live extravagantly nor use money unnecessarily; generally speaking, they have to live on less than 10s. per week. Their resource is prayer and trust in God to supply their needs. That there are testings and trials in such a work is obvious. And that the spiritual experience gained in such testings flows out into the hearts and lives of the natives is also obvious. It is this experience and life of sacrifice which to a large extent is the secret of their success. One could only wish that scattered over the continent of Australia we might have a number of such stations working for the evangelisation of the natives.

As I said before, facts are stubborn things. It is no romance that I have been reading to the House, but a statement of actual facts. When we come to compare a work like this, which has been going on for 20-odd years, with other work, the comparisons become very odious indeed. Now I wish to refer to a letter written by the present Superintendent of the Moore River settlement, which appeared in "The West Australian" of yesterday. I do not know the missionary who is referred to in the letter. I claim to be merely waiting for some statement from the Minister clearing the fair name of this State from the terrible accusations brought against it. Let me say that the superintendent, Mr. Knight, communicated a letter to the Press—in my opinion, a good letter—and that the next day we read in the Press that he had committed a breach of the Public Service regu-

lations in communicating with the Press without having obtained the permission of his department or his Minister. I admire the superintendent for his action; he is a man who must have something in him. A letter from Dean Moore published yesterday includes the following:—

The misrepresentation of facts shows the value of Mr. Knight's statements. Compare his version of the deaconess's work and influence at Moore River with the spontaneous testimony of ten ex-members of the staff whose letters appeared on October 24, not to mention the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, who frequently visits the settlement and knows the facts.

It may be said that they are all church people, and all combine to stick together. I quote further from the letter—

Furthermore, Mr. Knight gives himself away completely in his attempt to explain the incident of the eight working boys found in the girls' dormitory. So it was only an innocent party of brothers and sisters and cousins, and dear Mr. Knight wondered whether there had been anything wrong, or whether he had "jumped to unjustified conclusions." Well, well! But if so, why did he immediately dismiss from the settlement the boys not under warrant? Moreover, it was not at all this "dormitory incident," as Mr. Knight well knows, which gave rise to the alleged "libel" that the place was becoming a brothel. The reason for this was put down to the absence of any school for 16 months and lack of sufficient work to keep men and girls full employed. The blame here was clearly at the door of the department's policy; no accusation was made against the superintendent.

I want the House to remember that we as a people, through our Executive the Government, have no place to which to send, for reformatory treatment or for purposes of instruction, the delinquent children of white parents. This very afternoon I was thinking how peculiar it is that we have not thought it worth while to set up a Government institution for the purpose of reclaiming or training our own white children when their parents have failed to do so. This is a fair question: Why have we persisted for years in maintaining institutions for the training and reforming of aboriginal children, meantime doing nothing for delinquent white children? I am forced to the conclusion that if the Government came to an arrangement with the missionaries to take over existing institutions of the kind it would relieve the taxpayers of the burden under which they suffer.

We claim to be a humane people, and surely if the statements that have been made are found to be correct, action is called for! We cannot claim to be treating the aboriginal children humanely. The Royal Commissioner who conducted an inquiry into matters affecting the natives, is a gentleman we all know and appreciate as level-headed and shrewd, and he has said that the place at present under consideration is shocking. I desire to be fair, and in order to show that attempts at improvement have been made let me mention that for the year ended on 30th June, 1934, the expenditure at Moore River was £5,106, and for the year ended on the 30th June, 1943, £10,334—a rise from £5,000 to £10,000, and yet we have even now a place that is a degradation. People get up at annual meetings of churches or of women's associations and launch such terrible charges against not only the Government but also the whole of the people of this State, and they should be brought to the Bar of this Chamber and required to substantiate their assertions.

I have no doubt whatever that the women whom I accompanied on a deputation to the Minister are prepared to appear here. But on the part of the Minister there is complete silence. The people of Western Australia and of the entire Commonwealth have had the charges brought under their notice. I have in mind especially the charges referring to hygiene and sanitation, and immorality of the grossest kind. I was asked to undertake the unpleasant task of bringing this subject before members of this Chamber and the people of the country.

HON. H. SEDDON (North-East): I desire to make a few remarks, but do not expect the Minister to deal with them in the course of his reply. Doubtless he will take up the matter I am mentioning, and afford me an answer on a more suitable occasion. Members may recollect that during the Address-in-reply debate I quoted from a letter which appeared in "The Economist" of the 22nd April, 1944, on the subject of the price of gold. I pointed out that the extract gave particulars regarding the price of gold which had been obtained from South Africa. On that subject I asked a question to which the Government so far has not been able to afford a reply. The question bore on this very point. Incidentally

I may mention that a statement has been issued by a Commonwealth Minister relative to the difference between the price of gold in India and the price which is being paid as far as Australia is concerned. That statement evidently did not go far enough. That statement did deliberately ignore the important fact that the South African Government was permitted to sell gold in India at the premium paid in that country, and also permitted to set that gold against its imports from India.

The question to which I wish to obtain an answer is: Has the Australian Government sold any gold in India and taken advantage of the opportunity given to the South African Government; or, on the other hand, has the Australian Government been content to accept the fixed price paid for gold ever since the war started? This question is pertinent to Western Australia on account of the importance of the gold-mining industry to this State; and, in view of the importance of the industry, in the future, to the whole welfare of Australia, we would expect both the State and the Commonwealth Government to be alive to the necessity for procuring the maximum return from our gold. Consequently, this is a question to which we should have an answer, and I am giving the Minister an opportunity to reply to it and clear up the matter on a subsequent occasion. There are two other things to which I should like to refer.

As the Commonwealth loan has now been dealt with, I cannot be accused of saying anything that would interfere with that loan; but there are certain things to which reference might well be made in connection with the response to the loan and which might be brought before the Commonwealth Government. The first is that it must be recognised that the demands made upon the people of Australia in the form of taxation are having an effect upon the amount of money available for investment in loans. I therefore suggest that the Commonwealth Government, when dealing with the raising of loans, should have regard to the fact that it is expecting the people of Australia to pay more taxation than ever before; and, in addition, it is expecting them to pay a super tax. This is bound to affect the response to the appeal. There are also widespread stories of waste of money, which are bound to have

an effect on loans raised. I mention these points because I think the Commonwealth Government should have regard to them in connection with its future loan policy.

There is the further question of the money in the savings bank. The attitude of many people is that they prefer having money there to placing it in loans. These things are connected with the Commonwealth Government's policy—first of all with regard to expenditure, and, secondly, with regard to the prosecution of the war. While the people are, immediately preceding a loan, subjected to a variety of propaganda to induce them to find money to invest in loans; unfortunately, when a loan has been filled, we hear very little more about the policy of expenditure and the prosecution of our part in the war until the next loan appeal is launched. All this has had an effect on the minds of the people that should be dealt with by those who have in their care Australia's part in the war.

I raise these questions because they require an answer. The people of this country should be given an opportunity to hear the Government's reply to those criticisms that are being made and also of seeing that the Government supports its request for financial assistance by ensuring that it obtains equal support from the people it is employing to make the commodities used in the war. I have pleasure in supporting the Bill and I would mention that I have raised these points because they are being referred to in the community. They are not made use of on any public platform, because people feel that they should do nothing to interfere with the success of a loan. However, they are matters that should be dealt with by responsible authorities so that the people may receive an answer to the criticism levelled.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (in reply): I feel sure that Mr. Hall does not expect me to reply to the many charges he has made against the Department of Native Affairs.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Not at all.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY: But I would like to refer to one or two statements he has made. First of all, in his opening remarks, he said that, notwithstanding the very serious charges that had been made, there had been no reply from the responsible Minister; that he had been waiting

to hear, through the Press or otherwise, what the Minister had to say; and that, because there had been no reply, he felt that he must ventilate these matters in this Chamber. Those were not his words, but I think that is the equivalent of what he said. I would draw the attention of members to his closing remarks, in which he said he understood that the Minister had made a statement that he would deal with these matters in full when the Estimates were being dealt with in another place. Following that statement, he apologised for taking up the time of the House, adding: "I have been asked to do this and that is the reason I have spoken on this Bill."

I suggest to the hon. member that it was quite possible for him to approach the department in regard to the figures he has quoted this afternoon; but apparently he did not consider it possible to approach the department to find out the departmental point of view in regard to the very serious charges contained in the letters he read to the Chamber. I think the hon. member quoted letters that had been sent to somebody else and handed to him to ventilate in this Chamber. If the hon. member had wanted to be fair, he would at least have approached the department and said: "I have received these letters. There are some very serious charges that I propose to ventilate in the Legislative Council. Have you anything to say?"

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: I have been waiting for a statement for weeks.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member is not prepared to do a fair thing.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: We have waited too long.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: He is prepared to malign the Minister and officials of the department, without in any way giving the department or the persons concerned an opportunity to put their side of the question alongside the statements he makes.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: They have had every opportunity.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That is all I propose to say on the question at present. There is another side—a good one.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: It is about time it was given.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Apparently the hon. member was not prepared to men-

tion any of the good side of native administration. I think I can well leave this matter in the hands of the Minister in charge of the department. To come now to Mr. Seddon's reference to the sale of gold in India. It is true that the hon. member asked a question some little time ago. The question was referred to the Government and, by the Government, referred to the Commonwealth for information, if available. So far as I know, there has been no reply to that communication. The other matters to which Mr. Seddon referred are really Commonwealth matters; but, if it is at all possible to obtain the information for which he has asked, I will be only too pleased to secure it for him.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—MORTGAGEES' RIGHTS RESTRICTION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [5.58]: It is with some difficulty that I speak on this Bill, because it is so involved with the Bill the second reading of which has just been postponed until a later stage of the sitting. This measure is to amend the Mortgagees' Rights Restriction Act. The existing Act is in force until the end of the year but there will be a continuance Bill to provide for its operation to extend over another 12 months. I have expressed myself on many occasions as being opposed entirely to the continuance of this Act. Therefore, I am placed in a very difficult position when asked to amend a measure to which I am totally opposed.

Generally speaking, the second reading is to decide whether members are agreed upon the principles of a Bill. I find myself in the difficult position that I have to support the second reading of this measure although I am entirely opposed to the Act it proposes to amend. In supporting the Bill, I do so hoping to make some drastic amendments in Committee, and also in the hope that after the Bill is dealt with, the continuation

measure will be rejected by this Chamber. I do not propose to go into the details of the Bill until it reaches the Committee stage when we can deal with it more clearly, but I would like to point out that it purports to amend an Act that was brought in simply to overcome the serious financial difficulties that arose in 1931.

Most of the legislation brought down at that time has gone by the board, but that dealing with the reduction of interest still remains. The only amendment offered by the Government is in connection with small mortgages due to small people; that is to say, people with small incomes. It does not affect the great number of mortgages which are let out as trust funds of, say, deceased estates because it limits mortgagees, who are trustees, to an annual income of £250, and the trustees of the bigger estates have a far greater income than that although the various beneficiaries may not have more. But it is impossible to wind up estates while these mortgages are still in existence. Possibly members representing country districts will have another view, but although the original legislation was brought down under the Premier's Plan, as it was known in 1931, several of the States provided that the onus should be on the mortgagor to approach the court to get relief.

In this State we have always insisted that the mortgagee should approach the court and go to the expense of getting the authority of the court for relief. That has not always been easy; in fact, it has been very difficult at times, besides involving some expense which, in many instances, the trustees have felt they were not justified in incurring on a more or less speculative chance of getting the order they sought. This Bill presents a simple and easy way of getting an order under certain limited circumstances. It is, I admit, an advance on what has happened in the past, but nevertheless I say that it is not sufficient that the onus should be thrown on the mortgagee to move the court or the Commissioner of Titles to prevent the mortgagee calling up his money. This measure is typical of a class of legislation that has become only too common in that it makes the scoundrel in the community the person who lends the money. The other scoundrel, and perhaps the worse one, is the man who has a house to let, but we are not dealing with him at the moment. The mortgagee is placed in a very invidious position, and

I sincerely trust that if this Bill does pass the second reading—and I am afraid I cannot oppose the second reading—that members will listen to me when I put forward some amendments.

On motion by Hon. H. Seddon, debate adjourned.

BILL—NATIVES (CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [6.7]: I intend to support the second reading of this Bill. I have had considerable experience of natives, including full-blooded natives in the North-West and half-castes in the southern areas. I am not optimistic about the results of this measure. I think it will be a failure in regard to a large proportion of those who will come under it. But I do believe that if it confers these rights on only half-a-dozen, who are half-castes, it will be worth while. I have not very much faith in the half-castes; a large percentage of them are wasters. But nevertheless there is a desirable element among them. They should be given some higher status than they have now. For that reason, this measure is well worth while. In addition, we have heard so much about the natives lately that it behoves us to do everything possible to pass this Bill to see what good it will do.

My experience of the full-blooded natives leads me to believe that not many of them will get the benefit of the measure. If by a fluke some of them do get citizenship rights, I do not think they will retain them for very long. People ask, "Why make these safeguards for the natives when they are not applicable to the white people?" The answer is that the native is a different type of individual. I have heard it said that they are God's creatures and that they have not had a chance. Perhaps they have not, but those who have had a chance have not shown themselves to be of very high intelligence. We are dealing with a different type of people altogether. I think it was Mr. E. H. H. Hall who, when reading a letter this afternoon, said that there was something wrong somewhere.

There is something wrong, and it is in the temperament of the native and the

half-caste. There is something different about these people and we must legislate accordingly. I hope that all the safeguards will be made and that when these people do not behave themselves, no bones will be made about the matter, but that their citizenship rights will be taken from them and they will be put back to where they were before. We have read a lot in the Press about education, and I believe that education is at the bottom of the matter. The half-caste must be educated. We have heard a lot about Carrolup and the Moore River native settlements. It is high time that an inquiry was held to investigate conditions at those institutions, so that we can be told what is wrong. There must be something wrong. Whether the inquiry should be by way of a Select Committee or a board—not a departmental, or missionary or religious board—I do not know, but some authority should go into the whole question of the set-up of Carrolup and the Moore River settlements. I have received letters the writers of which advocate the removal of those who are in charge of those institutions. It is high time that the people of this State learnt, through a full inquiry, just what is wrong. In the meanwhile, I support the second reading.

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central): I desire to commend the Government for bringing down this Bill. I do not wish to malign the Department of Native Affairs when it attempts to improve the condition of these unfortunate people. No matter what is said to the contrary by any Minister of the Crown, when the administration of any Government department, semi-Government department or a local governing authority is seriously and openly criticised, it becomes the bounden duty of that department to take the public into its confidence immediately by replying to the charges made against it. This is a democratic community, and we are not supposed to wait until it pleases any Minister of the Crown, to suit his convenience, to reply to the charges against the administration that he is pledged and paid to attend to.

There is a clause in this Bill which I hope some member will move to have excised at the Committee stage. If no-one else will do that, I shall myself. It is ridiculous. Will members believe me when I say that this Bill seriously proposes to deprive a native of his rights after he has

justified his claim to be lifted from the Aborigines Act, if he goes to a mission station and associates there with natives? There are other clauses which should also be dealt with in Committee. Mr. Wood mentioned the matter of an inquiry. Just what are we to do if inquiries are held and effect is not given to the recommendations made. Are we supposed to carry on under that kind of treatment? I am not optimistic as to the benefits that will result from any inquiry. I do not think that anything in this Bill requires an inquiry. Members have expressed themselves in favour of it. The desire of the majority of people in this State, as far as I can find is, and has been for years, to give these people an opportunity to free themselves from the control of the Aborigines Department.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

HON. E. H. H. HALL: All I wish to add to the remarks I made before tea is that I hope the amendments I have indicated will be accepted.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) (7.32): I commend the Bill to the House. The amendments it proposes are vitally necessary.

HON. A. Thomson: I think they are overdue.

HON. J. G. HISLOP: In discussing the second reading, I think we should pay full tribute to members of the City Council who gave so much time and thought to the laying out of the necessary work for inspecting these houses and prescribing for the Government the requisite details. I notice that there are certain types of shops which might be called eatinghouses which are exempted from the amendment, and I thought it might be wise to look into the question of whether those various types of shops and eatinghouses were cared for adequately under the existing Act or whether a further amendment is necessary. However, I find that they are all adequately cared for in the numerous provisions that appear in the Act. I was particularly worried to ensure that

those shops that sell milk and ice-cream should be controlled by the local health authority or by inspectors under the Commissioner of Public Health. I can assure the House that all those places which are exempt are sufficiently governed by regulations for their proper conduct, care and inspection.

Those who have seen the reports which the Honorary Minister quoted will agree that all of those requirements are not only advisable but are also essential to the proper carrying out of the Act in general, and I think we can rest assured that when the provisions of the Bill are enforced and policed, the standard of our eating houses will rise considerably. There is one aspect to which I ask members to give careful consideration, and that is the question whether the proprietors of these places, when de-registered, should have the right of appeal. Under the Bill, an eating-house may be de-registered by the certificate of the chairman of the road board on the authority of the local authority and on the advice of the local authority, the chairman acting as the agent of the local authority.

Beyond that there is no right of appeal, and although one realises that a local authority is not an individual but is a collection of very estimable and well-meaning people, there is a possibility that a health inspector might advise a local authority, and that the local authority might act on his advice and not always after making a personal inspection. It would seem to be not only wise but also just to give the proprietor of an eating house the right of some appeal. I suggest that where a local authority has the power to close a shop, or even where the local authority refuses registration, the proprietor should have the right of appeal to the Commissioner of Public Health. And when I say the Commissioner of Public Health, I mean the Commissioner as a qualified professional man, and I do not mean any deputy acting for the Commissioner. If the appeal is over the head of a local authority, it should be to the highest professional man in the department.

When the Commissioner of Public Health himself exercises his authority and orders a local authority to close an eating-house, the appeal then should be to the Minister. With the exception of providing for a right of

appeal, I do not think that any important alteration to the Bill is necessary. There is, however, a proposed new Section 158K which seems to be in a form of English that, while it might possibly be intelligible in law, might be made to read in a form which is not intelligible to the average person. In Committee I will suggest an alteration, not to vary the sense of the proposed new section, but simply to alter the phrasing. It reads—

The registration of an eating-house, or a license issued to a proprietor may be cancelled by the local authority which granted or issued the same, etc.

This reads as if the clause relates to registration rather than cancellation. It would be better if it provided—

The chairman of the local authority with the approval of the local authority may cancel, by notice in writing, the registration which was granted by the local authority.

That would make clear exactly what the power is without altering the meaning. I will support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Hon. G. Fraser in the Chair; the Honorary Minister in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 12 agreed to.

Clause 13—Amendment of Section 296:

Hon. H. SEDDON: I draw attention to the suggestion made by Dr. Hislop regarding provision for an appeal.

The HONORARY MINISTER: It is proposed to insert a new paragraph, which will have to be done on recomittal.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 14—agreed to.

Progress reported.

MOTION—HEALTH AND HOSPITAL ADMINISTRATION.

As to Inquiry by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from the 25th October on the following motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop:—

That this House desires to draw the attention of the Government to the urgent necessity for a Royal Commission, on which there is professional medical representation, to be appointed to—

- (i) investigate the administration of the Health Act;

- (ii) investigate the condition and administration of hospitals and the conditions under which nurses are trained as well as the training they receive;
- (iii) make recommendations for the necessary measures to be adopted during the war for the adequate hospital accommodation and treatment of all forms of sickness; and
- (iv) formulate plans for the post-war finance and provision of hospital accommodation, such plans to include the administration of hospital and nursing services.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY [7.45]: I suppose it would not be out of place for me to suggest that in introducing this motion Dr. Hislop gave evidence of having gone to a tremendous amount of trouble to present his case in the form he did. No doubt members will be impressed by many of the statements he made, and by the opinions he expressed. Analysis of his speech, however, indicates that his main arguments are based on opinions rather than on facts. He reiterated many statements made previously by him in this House that are far removed from the actual facts, and I propose in the course of my remarks to refer to some of those items which in my opinion have been much exaggerated or are grossly misleading.

To deal with all Dr. Hislop's statements would entail far too lengthy a reply, but I hope to show that things are not so bad as the hon. member has painted them, and that there is another side to the issues raised by him. Perhaps the main issue raised by him is that of professional versus lay control of the Health and Medical Departments, and he stresses the opinion that in both these departments the professional head is ignored and his duties usurped by the lay or permanent head. That this is not so can, I think, be clearly demonstrated. However, to deal with the motion, I think it can be said to fall into two parts. A Royal Commission is desired—

1. To investigate—
 - (a) the administration of the Health Act;
 - (b) the condition and administration of hospitals;
 - (c) the training of nurses.
2. (a) To make recommendations regarding adequate hospital accommodation and treatment of sickness; and
- (b) To formulate plans for post-war finance and provision of hospital accommodation.

In regard to the first point—the administration of the Health Act—members will recall that Dr. Hislop said very little about this department. He simply says that from replies given to questions he has asked in the House he is in doubt as to whether the recently appointed Commissioner of Public Health administers the Health Department; and, after quoting the advertisement calling for applications for that position, he complains that it is misleading and he expresses the hope that too much use is not being made of Section 38, which gives the Minister certain overriding powers. This leads him to make an appeal to retain the Commissioner at all costs, inferring that the Commissioner may not be getting the full co-operation of the department. I am not using the hon. member's words, but hope I am quoting him fairly.

Let me examine the position: Members know that the administration of the Health Act is in the hands of the Commissioner of Public Health and the local authorities. The Commissioner is the central authority, and the Act confers upon him numerous statutory powers; he must approve of local appointments and local by-laws and he has supervisory powers over local authorities. In certain matters such as maternity homes, venereal disease, public buildings, he has direct powers. As is usual in most statutes, the Commissioner is appointed "subject to the Minister," and under Section 38—referred to by Dr. Hislop—the Minister may, if he considers it necessary, exercise the powers of the Commissioner. The Commissioner has extremely wide and far-reaching powers—powers which operate in respect of individuals as well as of local authorities. On occasions, the Minister receives complaints or appeals against the exercise of statutory authority by the Commissioner. I am informed that in the space of 44 years on only two occasions has the Minister felt it necessary to act under Section 38. One of these occasions was when the Hon. J. D. Connolly was Minister, and the other was during the period when the late S. W. Munsie was Minister for Health.

The whole Act centres around the Commissioner of Public Health, who has direct access to the Minister. There is no mention of the permanent head, yet Dr. Hislop suggests interference by the permanent head, although there is no legitimate basis for this suggestion. It is unfortunate that

Dr. Park, the present Commissioner, should have decided to submit his resignation. So far as the Government and the department are concerned, they were very pleased to secure his services, and everything has been done to facilitate his work and enable him to secure results. If members will peruse the Estimates, which, of course, are submitted in another place, they will see that money is provided to increase the staff of visiting nurses from two to four; to add another school medical officer and another school dentist to the staff; and, in addition, preliminary steps have been taken to provide Dr. Park with a medical assistant. Everything the Minister and the departmental officers can do to provide facilities for Dr. Park to give us the advantage of his knowledge and experience has been and will be done, and the Government certainly hopes that he may be prevailed upon to remain in this State.

In order clearly to define the respective positions of the Commissioner of Public Health and the permanent head, a conference was held some weeks ago. It was arranged, I understand, in order that there might be no misapprehension as to the duties of the various officers. It was called because there had been what I might call a whispering campaign, which in my opinion was having an exceedingly detrimental effect. As a result of the conference, the following memorandum was forwarded to the Commissioner:—

A. Public Health Branch.—

The Commissioner is the administrator of of the Health Act, and of all associated health functions such as school medical and dental work, infant health.

Under Public Service Regulations he is the sub-head. He has direct access to the Minister, either personally or in writing.

The indications are that the clerical staff on the health side will need to be built up. The Under Secretary by long association with public health, before the hospitals section was joined, has tended to assist the health administration. On his retirement it might be arranged that the Assistant Under Secretary shall specialise on health and also act as secretary to the Commissioner (a position provided by the Health Act).

B. Hospitals Branch (Hospitals and Medical Services and Homes)—

1. Of the considerable volume of business the bulk relates to finance, administration, legal matters, staffing.

2. The "P.M.O." is the professional sub-head. The term has dropped into disuse, to-

gether with the term "Medical Department," since both have been concentrated under one Minister. For instance, we appointed the "Commissioner of Public Health," not the "P.M.O.," to the Medical Board.

3. The duties of the professional sub-head are:—To visit and approve all requisitions for drugs, instruments and appliances.

4. To settle, subject to the Minister, all medical appointments.

5. To deal with any professional matters which arise.

6. He should be consulted re all building proposals (other than of an obviously minor character).

7. He should visit and inspect hospitals as convenient and make recommendations as he thinks fit.

8. If a second doctor is appointed (a Deputy Commissioner) who acts as Inspector of Hospitals, the latter would be under the direction of and report to the Commissioner.

9. In all professional matters of this branch, as with the health side, the Commissioner would have direct access to the Minister.

I think, Mr. President, that that memorandum is a rather comprehensive summary, shall I say, of the duties of the Commissioner of Public Health.

Hon. H. Seddon: Do you say that that memorandum was adopted recently?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. The letter was handed to Dr. Park some two or three weeks ago, before there was any suggestion of his resignation.

Hon. J. A. Dimmitt: Before his resignation?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. I may say that the memorandum was accepted by Dr. Park as quite satisfactory, and it has not been in question in any way since. It will be noted that the Commissioner enters into the hospital side quite extensively, and that with the appointment of a medical assistant, who would also act as an inspector of hospitals—I draw members' attention to paragraph B. 8 of the memorandum—the Commissioner would be placed in a very strong position from a professional point of view. The suggestion underlying much of Dr. Hislop's remarks is that the department does not have, and does not want, medical advice or guidance. Nothing is further from the truth, as is evidenced by the way in which Dr. Park has been welcomed and his work facilitated. I want to emphasise the fact that the whole of the public health administration is completely under the Commissioner, the professional head.

In various parts of his speech, Dr. Hislop criticised, either directly or by inference, the presence in the department of a permanent head. Members are familiar with the normal set-up of Government departments; they know the relationship of the Director of Works, the Solicitor General and the Surveyor General, for instance, to their respective permanent heads. These latter officers have a great deal of responsibility quite apart from any matters of a professional nature, and it has never been suggested that the professional men I have already named should also be the respective permanent heads. If that were brought about we should soon find that these highly paid professional men would be almost completely given over to administrative work of a non-professional nature.

If we turn to the Public Health Departments of the Eastern States—this was referred to by Dr. Hislop—we find that in every case the organisation is exactly similar to that adopted here. Even in the recently re-organised Victorian department an Under Secretary has been appointed, and, from a public service point of view, he is administratively in charge under the Minister. In a large department a permanent head is a necessity; organisation, finance, and other business matters require attention, and administrative experience is invaluable. I go further and will say that no permanent head would be so foolish as to try to interfere in professional matters or professional administration; and if he did, the professional man has direct access to the Minister.

I could not help thinking when Dr. Hislop was referring to this phase so frequently, that this State is not alone respecting an agitation of this description. I have read statements indicating that the same argument has arisen in other States and other countries. Even in Great Britain in recent times quite an extensive controversy has been raging between the B.M.A. and the Imperial Government. I have had supplied to me an extract from a medical journal dealing with this question and embodying quotations from a White Paper presented to the House of Commons by the Imperial Government on this particular subject. Just as a matter of interest I will read the extract to the House. It is taken from "The Canadian Hospital" dated July, 1944, and is headed "The White

Paper." Dealing with a general medical service for Great Britain it says—

The White Paper formed the subject of debates in both Houses, in which the position of the medical profession received a considerable—some thought undue—amount of attention. It was noticeable that proposals which were put forward violated sound constitutional principles, as if the promoters either did not know or were indifferent to essential features of any Government scheme. The doctors and the voluntary hospitals have been advocating some kind of national body like the B.B.C. As a practical proposal, that can hardly be regarded as applicable to more than hospitals. It would be quite unworkable for anything which could be called a health service. However, the "Lancet," which has been pressing the suggestion, has now abandoned it. (April 1st.)

Closely related to it is the demand from the medical profession that its representatives be placed in positions of executive authority. It has come to the fore a good deal lately, though not in this country with the same force as it appears to have done in Australia. Lord Woolton, speaking on behalf of the Government, made their position quite clear that they "are most anxious to co-operate in every sort of way with the medical profession, to consult them and do everything with them—except one thing. The Ministers are determined that they will take the responsibility for their actions, and they are not going to place that responsibility on to a medical board."

There was a remark by Dr. Hislop in the early part of his speech that has significance in this matter of professional control or guidance in hospital matters. Dr. Hislop said: "I recall to the House a statement which I made that on a visit to Wagin Dr. Atkinson, the then Commissioner of Public Health, did not visit a maternity hospital because hospitals did not come under his jurisdiction." Dr. Hislop was evidently impressed with this remark himself, because he repeated it. The facts are that maternity hospitals are registered, under the Health Act, with the Commissioner, and the normal arrangements for inspection are by two visiting nurses who work under and report to the Commissioner. Moreover, the actual carrying out of midwifery work is under the Midwives' Registration Board, of which the Commissioner is chairman.

We have, therefore, the strange spectacle of the ex-Commissioner denying a certain specific portion of his responsibility—that is, if he did say what Dr. Hislop attributes to him. Does Dr. Hislop blame the professional head for taking this obviously

wrong attitude? Not at all! Dr. Hislop uses the alleged incident to try to prove that the Commissioner has no jurisdiction over hospitals, and to prove his suggestion that "there is no supervision over hospitals by a medical man." It is obvious that in this matter Dr. Hislop is completely wrong. The legal and administrative responsibility is on the Commissioner, and if the incident has been correctly reported by Dr. Hislop, the professional head was blameworthy for neglecting his job. Dr. Hislop is evidently ready to believe anything against the department, provided it is against the non-professional officers, or even if he thinks it is against these persons.

Nearly the whole of Dr. Hislop's speech deals with hospitals, and their administration, and if one accepted his remarks and conclusions one would see only a sorry picture indeed. But are his remarks fair and his conclusions sound? Members know their local hospitals and know that there are many admirable hospitals that are doing fine work. The outstanding and insuperable difficulty in this State is the large number of small hospitals. Of some 85 hospitals, 58 per cent. average under 10 beds occupied. Capital costs for all these small hospitals are relatively heavy; maintenance is more costly; and the small hospital is, perhaps, less efficient than the larger. Dr. Hislop complains that local doctors are not on local hospital boards—which is not true. The fact is that in a number of cases they are members. Some years ago the British Medical Association urged strongly that the local doctor should ex officio be a member of the local hospital board, but, after discussion, the Minister agreed that where the local people wanted their doctor as a member, he would be appointed.

Members themselves can probably remember cases where the presence of the local doctor as an ex-officio board member would only be an embarrassment. The department knows of many such. The inherent difficulties in the hospital system of this State are the huge area to be covered, the small population to be served, the consequent higher cost of what we do, and the small amount of funds available. No-one, looking back over the last 20 years, can say that the hospitals, their equipment and their appurtenances have not improved

tremendously. Unfortunately, the war has intervened and it is inevitable that hospital maintenance has suffered. Neither men nor materials have been available, except in small numbers and quantities and at heavy cost. Consequently, only urgent work has been undertaken. Normally, about £40,000 per annum was spent in the past on new work and major renovations. The following figures show the falling off, due to war causes:—

					Expenditure on Works. £
1938/39	..	..	..	..	38,643
1939/40	..	..	..	..	31,622
1940/41	..	..	..	..	18,642
1941/42	..	..	..	..	9,075
1942/43	..	..	..	..	10,486
1943/44	..	..	..	..	18,232

The new Perth Hospital building stands as a monument of what the Government, the Minister and the department would do, if they could. But the work remains, halted half way, despite repeated efforts to secure priorities which would enable it to proceed. It is interesting to note that when the honorary medical staff of the Perth Hospital urged the board of management to secure some expert person to report on the old building and its replacement, it was not a doctor whom they asked for but an architect! And the Government secured an architect who was reputed to be the outstanding hospital architect in the British Empire. Members will have noted that Dr. Hislop is entirely critical throughout his speech and apparently sees no point worthy of commendation, nor does he make any allowance whatever for the disruption caused by war.

In regard to the training of nurses, which was one of the main themes of Dr. Hislop's criticism, it is noticeable that right through his speech one of the chief causes of his dissatisfaction is the extent to which the department is alleged to do without professional, that is medical, advice. Yet here we have a field—the training of nurses—which is exclusively in the possession of the professional people—doctors and matrons. The law at present sets up separate registration boards for general nurses and midwifery nurses, which if an amending Bill now before Parliament becomes law, will be combined in one registration board, but all these boards—the existing two, and the future combined board—are exclusively composed of doc-

tors, matrons and nurses. These boards lay down the curricula for study, they approve of training schools, they register the trainees, they receive regular reports, and they conduct the examinations. From first to last, the whole business is in the hands of professional people, but still apparently Dr. Hislop is far from satisfied.

But while Dr. Hislop's motion is couched in general terms and therefore applies to all training schools and trainees, his adverse comments are principally aimed at the combined training school, which commences the course at Wooroloo, and provides a period at a country hospital, and a final two years at Kalgoorlie. To listen to Dr. Hislop's description of the disabilities which these girls suffer, one would imagine they would stand a somewhat poor chance, especially in competition with the large concentrated training schools at the metropolitan hospitals. When we realise, however, that the candidates from the much criticised departmental school secured first and third places at the recent final examination it makes one ask, what is wrong? Not with the training school, but with the criticism!

And these results are not abnormal. In the previous final—May, 1944—from among the girls from the same training schools—that is, finishing with two years at Kalgoorlie—there came second place in the State; and as a result of the February, 1944 finals, girls from Kalgoorlie gained first and third places. On this point the reply to Dr. Hislop's motion is, therefore, in the first place that if the departmental training school is to be judged by its results—surely a fair test—then we must conclude that it is pretty good. In the second place, if there are defects in the training, then the remedies lie entirely with the professional people themselves.

In his criticism of present arrangements Dr. Hislop probably does not realise the difficulties inseparable from our multitude of small hospitals which I have already referred to in another sense. The small hospital, which is not a training school, can employ as nurses only those already trained. In this State this affects all but the large metropolitan hospitals, Wooroloo, Kalgoorlie and, with certain limitations, about six of the larger country hospitals. This means that some 73 hospitals can employ only those already trained, and that only 12 hospitals produce trained nurses, or partly help

to do so. Compared with States like New South Wales and Victoria, in both of which a much larger proportion of the hospitals are training schools, this State is very unfavourably placed.

Exact figures were obtained a few years ago from Victoria and New South Wales showing—

(a) The total number of trained nurses employed in hospitals; and

(b) The average annual output of newly registered trained nurses.

The figures showed that the annual output of newly trained nurses, in proportion to the numbers of trained nurses employed, was in Victoria four times the figure in this State, and the corresponding figure for New South Wales was $2\frac{1}{2}$ times as great as ours. The fact is that we need more nurses because of our large number of small hospitals and we train relatively few because of our small number of training schools. And not much can be done to alter these basic facts.

The development of regional hospital centres, which Dr. Hislop tells us will take very many years, will help the position to some extent; but his suggestion radically to close down numbers of small hospitals and centralise their work is not practicable, and would be very hard on the country people. Dr. Hislop suggests that, to assist the training of nurses, several of these small country hospitals should be concentrated into, say, 100 bed units. But would it be reasonable to expect the inhabitants of the Midlands area to close up the hospitals at Three Springs, Morawa, Dalwallinu and Wongan Hills and concentrate on a hospital at Moora, averaging 40 beds? Still much below Dr. Hislop's 100 beds, despite this concentration, or we might close all hospitals on the Murchison from Mullewa to Wiluna, and concentrate at, say, Cue in a hospital which would average 40-45 beds—which is quite impracticable.

Then again Dr. Hislop has a lot to say about the training of probationers at Kalgoorlie, the lack of equipment and materials. It is a pity the doctor is so ready to listen to individual complaints; these can always be obtained, if wanted. If there are shortages of ward materials and equipment, the matron knows nothing of it and no official complaints have been made by the staff. It is from among these poorly trained, poorly served girls—according to the gospel of Dr.

Hislop—that such excellent results have been achieved.

Regarding the taking of certain measures in respect of trainees at the Sanatorium, all nurses on arrival are x-rayed and are subjected to a Mantoux test. This Mantoux test indicates if the person has had in the past an infection; it has been found in other countries that nurses who commence training with a positive test and a clear x-ray are less liable to contract the disease. Unfortunately if the medical staff excluded all those nurses who give a negative Mantoux test, they would be unable to staff the Sanatorium. The Medical Superintendent is at least as concerned in this matter as is Dr. Hislop, but with the extreme difficulties of wartime staffing, the ideal procedures cannot at present be practised.

The application of another standard, as suggested by Dr. Hislop, is entirely a matter for the medical staff. Dr. Hislop concludes his comment on this matter by asking: "Where does the fault lie? Is it due to lay refusal to accept medical advice?" This last question contains a most improper suggestion. We are dealing with a question of a specially medical character, and Dr. Hislop suggests that the specialist medical officers such as the Commissioner of Public Health and the Medical Superintendent of the Sanatorium would permit their professional knowledge and judgment to be overriden. Fortunately, the department has a much higher opinion of its professional men than has Dr. Hislop. A matter like this is left completely in their hands. Certain ideas which will meet this, as well as other difficulties relating to the training, the care and the selection of trainees, are under consideration by a Hospitals Committee, but the solutions are not easy.

On the question of adequate hospital accommodation and treatment of sickness, Dr. Hislop states:—

Times without number the profession has asked for a Hospital Commission. Slowly the department moves along its way, safe in its slow-moving pride, allowing itself to be stifled by dead precedent. How often have we heard the retort: "That is something we have never done before," as a reason for opposing progress? Progress cannot be made with such administration, acting as a millstone around our necks.

The facts are rather interesting. The matter has been the subject of various deputations from the B.M.A. The last deputa-

tion waited upon the Minister, Hon. A. H. Panton, in April, 1938, and was given a sympathetic hearing. The Minister made it clear that he thought there was quite a lot to be said in favour of such a proposal, and that he was quite willing to accept a workable scheme. As promised at this deputation, the department obtained a good deal of information regarding similar bodies in New South Wales and Victoria; and the Minister sent this on to the Association on the 5th July, 1938.

A year later—that is, in August 1939—a discussion regarding details took place between representatives of the Association and the Commissioner of Public Health and the Under Secretary. Following the discussion, the Under Secretary wrote to the B.M.A. on the 18th October summarising the suggested powers and duties of the proposed Commission. In his letter he added: "Whereas the powers and duties can be clearly set down, the real problem is, I think, that of the personnel, and you will no doubt express your opinions and make your recommendations to the Minister on that point." This letter was acknowledged on the 23rd October, 1939. Dr. Cuthbert's letter concluded: "You will no doubt be hearing from the B.M.A. again on this matter in due course." But that is the last the Department has heard!

In view of this, to whom should the remarks of the hon. member apply? Certainly not to the Minister or the Department! I suggest that they apply to the doctor's own Association. Dr. Hislop criticises the £ for £ policy applied to hospital buildings in the country, and speaks as though this were another objectionable scheme of the Under Secretary. The policy has been in vogue for at least 30 years and has been accepted and followed by successive Governments. The creation of the Departmental Hospital Planning Committee, and consideration of whether this £ for £ policy should be abandoned, were both due in the first place to the initiative of the much-criticised permanent head.

On the subject of regional planning of hospitals, the doctor read a letter from the Town Clerk of Wagin, dated the 20th September, which he stated was evidence that the Medical Department had decided upon the sites of eight base hospitals. That let-

ter is hard to understand, in view of the facts as stated to me by the permanent head. It appears that the Under Secretary was in Wagin, and, as the council and the road board had given practical evidence of their interest in the hospital, a discussion was arranged. The Under Secretary made it perfectly clear that the ideas regarding the placing of regional hospital centres were his own; that no such plan had been adopted; but that the object of the discussion was to indicate the probable lines of future development, so that if the people of Wagin thought differently, they would have an opportunity of registering their views. That would seem to be a fair and proper way of doing business. It will be interesting to note the reply which the Under Secretary will receive to the letter he sent to the writer of the communication mentioned by Dr. Hislop.

It is obvious that the Government and the Department are perfectly ready to move forward when the time is ripe, and when finance can be obtained. Regarding the latter, it is well to correct some loose thinking and speaking that have been prevalent of late. It has been suggested that Federal money will be available for hospital works, even that the Commonwealth Government will build new hospitals for us. There is no foundation for such statements, and there is no indication that in respect of any programme of hospital improvements we shall have any aid beyond our own State resources. Dr. Hislop referred to the Federal scheme of hospital benefits and the payment of 6s. per patient per day. This scheme is to benefit the patients, not the hospitals. Patients under this scheme become entitled to free hospital care; and, so far as the hospitals are concerned, instead of collecting fees from the patients, it is proposed that they receive the 6s. per day from Federal sources. As present fee collection averages about 6s. per day, the hospitals will gain nothing. They will draw from the scheme the same amount which they now receive by way of patients' fees.

During the course of his speech, Dr. Hislop complained that there is no standard constitution for hospitals, and he inferred that this is evidence of confusion and bad administration. Members who have knowledge of local hospital administration will

at once recognise how impossible it would be to apply one type of constitution to gold-fields or timber mill communities, where the hospital is run by the medical and hospital fund, to country hospitals where the board is often selected on a geographical basis, and to metropolitan hospitals like the Children's Hospital or Perth Hospital. This variety is provided for by the Hospitals Act of 1928.

According to Dr. Hislop, all these unfortunate hospitals are under the financial domination of the department, which is represented as an autocrat. In the first place, members will recognise the usual pattern of Government financial responsibility through the department, the Minister, and Parliament. If the department is an autocrat then it must be a benevolent autocrat, because there have been no appeals from the department to a higher authority—namely, the Minister—for years. Further, it is evident from the financial state of these "down-trodden" hospital boards that they are generally in a very healthy condition. At the 30th June last, 42 of these hospitals reported their maintenance account in credit totalling £22,768, while 13 of them were in debit, with an aggregate of £1,843, giving a net credit balance of £20,925. It would appear that, whatever financial domination is exercised by the department, those boards at present are not in financial difficulties.

It is suitable here to refer to what Dr. Hislop alluded to as further evidence of departmental autoeracy. He stated that in practice the Under Secretary, without the benefit of any professional advice, approves or disapproves of hospital plans. Surely, Dr. Hislop must be strangely ignorant of the normal procedure in Government departments. In the first place, any actions of the department or of its Under Secretary are subject to the Minister; and, in a community like this, it is certain that the unreasonable or autocratic exercise of authority would very soon be brought to the notice of the Minister. The fact is that there have been no complaints whatever. In the second place, all proposals—even the smallest—for additions or alterations or for any new structures, are referred to the Principal Architect. Indeed, for almost everything but minor or temporary jobs the plans are prepared by the Principal Architect.

Several specific cases were mentioned by Dr. Hislop where he considered this department had acted autoeratically towards the local hospital authority. I have taken the trouble to obtain the departmental side in each of the cases mentioned by him. They are worth examining. Referring to the Wagin maternity wing, Dr. Hislop said:

At Wagin a new maternity wing was required. During a visit to that town, at the request of members of the local council, I saw the hospital and obtained an idea of the proposed lay-out. I pointed out that it would cause a great increase in nursing work, and that the distance required to carry food could be shortened by a re-arrangement.

Later, when I knew the plans were in the hands of the contractor, I visited Wagin and was told that the final plan had not even been submitted to the council or hospital board, yet the board was being called upon to find its share of the cost. No medical supervision or criticism of that plan had been obtained. I spoke to the Principal Architect and to the Commissioner of Public Health, but I know no more.

In reply, let me quote from a letter from the Town Clerk of Wagin sent to the department and dated the 24th September, 1943. It is as follows:—

The sketch plans submitted have been perused by the council and road board and also discussed with the medical officer of health and the matron of the hospital, and the lay-out is considered very good.

Following the return of the sketch plans, as referred to, the local people made certain suggestions which were transmitted to the Principal Architect and incorporated in the final plans. It is obvious that the local people, including the local doctor and the matron, were consulted "and considered the layout very good." These professional people apparently held a different opinion from that of Dr. Hislop. It is interesting to note that it was during this or another visit to Wagin that Dr. Hislop had been credited with urging the local people not to go ahead with this maternity wing because, so it was alleged, he stated "the Federal people would later be building a new hospital." That statement was probably the result of gross misunderstanding of Dr. Hislop's remarks at Wagin—as gross a misunderstanding as that which Dr. Hislop acquired regarding the history of the negotiations and discussions with the local people.

One more point: The suggestion of high-handedness on the part of the department is obviously ridiculous, when it is realised that there is no power whatever to force the local people to subscribe any money. If, at any stage, they are displeased or dissatisfied, then all they need do is to cease negotiations. The conversion of the infectious block into a maternity wing at Collie received some attention by Dr. Hislop on this and on previous occasions. Dr. Hislop saw, apparently at once, that there was a point at which a stretcher could not be moved from the labour ward to a nearby normal ward. The plans were certainly seen by and discussed with the local people. On the 20th April, 1943, Dr. Atkinson and the Under Secretary visited Collie and attended a conference at which were present Drs. Smith, Copping and Walsh, Mr. Hall (the district architect), the town clerk, and health inspector and the matron. The plans for the maternity wing proposal were fully discussed at that meeting and various alterations decided on. No one noticed the structural difficulty referred to, but it was not for lack of consultation with the local doctors.

The recent trouble over alterations at the Onslow hospital was also mentioned by Dr. Hislop. During the last two years Onslow hospital has been abnormally busy, for causes due to war. There is a midwifery ward but there have been only three cases in 12 months. The ward has otherwise been lying idle. The hospital was in difficulties for staff quarters. After discussion with the local doctor it was arranged to use temporarily another ward for midwifery and to use the midwifery ward for the staff. The only "trouble" was that certain local people were reluctant to lose the original midwifery ward, even temporarily. Dr. Hislop may be interested to know that when Dr. Park dealt with this matter on the spot in August last, he fully agreed with the proposed re-arrangement. It is difficult to understand what point Dr. Hislop seeks to make by quoting this case.

Then we have the case of the Bunbury hospital. This particular institution has been mentioned more than once by Dr. Hislop, and if he would quote the whole of the department's letter the House would get the complete picture. The point was that the Bunbury Council was clamouring for reno-

vations, and the Under Secretary was anxious to impress on the council that even all the renovations possible would still leave a hopelessly unsatisfactory hospital. Some £1,300 expenditure has been authorised, but it is to be hoped that the council, or others on behalf of the local hospital, will take an interest in the district hospital problem. It is not suggested that the expenditure of £1,300 is going to make that hospital a satisfactory institution, but at least it is an earnest of the intention of the department to do what is possible under present circumstances.

Some caustic comment was indulged in by Dr. Hislop on the return of £300 lotteries money from Mt. Magnet. He evidently did not know the facts which are that in May, 1936, the Lotteries Commission agreed to find £300 towards certain additions at the Mt. Magnet Hospital estimated to cost £550. However, this work was not gone on with but a much more comprehensive scheme was put up and eventually a job costing about £3,000 was put in hand, towards which the Lotteries Commission found £1,895. It, therefore, cancelled its original grant of £300. It will be seen that the Lotteries Commission gave £1,895 to the hospital in lieu of the £300, but apparently Dr. Hislop thinks the commission should not have asked for the return of the smaller sum.

With regard to the Busselton hospital, Dr. Hislop stated: "The quarters badly need repair, rain leaks through the roof and the walls are covered with mildew." This is a gross exaggeration. Some leaks did develop in the roof. The roof was repaired as soon as a plumber could be obtained, which was a matter of days. The walls in a couple of places were damaged, but not in the gross sense stated by Dr. Hislop. He spoke as though the whole of the walls were stained with mildew. Dr. Hislop stated that the nurses have to go across the road from their quarters to the hospital to get a hot bath. That is true, but it was entirely due to the failure of a bath heater, the replacement of which, at once ordered, has taken a long time—a war disability of which Dr. Hislop refuses to take account.

The Geraldton hospital was another mentioned by Dr. Hislop who stated there is but one bathroom to 20 nurses and "the secretary." In point of fact there is no secretary; there is a clerk who does not live—

or bath—at the hospital. Geraldton is an old and unsatisfactory hospital and, like Bunbury, the local people appear to take little interest in it. At this moment the department is negotiating for the use of a house adjoining the hospital, which will much improve the position for the nursing staff. Having referred to these instances, and I think they are all the instances quoted by Dr. Hislop, members will probably agree with me that he has, at any rate, certainly over-stated the grounds of complaint, if there are any such grounds, in regard to these institutions. We can accept the departmental explanation which I have given. There is no desire to mislead this House or anyone else in regard to matters of this kind. I claim that the explanation I have given paints an entirely different picture from the one painted by Dr. Hislop when dealing with these particular points.

In his concluding remarks Dr. Hislop stated that he was biased against any form of administration which placed economy before efficiency; and which sought to administer without consultation with the active medical profession. These sentiments can be agreed to, and I think I have said sufficient to indicate that they cannot be applied to the department. Dr. Hislop urges that a forward-looking policy should be developed, with sufficient guidance from medical opinion. As a fact, a departmental committee has been sitting for some months, considering various aspects and the necessary basic data has been compiled. This committee consists of the Minister for Health (Hon. A. H. Panton), the Commissioner of Public Health (Dr. Park), the Under Treasurer (Mr. Reid), the manager of Perth Hospital (Mr. Powell) who was previously accountant to the Charities Board of Victoria, and the Under Secretary (Mr. Huelin).

I must emphasise that the reasons submitted by Dr. Hislop in support of the motion are not in accordance with the facts. He has built his arguments on faulty foundations. His criticism ranges from the particular to the general. Many of his statements will not bear close examination. It is acknowledged that the older hospitals are not in accord with modern ideas and that maintenance has had to be neglected owing to war conditions. So far as the Health Act is concerned, he has not submitted any facts or reasons in support of

an investigation. His suggestions as to the autocratic attitude of the department regarding buildings and finance are not supported by the facts. His main arguments are based on opinions, not on facts.

The Government and the Minister are anxious to take full advantage of any helpful professional opinions and advice. This is evidenced by the support already given to Dr. Park, the position accorded him in the hospital field, and the willingness to give him a professional assistant who will act as an inspector of hospitals. This attitude is also evidenced by the fact that Dr. Park is a member of the Departmental Hospital Planning Committee, and the invitation to the B.M.A. to add a nominee to that committee. Dr. Hislop, in my opinion, well knows that any diminution of medical influence in the counsels of the Public Health Department is quite definitely not due to active influences of a non-professional nature, as he persistently suggests. With the continued presence of a man like Dr. Park—again I say we hope that Dr. Park will decide to remain in this State—particularly supported by a medical inspector of hospitals—if and when one can be secured—with the Government, the Minister and the department being fully conscious of the shortcomings in our hospitals, and with the necessary men and materials and money, we can certainly make wise progress.

In regard to the training of nurses—I agree with Dr. Hislop that this is very important—it has been shown that, from among the very set of trainees at whose training all Dr. Hislop's shafts of criticism have been aimed, have come a majority of leaders during the three final examinations this year. Those girls already have the disability of moving about—12-14 months at Wooroloo, 10-12 months at a country hospital, and 24 months at Kalgoorlie. Surely either Dr. Hislop has very much exaggerated the matters he referred to, or they have had no adverse effect on the training. In any event it has been shown that the training of nurses is completely in the hands of the medical and nursing professions.

The alleged absence of professional advice or guidance is the main burden of Dr. Hislop's complaints in the hospital field. Surely, when he realises that any shortcomings in the training of nurses are with-

in the power of his own profession and the nursing profession to remedy, he should be satisfied to act through those channels. So far as hospital accommodation is concerned, all States have the very voluminous report of the Medical Survey Committee, associated with the Federal Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Social Services. We know what we need, and a beginning has been made by the Departmental Hospital Planning Committee in the right direction. It is quite on the cards that that committee may develop into something of a more permanent nature.

We do not need a Royal Commission to tell us what we already know. As we proceed, and as our programme develops, there might be occasion to bring in an expert to advise the Government. If the need arises, that will be done, as it has been done in the past. I have only to remind members that in the past we brought from the Eastern States Mr. Stephenson, the Architect already referred to, and Mr. C. L. McVilly, Inspector of the Charities Board, Victoria, who is recognised as one of the outstanding experts in Australia on hospital administration. I think I am right in saying that he is the gentleman upon whom the Commonwealth Government called to inspect military hospitals. Both those visits, of course, were in connection with the building of the new Perth Hospital. I regret the necessity for having had to speak at such length, and although I have not touched on all the points raised by Dr. Hislop, I think I have dealt with the main points and have said sufficient to justify the House voting against the motion.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.6 p.m.
