

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 10th October, 1945.

	PAGE
Questions: Fodder conservation, as to proposed State scheme	1119
Bulk handling of wheat, as to installation at Fremantle	1119
Bills: Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment, 3R., passed	1119
Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board), recom.	1119
Police Act Amendment, returned	1124
National Fitness, 2R.	1124
State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, 2R.	1134
Soil Conservation, 2R.	1135
Motion: North-West, as to action to restore economy	1123

spection by any member at the office of the Under Secretary for Works.

BILL—MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and *passed*.

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).

Recommittal.

On motion by Hon. Sir Hal Colbatch, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clauses 2 and 16 and the Schedule.

In Committee.

Hon. V. Hamersley in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—This Act to be read in conjunction with certain other Acts, but provisions of this Act to prevail:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of Subclause (2) after the word "Act" the words "or the provisions of any other Act" be struck out.

If the amendment be agreed to, I shall at a later stage move to strike out in the schedule the words "Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-1941." If the words that I have moved to be struck out be not deleted, this measure will over-ride the Industrial Arbitration Act.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The hon. member might have given a better reason for his amendment. The schedule indicates a number of Acts that may be affected. Some other Act not mentioned in the schedule may be affected to some extent. Is it not right that we should make provision for that contingency? Also, are not the provisions of the Bill what we really require? We spent a lot of time last night discussing the pros and cons of many of the clauses. When a Bill is agreed to by Parliament it surely represents what Parliament desires. Therefore if something in some other Act, not included in the schedule, is repugnant to the contents of this Bill, we should retain this provision.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: My sole object in moving the amendment is that I do not like the idea of this Bill over-riding the

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

QUESTIONS.

FODDER CONSERVATION.

As to Proposed State Scheme.

Hon. A. L. LOTON asked the Chief Secretary: As the implementing of the fodder conservation scheme is the joint responsibility of the State and Commonwealth Governments, will the State Government of Western Australia make an early announcement of its proposed scheme, especially if the conservation of both wheaten and oaten hay, ensilage, meadow and clover hay is to be embraced in such a scheme?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The Government will make an early announcement indicating the basis of a scheme considered suitable to the conditions in Western Australia.

BULK HANDLING OF WHEAT.

As to Installation at Fremantle.

Hon. A. THOMSON asked the Chief Secretary: As the Government proposes to expend £350,000 in providing bulk handling installations for wheat at the port of Fremantle, and has made a start on the erection of gantries, will the Minister lay on the Table of the House, for the information of members, all plans and details of what is to be provided for in the expenditure of the £350,000?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: The plans are continually required for departmental use but will be made available for in-

Industrial Arbitration Act. If we retain the words, "or the provisions of any other Act," we do not need a schedule.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not see the logic of Mr. Parker's argument. The schedule is an indication of the Acts affected by the Bill. If the schedule were deleted there would be no indication of what Acts were affected.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: Can you tell me how the Industrial Arbitration Act will be affected by this measure?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I could not offhand, and I could not tell the hon. member how the other Acts in the schedule would be affected. I could not give that information without looking them up or being advised. It is desirable that the schedule should remain so that any person who reads the Act will know what other measures are affected by it. Mr. Parker does not desire this Bill to over-ride the Industrial Arbitration Act. The only way by which that Act could be over-ridden by this measure is in connection with the subject matter of this Bill which deals with the method by which appeals shall be made against promotion. We discussed that subject at length and decided that this method should apply. If it is contrary to something in the Industrial Arbitration Act we should say so clearly in the Bill. I oppose the amendment.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	9

Majority for	1
--------------	---

AYES.	
Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. A. Dimmilt	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. W. J. Mann
	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. G. W. Mills
Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. T. Moore
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. H. Kitchin	Hon. E. H. Gray
Hon. A. L. Loton	(Teller.)

AVE.	PAIR.	No.
Hon. H. Seddon		Hon. W. R. Hall

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

Clause 16: Representation of parties and procedure:

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: I move an amendment—

That in lines 5 and 6 of Subclause (1) the words and parentheses "(not being a legal practitioner)" be struck out.

I do not intend to repeat the arguments that were advanced last night in connection with this matter and will content myself with simply moving the amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I hope the Committee will not reverse the decision it reached last night. We had a fairly long discussion then on this question. I pointed out that the procedure proposed in the Bill is similar to that under the Industrial Arbitration Act and to that extent we could accept the procedure as being satisfactory. In addition to that, the various organisations that are keenly interested in, and mainly affected by the Bill have agreed that they do not desire legal practitioners to have the right to appear in connection with these appeals. Their views should be noted, and I do not think that appellants in any of the appeals likely to go before the board will be prejudiced by not having legal men to appear for them. I do not know that I need use any further argument.

We will either agree to members of an organisation being granted this power and the procedure they desire in respect of appeals they may lodge, or we shall refuse to grant that right. Last night the Committee voted on this question and decided that the words should remain in the subclause. Sir Hal Colebatch was good enough to give notice of the amendment which appears on the notice paper. I thank him for having done so. I think that members when they desire to recommit a Bill of this description and they know that it is to be recommitted, should at least extend to me the courtesy of indicating the action they intend to take in order that I may secure the information that is desired.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The Chief Secretary says that the parties do not desire legal practitioners to appear before the appeal board. If that is their desire, they need not have legal practitioners. There is nothing in the amendment that will compel them to engage lawyers. What is the objection to this proposal? Is it that one side is afraid that if the other side is represented by a legal practitioner, the former will be disadvantaged?

The Chief Secretary: Of course, that is one reason.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: If that is so, surely it represents the strongest argument for allowing legal practitioners because it argues that a trained man would be likely to place his client's case more effectively before the board. It seems to me an extraordinary attitude that a party that insists not only on preference to unionists but on compulsory unionism should say that people shall not be allowed to practise the particular branch of a profession in which they are engaged. Recently there was a strike at Fremantle when one ship was held up for a long time because the cooks would not allow someone who was not a member of the cooks' union to do the cooking. If that was a legitimate reason, it must suggest that the others were not good cooks.

What objection can there be to allowing a party appearing before the appeal board to select his own advocate? Why say that a man must not select a trained advocate but must secure the services of some amateur? As to the suggestion that this issue was decided last night, it is perhaps necessary for me to explain that I voted against Mr. Baxter's amendment without considering the fact that I could have voted for it and then moved to strike out the portion to which I objected, which was to the limiting of fees payable to £10 10s. That proposal would have limited the choice with regard to legal practitioners who would either resort to some subterfuge, as Mr. Parker suggested, to counter the restriction, or it would mean that a second-class lawyer would be engaged at a smaller fee.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I wish to apologise to the Minister for not having put my amendment on the notice paper or giving him notice of my intention. I regret I did not do so.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If one party to an appeal has the advantage of the services of a legal practitioner, then the other party to the appeal would necessarily feel it would be advisable that he also should engage a lawyer. One can imagine what would take place with two legal practitioners holding the floor against each other. In many cases the organisations interested would object to the methods adopted by lawyers. It is quite easy to understand that with a lawyer anxious to take advantage of every point of which he knew, a state of affairs would be

created that the unions do not desire. In view of the matters to be decided by the appeal board there is no necessity for the appearance of legal practitioners. Then there is the question of expense. We heard sufficient last night to convince any reasonable member that if legal practitioners were engaged it would be quite possible to so load the cost of appeal that it would be beyond the pocket of some officers who might desire to lodge applications. It is quite possible for appellants to secure the services of an advocate who is not a legal practitioner but who is a trained advocate in such matters, whose services would probably be more effective than those of a legal practitioner and the cost of securing his assistance would be much less than if a lawyer were engaged.

Hon. Sir HAL COLEBATCH: The arguments advanced by the Chief Secretary would justify Parliament passing an Act prohibiting the appearance of practitioners in any court of law on the ground that some litigants could not afford to engage lawyers to represent them. There is no comparison between the position under the Industrial Arbitration Act and under the Bill now before the Committee. In the Arbitration Court there are always two sides—the employers and the employees. As the result this has led to the training of advocates on either side. In the Arbitration Court the matter at issue is between the employer and the employee. In the case now before us, it is a matter of the rights of individuals. I think we should be interfering with the liberty of the individual if we told him he must have an advocate who is not trained.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am afraid the Chief Secretary has been misinformed. When amateurs take on these professional matters, they are twice or three times as expensive as are members of the profession. That applies in all trades or callings. It has been proved by the Federal regulations which prevented solicitors from appearing for tenants. It was found that agents charged far greater fees, because the fees were not controlled, than solicitors would have done. I do not advocate that lawyers should be permitted to appear in this case, but I support the amendment on behalf of those people who should have a free choice. It is a recognised principle of law that in matters affecting the individual, the person concerned should

have the right to a free choice of advocate. In the case of the Arbitration Court the individual is permitted to appear because he is entitled to the protection the court can give him. Why should an appellant in this case be debarred from employing any agent he desires? Why should any section of the community be prohibited from appearing for the individual in which event he would probably find out something in favour of the appellant that would not otherwise be brought forward?

Hon. C. B. WILLIAMS: The agent for the appellant is usually the person who controls the union or organisation to which the appellant belongs. If this amendment is passed, before an appeal was lodged the agent, who would be the representative of the appellant, would instruct the solicitor and probably sit with him on the appeal because he alone would thoroughly understand the case. Who can take a case better than the agent such as we see in the Arbitration Court? Even this Chamber saw, some years ago, that that was a just course to adopt because it would not allow any legal representative to appear in the Arbitration Court. The individual who controls the union or association best knows whether a man has a right to appeal or not. The worker would be happier, whichever way the decision went, if he was represented by the agent of the organisation concerned. I oppose the amendment.

Hon. E. H. HALL: I am opposed to any restriction in the choice of agent. In this instance, the greatest freedom should be allowed to the individual. I am not in favour of debarring a trained legal man from presenting a case to the board. We should not place any obstacle in the way of the appellant getting the best advice obtainable.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Mr. Parker was dealing with the case of a man who is being defended against a charge concerning which he is the offender. No offence will have been committed in connection with this Bill. It is a question of the individual considering that he has a better right to the higher position than has the person recommended. Over the years the organisations concerned have had a wide experience of how these matters are worked, and experience in the employment of legal practitioners. We have had the experience

of the Arbitration Court for many years. It is the consensus of opinion of the people who will be affected by the Bill that neither side should have the right to engage a legal practitioner. When I was speaking previously, I was not referring to any solicitor bringing out points which would not otherwise have been brought out in regard to the efficiency or seniority of the individual. I was referring mainly to the methods frequently used by members of the legal profession in cases of the kind. As a general rule, the person who would be appointed to represent the appellant would have more knowledge of service methods, etc., than would a legal practitioner.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I think you would be well advised to get that man.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If one side engages a legal practitioner it may be necessary for the other side to do so because legal points may be involved. I hope the Committee will not reverse the decision of last night.

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

Ayes	13
Noes	8
Majority for				5

AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. A. L. Lotton	Hon. H. Seddon
Hon. W. J. Mann	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew	Hon. W. H. Kitchin
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. W. Miles
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. E. M. Heenan	Hon. T. Moore
	(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Hon. C. R. Cornish	Hon. G. Fraser

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

Schedule:

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I move an amendment—

That the words "Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-41, No. 57 of 1912" be struck out.

This is really following on the last amendment and is moved with a view to leaving the Industrial Arbitration Act sacrosanct.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not think the hon. member has put forward a very sound argument. Again I would say that we are in the process of agreeing to the provisions of this Bill, and if there is any provision in it which does affect any other Act, that Act should appear in the schedule. I do not know in what particular way the Industrial Arbitration Act may be affected by the amendment, but had I had notice of the amendment last night I could have made sure of the actual point which may be involved. To that extent I am at a disadvantage. The hon. member is not prepared to point out the effect; he is in the same position as myself. He is arguing that because the Industrial Arbitration Act has been on the statute book for some years dealing with matters associated with industrial disputes, it should remain as it is and not be affected by this Bill. My point is that we either agree with the provisions of this Bill, or we do not. I think that if we had the Bill recommitted there are lots of other provisions that might not be agreed to by this Committee. In view of the vote just taken, it is surprising to me how easy it is to bring that about. I hope we will not interfere with the schedule of the Bill, which simply indicates the Acts which may, so far as we know, be affected by the Bill.

Hon. H. S. W. PARKER: I am sorry that I did not give the Minister notice of this amendment. On many occasions I have mentioned the need for a parliamentary draftsman and staff. If this Bill does amend the Arbitration Act, the proper way to achieve that would be to amend the Industrial Arbitration Act itself so as to let this Bill be in conformity with it. If we leave these words in the Bill, at some future date the resultant Act could be amended and that would automatically amend the Industrial Arbitration Act. I do not like that. I do not like the way the Bill is drawn; though I may be entirely wrong. Had we a proper drafting staff, I am sure a number of difficulties would have been overcome. I am afraid I cannot withdraw my amendment.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Now it seems as though we are getting somewhere! We are coming back to the old fetish of Mr. Parker that no parliamentary draftsman knows his job.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I will say frankly that it takes years to learn.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Almost without exception we find the hon. member complaining that Bills are not drafted as he would like them to be. So far as I am concerned, a large number of Bills are dealt with by this Chamber year in and year out and only on a very few occasions have we had anything to complain about; but because Mr. Parker does not like the drafting of a Bill, he says, "We will amend it and take out of the schedule these words." This Bill deals with one specific question—the question of appeals against promotions. It applies to particular Government servants, whereas the Industrial Arbitration Act, as everybody knows, deals with a whole host of industrial matters. May I again point out that if the provisions of this Bill are what we desire in regard to the promotions appeal board, there is absolutely no reason why we should accede to the request and delete the words "Industrial Arbitration Act" from the schedule.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Ever since I have been in Parliament, I have felt that when there is a doubt we should leave things as they are. For that reason, I am going to vote for the deletion of the words suggested by Mr. Parker. No doubt this Bill will go to a conference.

The Chief Secretary: What makes you say that?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Well, I will assume that it will. If it does, and Mr. Parker is proved to be wrong, I am sure the managers will give way. After all, the position is that we are framing a law; and if there is a doubt in any member's mind as to what the ultimate result will be and whether the Industrial Arbitration Act will be overridden, I think we should hesitate. I agree with the Chief Secretary that, in fairness to Ministers, amendments of this kind should be placed on the notice paper."

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: May I suggest that we report progress?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The questions raised by Mr. Parker in both amendments are purely legal so far as I can see. They are questions about which I suppose he did not expect me to know too much, though I think I know a little about them. I feel disposed to move that the Bill be recommitted at the next sitting. I think

it is most unfair for an hon. member to take a legal point without giving notice at all of his intention. I do not think his amendments will count for very much.

Hon. W. J. Mann: Then let them go!

The CHIEF SECRETARY: No, I am standing by the Bill. I do not want to pander to the whims of Mr. Parker when he talks about drafting, because I have as much faith in the person who drafted the Bill as I have in Mr. Parker.

Hon. H. S. W. Parker: I am afraid that is not much, is it?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: For that reason I am standing by the Bill.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: I do not like the expression "pandering to the whims of Mr. Parker." I do not think it is nice. If we have an hon. member with legal knowledge, or any other special knowledge, who honestly thinks a Bill can be improved, he should be at liberty to give the Committee the benefit of his advice. Surely it is not a matter of the Committee's expressing want of confidence in the Parliamentary Draftsman! That is not the right and proper way to put it. I should say the hon. member was actuated by a sincere belief that if the wording is altered it will be all to the good. Believing that, I am going to support the amendment.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	11
Majority against	1

AYES.

Hon. L. B. Bolton.	Hon. H. Seddon.
Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch	Hon. A. Thomson
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. H. Hall	Hon. F. R. Welsh.
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	Hon. W. J. Mann
	(Teller.)

NOES.

Hon. J. M. Drew.	Hon. G. W. Miles.
Hon. F. E. Gibson	Hon. T. Moore.
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. H. L. Roche
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. C. B. Williams
Hon. W. H. Kitson.	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. A. L. Loton	(Teller.)

PAIR.

AYE.	No.
Hon. C. R. Cornish.	Hon. G. Fraser

Amendment thus negatived.

Schedule put and passed.

Bill again reported with further amendments.

BILL—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—NATIONAL FITNESS.

Second Reading.

The CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.30] in moving the second reading said: National fitness is a subject that has become very important in recent years. I think we have every reason to be pleased with the progress that has been made in this State in connection with national fitness. Members are no doubt aware that we have, in this State, a National Fitness Council which is charged with the task of organising and controlling national fitness in Western Australia, and which is financed by means of grants from the Commonwealth Government. Though the council is constituted in conformity with the Commonwealth National Fitness Act of 1941, it does not possess any State authority, and therefore this Bill seeks to provide that authority. I believe many persons entertain an erroneous conception of what is meant by "national fitness." To their minds it is associated solely with what is commonly known as "physical jerks." Such an incorrect interpretation, however, cannot be applied to the work of the council, the objectives of which I will deal with later, physical fitness being but a small part of the activities of the National Fitness Council.

In the meantime members may be interested to have a brief outline of the progress of the national fitness movement in Australia and, more particularly in Western Australia. In 1938 the Commonwealth Department of Health drew the attention of the Commonwealth Government to the need for a national fitness campaign. As the result of that, and of recommendations from the National Health and Medical Research Council, the Commonwealth Minister for Health convened the first meeting of the co-ordinating council for physical fitness, which later became the Commonwealth Council for National Fitness. At that meeting, held in Melbourne in 1939, the council resolved to act as a co-ordinating agency to ensure that improvement of physical fitness on a national basis, and to co-operate with State Governments and other authorities. In July, 1939, the Commonwealth Government decided to allocate the sum of £100,000, over a period of

five years, for a national fitness campaign. Among other things, this grant, which was subsequently extended permanently, provided for the appointment of an organiser in each State and for the establishment at each Australian university of lectureships and scholarships in physical education.

Considerable progress was made, the activities of the State councils being concentrated mainly on the needs of the 14-21 year age groups, and also the training of leaders and instructors. The passing of the National Fitness Act in 1941 by the Commonwealth Parliament gave statutory authority to the Federal Council, and provided for the establishment of a trust account from which grants could be made to national fitness councils appointed by the various State Governments. In June, 1942, an extended programme of work, involving an additional grant of £50,000 annually, was approved by the Commonwealth Government. As a result the annual grants to the State councils were substantially increased, and for the first time allocations were made to State Education Departments for the development and extension of physical education in schools and teachers' colleges. Thus were laid the foundations of a campaign to improve the general health and fitness of our nation, and each year has revealed considerable and satisfactory progress, particularly—I might say—in Western Australia. The main objective during the war has been the development and encouragement of youth activities in the community. The ending of the war will permit the extension of the council's programme, one item in particular being the establishment of model community centres in the capital cities, an important project that had to be postponed during the war.

Turning to our own State, a national fitness council was set up here in 1939. It was an incorporated body consisting of 17 members, seven of whom, such as the Director of Education, the Commissioner of Public Health and the Town Planning Commissioner, were ex officio members. In addition there were five representatives nominated by the sporting bodies and five from non-sporting organisations such as the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, and so on. The then Minister for Health was chairman, but his authority over the council's activities did not extend beyond his control as chairman of the council. Many difficulties arose, difficulties that were also encountered in other States.

The councils were neither Commonwealth nor State bodies. They had no effective standing with Government departments, and they were virtually voluntary organisations endeavouring to carry out a national programme without adequate Government backing or machinery. The Western Australian council could not agree on important matters, through the marked divergence of the views of its members.

In these circumstances, therefore, the Commonwealth Government suggested that the existing State bodies, with their members nominated by various organisations, should be superseded by councils whose personnel, in each State, would be appointed by the Governor in Council, and would be under the control of a responsible Minister. The State Government agreed to make this change, and early in 1944 the administration of the national fitness movement in this State was placed under the jurisdiction of the Minister for Education, mainly because of the close affinity of the work of the council to that of the Education Department, particularly in dealing with adolescents. A council of 25, including seven doctors, and representatives of all sections of the community, both male and female, was appointed, and I am pleased to say it has been working in harmony and with much success. In 1944 grants totalling £9,833 were received from the Commonwealth Government and were allocated to leader training, playgrounds, fitness committees, boys' and girls' clubs, camps and hostels, keep-fit classes, the University, the Education Department and general purposes. At the 31st December, 1944, the balance standing to the credit of the council, and available for use, amounted to £1,113. That, I think, gives a very brief history of the national fitness movement in this State up to date.

Turning to the Bill itself, which is mainly a machinery measure, it will be noted that it provides for the establishment of the State national fitness council, which shall consist of the Minister, as chairman—in this case, of course, the Minister for Education—the Director of Education as deputy chairman, and the Commissioner of Public Health and the Town Planning Commissioner as ex officio members, and such other persons, not exceeding 21 in number, as the Governor may from time to time appoint on the nomination of the Minister, all of whom shall hold office during the Governor's pleasure. It may be

argued that the previous method of election of members by various organisations was more democratic, but it is pointed out that that elective system was tried and found wanting. The voices of the youth organisations, however, have not been stifled by any means.

The Bill gives the council power, at any time and as often as it thinks fit, to appoint committees to do or transact such acts, matters and things within the scope of the powers, functions and duties of the council, as the council may by resolution authorise. It provides that there shall be no limit to the number of members of each committee, which may include persons who are not members of the council, but every committee shall include at least one councillor. This will permit the continuance of existing committees, which have been doing excellent work; committees such as the Associated Youth Committees, on which are representatives of 26 of the major youth organisations of this State, the Amateur Sporting Committee, on which are represented all sporting organisations, the Camps and Hostels Committee, the Advisory Playgrounds Committee, the Advisory Board of Physical Education, the Medical and Dental Sub-committee which consists of the medical officers of the council, the Association of National Fitness Leaders, and the Community and Youth Centres Advisory Committee. It may be of interest to members to learn that a ten years' lease of the Bickley reservoir and the surrounding valleys has been obtained and is being developed as the first State youth camp. This area, which is valued at approximately £35,000, is one of the show spots of the hills, and I think every member will have a good knowledge of that area.

Hon. A. Thomson: Does it belong to the State?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, but the camp is for the use of youth groups connected with the Associated Youth Committees, national fitness leaders and school groups from inland and under-privileged areas. The supervision exercised in the camp is very strict. A permanent warden has been appointed and the responsibility for each group using this camp is placed on adults approved by the Camps and Hostels Committee. The council intends later to open similar camps in other parts of the State. Provision is made for a co-ordinat-

ing committee consisting of the chairman of each committee appointed by the council and one other member of each and every committee. Of the two persons representing each committee, at least one shall be a councillor. This will ensure that when a committee's recommendations are being considered by the council there will be present a member of the committee who will be able to advise the council fully on the matters under consideration.

The Bill sets out that every committee will be bound to submit reports of the business and matters transacted by it to the co-ordinating committee, which will examine and, as far as possible, co-ordinate the matters dealt with in the reports and the recommendations made in such reports. The co-ordinating committee will then report and submit its recommendations to the council. The council may at any time, by resolution, dissolve any committee appointed by it or remove or determine the membership of any person as a member of any such committee. Any person shall hold office as a committee member during the pleasure of the council. The Minister may appoint a director of physical education and national fitness, a secretary to the council and a treasurer to the council, these persons to act ex-officio in their respective capacities with or to the co-ordinating committee. The functions and duties of these officers and their rates of remuneration, if any, shall be such as may be prescribed by regulation.

The powers, duties and functions of the council have also been provided for. Included in these are the nomination of the State's representative on the Commonwealth National Fitness Council; the provision of facilities for instruction in physical education and for the maintenance of physical fitness; the training of teachers and leaders; the encouragement of the community spirit, and co-operation with youth movements generally. Provision is made for the establishment of a fund to be known as the State National Fitness Fund, which shall be administered by the council. All moneys from time to time belonging to this fund shall be deposited in an account kept at the State Treasury. All moneys in the fund not immediately required may be invested subject to the Governor's approval.

The manner in which the moneys in the fund may be used and applied is set out, and includes the payment of administration expenses, the salaries of officers and teachers of the Education Department who are wholly engaged on national fitness work. the remuneration, if any, of the executive officers of the council, and the payment of subsidies and the making of loans to any organisations approved by the Minister, the objects or some of the objects of which relate to the encouragement or development of national fitness; provided that moneys received by way of Commonwealth grants shall be used and applied only for those purposes, if any, which may be specified by the Commonwealth, and gifts of money and the proceeds for the realisation of other gifts shall be used and applied in accordance with the conditions upon which the gift was made. The Commonwealth Government desired that, with regard to the money it made available, the accounts should be properly audited and a certificate supplied by the Auditor General as to the correctness of the expenditure and the balance shown. The Bill provides that this shall be done and that a full and true balance sheet and other financial statement shall be submitted annually to the Auditor General who shall, in respect to the accounts, have all the powers conferred on him by the Audit Act, 1904.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Does the Commonwealth propose to make an annual grant?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. In the first place the Commonwealth granted £100,000 over a period of five years. Now the grant has been made permanent without any limitation as to the amount. Last year the grant to this State was between £9,000 and £10,000. At least once every year a general report containing a summary of the work done during the preceding year shall be placed before both Houses of Parliament together with a true copy of the accounts as then last audited. That covers the main provisions in the Bill. It is mainly a machinery measure designed to enable the National Fitness Council of this State to work smoothly and to provide means whereby the council may have the full support of the State Government and Government departments.

One sound argument in its favour is the fact that the Commissioner of Taxation is prepared to allow expenditure by the

council to be free of sales tax on being satisfied that expenditure is under Government control. That is quite a valuable concession for the council, because I believe that on most of the expenditure where materials particularly are required, the sales tax is something like 25 per cent. It can be realised from what I have said that the affairs of the National Fitness Council are on a sound and workmanlike basis. Since the change of administration was instituted, steady and harmonious progress has been made, so much so that we have been advised that the activities of no other State can show comparable results. A great work is being done by the council for the youth of the State, particularly for those that may be described as underprivileged.

I trust that the House will agree to the proposals in the Bill, which will give stability to the State Council, provide it with a proper constitution, and give the State Government authority to operate on, supplement and expand the grants made by the Commonwealth for the purpose of national fitness. Within the next few days a youth week is to be held in the metropolitan area. From what I have learnt of the programme, it will be worth while members paying attention to it. There will be an indication of the great value of the work being performed by the National Fitness Council, and I have been informed that it will be even better than the demonstration staged at Gloucester Park last year when the late Prime Minister attended—and I believe that was his last public appearance in this State. On that occasion there was a demonstration which did credit to Western Australia and particularly to the organisers of the movement, and I feel that the organisers are entitled to the wholehearted support of members.

Many of the organisers are giving their time in an entirely voluntary capacity. Many of them are experts in the particular branch of national fitness with which they are associated, and in view of the fact that we have made such excellent strides in the last two of three years particularly, and that other States are looking to us for a lead, I feel sure that any assistance we can give the movement will be much appreciated by those engaged in it and can only lead to further advance and greater efficiency in

the activities of the council. I hope that the House will approve of the Bill as presented and that, as the years pass, we shall be able to see the very great benefits accruing therefrom. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

MOTION—NORTH-WEST.

As to Action to Restore Economy.

Debate resumed from the 12th September on the following motion by Hon. F. R. Welsh—

That, in view of the serious position existing in the northern part of the State, this House considers that the Government should take immediate action to restore the economy of the North Province.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.55]: This is a motion with which we can all agree, and in indicating my approval, may I say that a motion of this kind was not required to convince the Government of the necessity for considerable work in the North-West of this State. Still, much depends upon what is meant by the words in the motion "to restore the economy of the North Province." Those words are capable of a very wide interpretation, and the Government has endeavoured to give a very wide interpretation to what is required.

Last year the Government was so impressed with the need for doing something worth while that it appointed a committee, which I consider is probably the most representative committee ever appointed by a State Government to deal with such a matter. Members will appreciate that, during the war period, when the northern part of this State was very vulnerable and when nobody could predict what was likely to happen even 48 hours ahead, there was little chance for the Government or anyone else to do much in this direction. The committee was appointed last year and comprises Mr. R. J. Dumas, Director of Works, Chairman; Mr. G. Gooch, representing the Pastoralists' Association and assisted by a sub-committee from that association; Mr. W. V. Fyfe, Director of Land Settlement; Mr. J. J. Farrell, General Manager of the Wyndham Meat Works; Mr. J. W. Young, Commissioner of Main Roads; Mr. G. Drake-

Broekman, Engineer for the North-West; Mr. J. S. Foxall, State Mining Engineer; Mr. G. B. Barnett, Tropical Agriculture Adviser; Mr. T. E. Owen, Manager of the State Shipping Service; Mr. W. A. McCullough, Assistant Chief Civil Engineer, Railway Department; and Dr. L. J. H. Teakle, Research Officer and Adviser in Plant Nutrition.

Anybody with any knowledge of the problems of the North will concede that this is just as representative a committee as could have been appointed for the purpose. I have been advised that the committee has given considerable attention to the requirements of the North. It has prepared a report, which has already been submitted to the Government. This report has not yet received the full consideration of the Government, and until it has, the report as a whole cannot very well be published. I should like to remind members that "The West Australian" of the 14th September last contained a long and comprehensive statement by the Premier dealing with the report of the committee. I do not know that I would be giving any further information to the House were I to enumerate in detail the matters which appeared in that report; but I feel that if I state the subjects which have been dealt with by the committee—and in each case it has submitted a very comprehensive report—members will realise how far-reaching and comprehensive is the nature of the problem with which the Government has to deal. The recommendations made by the committee cover the following subjects:—

Taxation, Customs tariffs, debt adjustment, freight concessions, pearling, jetties and harbours, re-stocking, regeneration and soil conservation, improvement of stock, shipbuilding, markets and marketing, labour, education, medical, mail and telephone services, housing, conversion from cattle to sheep, vermin, aerial transport, railways, oil and petrol supplies, stock routes, roads, water supply, irrigation, research station in the irrigation districts, meat works at Derby, fencing, mining.

This is perhaps the most comprehensive list of recommendations that has ever been submitted to any Government on a subject such as that covered by the motion. I am only doing the right thing, in my opinion, when I say that the Government appreciates the very close attention given to all of those subjects by the committee. Its report will, as stated by the Premier, receive the closest

possible consideration. I would also point out that the State Government has been co-operating with the Commonwealth Government in this matter. At the moment, I merely wish to refer to a report which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 26th September, dealing with the development of the North and advising special Commonwealth and State plans which have received the endorsement of the Commonwealth Cabinet. I do not wish to go into details of those plans, as members are probably just as well aware of them as I am myself. At a later stage, a considerable amount of detail will have to be submitted in connection with those matters. I am sure members will, in view of all the difficulties with which the State has been faced during the war years, agree that we have taken the earliest opportunity to secure the best possible advice on the requirements of the North and the methods by which the State Government, either alone or in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, can do whatever may be considered to be necessary.

In submitting the motion, Mr. Welsh referred to a number of matters which I have included in the list I quoted, but I think I ought to reply to two or three of them, as I may thus dispel some misconception that way perhaps be in his mind or in the minds of other members. For instance, Mr. Welsh requested that the Government should do all in its power to secure the return of the State ship which was chartered or taken over by the Commonwealth during the war period. Members are aware that the State Shipping Service had only three vessels. One was the "Koolinda." Another was the "Koolama." Members know what happened to her. She is lying alongside the Wyndham jetty, and arrangements are now being made to remove her in order that the jetty may be used. The third vessel was the smallest one, the "Kybra." Repeated representations have been made in recent times to the Commonwealth Government to return this vessel. We have not been successful, but are hopeful that we shall be in the very near future. In addition, we have made representations for the release of vessels belonging to Burns Philp, so that they might be used for our coastal trade in the North. One can quite understand the great disabilities the people in the North are suffering at present as a result of the shortage of shipping.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Do you refer to Burns Philp or to Holt's?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Burns Philp.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I thought Holt's were trading on the coast.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Are not Burns Philp and Coy., agents for Holt's? A comparison was made by Mr. Welsh between the shipping services existing at present and, I think, some 40 years ago. Of course, there is a tremendous difference between present conditions and the conditions of 40 years ago. The limited shipping that has been available, and the difference in the cargo that has to be carried, as well as the necessity for the carriage of that cargo, have created a problem. From time to time there has been a great lack of shipping space for cargoes which were essential to the people of the North. As members are probably aware, the local authorities in many cases had no jurisdiction, and military requirements always had priority. Mr. Welsh referred to the damage done by the Army to many of the roads in the North. The Government was aware of that damage and took what steps were open to it, even to the extent of having an investigation made by an engineer attached to the North-West branch of the Public Works Department. He traversed the country with Army engineers in order to inspect and report on the damage done to those roads, but so far I do not know what the result of his inspection is. Mr. Welsh also said that the Derby jetty was not in good order.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: I said the cattle-race.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I think the hon. member mentioned the jetty.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: I meant the cattle-race.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: If the hon. member did mean the jetty, then he could not have seen it recently, because, according to my advice, the jetty is in really first-class order.

Hon. G. W. Miles: I think it was the cattle-race that was mentioned.

Hon. C. R. Cornish: And the Carnarvon cattle-race, too.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I am only referring to points which I took from Mr. Welsh's speech. All these matters have been investigated by the committee which was appointed, and the members for the North

Province need not be afraid of the reception which that report will receive from the Government. Mr. Welsh complained that cattle were not being shipped from Derby, but only from Broome. I am informed that that is correct, but that it was done in order to assist the pastoralists.

Hon. F. R. Welsh: Assist the pastoralists?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes. I am told that more cattle can be shipped from Broome; and that, in addition to the normal carriage of 4,000 head of live cattle, an additional 4,000 dressed carcasses could be forwarded from the meatworks in the vessel's refrigerated chambers. As there is only one ship available for the North, it could only take on cattle at one of the ports, not both. Consequently, the best arrangement possible was made. I am told that had Derby been preferred to Broome, the vessel would not have been able to make as many trips as she did by calling at Broome. Ten trips were made during the year to Broome. Another reason, and a very sound one, why it was necessary to call at Broome instead of Derby was that the authorities considered it inadvisable, in view of the war situation, for the vessel to proceed down King's Sound. Those are some of the more important points raised by Mr. Welsh in his remarks, and I give that information for his benefit.

As I said in my opening remarks, this is a resolution with which all members can agree. I do not think any member of the Chamber can claim to be more concerned about the future of the North than is the Government. We have shown our bona fides by the appointment of the committee to which I referred. We have shown that we are prepared to co-operate with the Commonwealth Government in whatever it may be necessary to do. We have to admit, of course, that during the war years the position in the North deteriorated, but nothing which this Government could have done would have prevented that deterioration. We are anxious to see the economy of the North restored at the earliest possible moment. I support the motion.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Are not the Commonwealth and the Queensland Governments co-operating? Are they not forming another committee?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Yes, with regard to certain aspects.

HON. C. R. CORNISH (North) [6.12]: I support the motion. It is not my intention to embarrass the Government in any way, but we ought to let the Government know what is happening in our province, in the hope of getting something done in the near future. I consider the State Government has done a good job for the North. The adjustment of pastoralists' debts and the remission of lease rents are a small contribution towards the restoration of the economy of the North. I am pleased to note that one of the subjects to be inquired into by the committee that has been mentioned is taxation. That, I think, is the crux of the whole situation. High taxation during the war has to a great extent crippled the North. The petrol tax is another factor that has arrested the progress of the North. Both these matters, however, are controlled by the Commonwealth, which also controls shipping, and it must be borne in mind that it was the Commonwealth that took the ships away from our coast.

If the ships were returned, they would be of considerable help to the North. As I said, those matters are controlled by the Commonwealth Government. All the State could do would be to try to persuade the Commonwealth to consider those three subjects. It is no use going over matters that have been brought up in this Chamber and in another place, as well as in the Press. I could go through a list which I have here, but I think it would not do any good at this stage; on the other hand, it would embarrass the Government. I hope the committee will get busy and investigate the disabilities of the North. Our main trouble at present is shipping. Conditions are deplorable. I know that there are 50 tons of cement awaiting shipment to the North which has been held up for many months. It is urgently required for building purposes.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: Fuel and lubricating oils were mentioned by the Chief Secretary when he spoke of the list of subjects investigated. I hope that the cost of fuel oil will be investigated as it is one of the things that is keeping the North-West back. During the war two large storage tanks were erected at Onslow. I would like those tanks to remain because they would be a great help in the storage

of oil—both petrol and lubricating oils—for all the traffic there. In addition similar tanks should be erected at Wyndham, Derby, Port Hedland, Point Sampson and Carnarvon. They would assist in the development of those places. At present oil is brought to the ports in 40 and 80-gallon drums, and even in 5-gallon drums. There are thousands of these drums along the coast, and they will all have to be carted back, refilled and taken north again. That entails a lot of freight and cartage, which is a handicap to the North.

During my term of office as mayor of Carnarvon the municipal council arranged with the State Shipping Service to be supplied with fuel oil from the State ships. The Government provided a travelling tank of 1,800 gallons capacity on the railways so that when a boat was in port we filled it with fuel oil, and that kept the council going. It also obviated the necessity for paying freight on hundreds of drums that would have to keep travelling between Carnarvon and Fremantle. If similar tanks were established at each port much freight would be saved, and it would assist in the economy of the North. The State ships have done a good job in the circumstances, but now that the war is over the North will have to be served far differently if it is to amount to anything in the future. The rendering of service to the North should be the main consideration rather than that of making the ships pay. We have many debits today, and a few more debits against the State Shipping Service would do no harm. All classes of shipping should be allowed to trade along our coast so as to give the North the benefit of cheap goods from other countries.

When living in the North I could never understand why a tax or royalty was imposed on kangaroo skins. The life of a kangaroo hunter is lonely and dangerous, and it calls for some of our most courageous men who live a lonely life and suffer dirty conditions. They are killing a pest, yet when they bring in a few skins, the Government takes a 1d. per lb. royalty from them. Now there is some talk about poisoning kangaroos and burning the carcasses in heaps. If good kangaroo shooters were encouraged they would keep the pest down to a certain extent. On one station—Minilya—the manager at one time estimated that he had 60,000 sheep and 60,000 kangaroos.

Members can realise what damage the pest does to our pastoral lands. That is why much of our country is eaten out. It can carry the sheep all right, but the kangaroo is getting the better of it. I have spoken previously of allowing tropical fruits from the North to be landed lower down the coast. The prohibiting of shipments of those fruits has resulted in a great disability to the women and children of those parts because they used to get the benefit of pawpaws, mangoes, mangostenes and custard apples that came from further north.

They needed those consignments because they were their only means of getting fresh tropical fruit. That has all been barred, and I think it is the work of the Commonwealth Government. The State Government should make overtures to the Commonwealth Government to have that ban lifted so that our people can get that fruit. At Carnarvon plenty of fresh fruit is grown, but we cannot ship it north to supply the northern ports because by so doing the fruit is sent into a hotter climate and does not keep. But coming from the North the fruit is nice and fresh and I have seen upwards of 200 bunches of bananas landed at the different ports along our coast. I hope the Government will do something to assist the pearlers to re-establish themselves in the industry. During the war many boats were taken over or sunk and the pearlers had to get along in different walks of life. I am told now that the beds are all recouped after five years' spell, so that there is more pearlshell than ever.

Hon. H. Seddon: You must keep the Japs away.

Hon. C. R. CORNISH: I asked about the Japs and was told that there were Chinese and Malaysians in the industry who could beat the Japs. I was pleased to hear that, and I hope that the Japs will not be allowed back. With their poaching and other activities, they are best kept out of the industry. I have often spoken on the disabilities of the North previously. I have much pleasure in supporting the motion.

HON. SIR HAL COLEBATCH (Metropolitan) [7.38]: I shall support the motion if only because of my belief in the soundness of the old couplet—

I never was a grouser; I always stood for peace,

But the wheel that does the squeaking is the wheel that gets the grease!

The more the North-West members, the more Parliament and the State Government squeak about conditions in the North and the North-West the more likely they are to get them remedied. I have read carefully so much of the report of the committee appointed by the Government as has been published, and I am inclined to agree with the comment of the secretary of the Pastoralists' Association. What he said, briefly, is that the value of the report will depend entirely on the speed and the completeness with which the recommendations are put into operation. My knowledge of the North and the North-West, though not very exact, goes back a long way.

Some members will recall that 40 years ago, the North was, perhaps, the most prosperous part of the State. More good money was made there than anywhere else. When considering how we are going to overcome the present difficulties, there is something to be gained by thinking out just how those difficulties have arisen. It may be contended that much of the trouble is due to Government neglect. I think an equal amount, perhaps more, is due to Government action; to Government interference. Take first of all the tariff. I was rather surprised to notice that the committee appointed by the Government attached no importance—I am not sure whether it used the words “no importance” or “little importance”—to the effect of the tariff. I would like to see the evidence on what that decision is based, because the effects of the tariff have been more prejudicial to the North and the North-West of Western Australia than to any other portion of the Commonwealth.

Reference to the pearling industry was made by Mr. Cornish. I can remember that a good many years ago the pearlers raised this question and pointed out that their employees were the same type of people as were employed in the Japanese pearling fleet, and that they lived on the same things—principally rice and sugar. In each case our local pearlers had to pay a high price for sugar and for rice resulting from the Commonwealth prohibition on the importation of these articles, whereas the Japanese were able to purchase both commodities in the cheapest market. At one time it was estimated that the total cost of the tariff and the prohibitions—largely affecting rice and sugar—amounted to no less than £80 per boat per season. To saddle the pearlers

with that burden, as against their Japanese competitors was, in itself, almost sufficient to destroy the industry. But it is not only the pearling industry that suffers. Everything that has to be bought by those engaged in the pastoral industry is subject to high tariffs, and their markets are, in many cases, if not absolutely closed, greatly restricted by the same influence.

Most people acquainted with the North will agree with me when I say that the prohibition of Chinese labour struck a severe blow. I went all through the Kimberleys some 20 odd years ago and I could not help noticing that on every station where there was a Chinese cook and a gardener the conditions were immeasurably superior to those on the stations where neither of these positions was filled by Chinese. It was not a question of cheap labour; the Chinese were just as well paid as any Australian. It was rather a matter of adaptability. But the difference, particularly from the point of view of the housewife, was often that between life being tolerable and being intolerable.

I now come to the State Shipping Service. Had State shipping benefited the North I do not think anyone would have been entitled to complain at the heavy losses that were made. But did it benefit the North? Is it not a fact that all sorts of restrictions were imposed upon private shipping companies, and on the ships that used to trade between here and Singapore, with the result that the North suffered? Now we are told that in future only ships built in Australia are to be allowed to trade between the States. What effect that will have on the North and North-West I do not know; but it does not, to my mind, suggest a very hopeful outlook, because one of the grave needs of the North is adequate shipping with as few restrictions as possible.

I have occasion to know something about the present conditions in connection with goldmining and the mining of blue asbestos in the North-West. I am quite sure that the State Government is anxious to help in every possible way, and I have no criticism of the Government to offer on these matters. But I want to point out this fact, that inadequate traffic and other conditions are making it extremely difficult to develop either of these industries. I have not the slightest doubt that deposits of equal value, whether we

refer to gold, to blue asbestos or other minerals, in almost any other country throughout the world, would be regarded as an enormous asset. Here we are faced with an absolute problem: How can present costs be faced? So far as shipping and transport facilities are concerned, I am prepared to make every allowance for war conditions, and I have no doubt the Government will make every effort where possible to remedy the situation; but I do not think that that remedy will be provided by State shipping with all sorts of restrictions imposed upon other shipping interests. The north of this State will require all the shipping and transport facilities that can be made available.

It is not without interest to compare the North and the North-West of this State with northern Queensland. If we do that, we have to admit—I have spent many weeks in the north of Queensland—that the northern parts of Queensland have natural advantages compared with our North and North-West. North Queensland has more soil of very high quality and a heavier rainfall. It may be thought that in a well-governed Commonwealth where an advantage was to be given it would be made available to those localities that were most difficult to develop and to those parts that needed help most. But what is the position? It has been calculated—and I think quite accurately—that in the time of peace the subsidy paid to the Queensland sugar industry amounted to about £5,000,000 per annum. Why is that subsidy necessary? How is the price of sugar fixed? Again I speak with some knowledge, having spent several weeks in the sugar producing areas of Queensland.

The sugar locality may be divided into three sections. First, there is northern Queensland, which is well adapted for the production of all the sugar required by Australia. Then we go a little lower down and we find country with different conditions that is not capable of producing sugar so cheaply. Proceeding further south still and over the border into New South Wales, we find country that cannot produce sugar at anything like the cost that is possible in northern Queensland. The price of sugar in Australia is maintained by the Commonwealth through restrictions upon imports and by other means, the effect of which is to enable the worst areas for sugar pro-

duction to produce that commodity at a profit. Accompanying that aspect is the fact that in the northern parts which are most suited for sugar production, that production is confined to certain permitted areas, with the result that at the time I visited the sugar fields an acre of land that had the right to grow sugar was priced at £100, whereas an adjoining acre of exactly equal soil quality but lacking the right to grow sugar could be bought for £4 or £5. Perhaps one would not grumble so much if it were not that the effects of the subsidising of that very rich land fall chiefly upon areas where it is extremely difficult to develop their real potentialities. I trust Mr. Moore will excuse me for using a word that we know rather offends him.

It is difficult to develop the resources of the North and North-West of this State, and those are the parts of our State that are chiefly prejudiced by the Federal policy which gives such great advantages to enormously richer country areas in another State. If we go back 30 odd years we find that the conditions in the North and North-West were so prosperous and encouraging as to induce a private company—not a Western Australian company—to embark on a large expenditure for the purpose of building freezing works at Wyndham. We all know what happened. The war of 1914-18 broke out and the company was unable to carry on with the job. The then Government—I think it was the Labour Government of which Mr. Scaddan was Premier—took the concern over and completed the works. Because of the war this proved a desperately costly undertaking. Having completed the task, the Government was at an enormous disadvantage on account of the high capital cost resulting from the war. The trouble with the freezing works from that day onwards has been the enormously high initial cost.

There are some members of this House at present who were here when a Select Committee of this Chamber was appointed to inquire into the matter of the freezing works. On that Select Committee the North Province was represented. The committee unanimously recommended that the Government should close down the freezing works because of the huge annual loss. I happened at the time to be in charge of the ministerial responsibilities associated with the Wyndham freezing works, and

after long conferences with the manager, I took it upon myself to recommend the Government—I do not like using the word “ignore”—not to observe the recommendations of the Select Committee, but to carry on with the operations. The reason for my action was that it seemed to me the losses every year represented almost exactly the amounts paid for interest and sinking fund charges. The works, in other words, did not lose money on the operations, but only in respect of interest and sinking fund charges. It seemed to me therefore, that even if the works were closed, those charges would continue and at the same time there would be no money distributed in wages, the labour position would be prejudiced and the help—I admit it was very slight—given to the cattle industry would be withdrawn.

Speaking now many years after all this happened, I am quite satisfied that the Government of the day did the right thing in continuing to operate the undertaking and I am equally satisfied that the present Government is doing the right thing in reopening the works. I am sure the Government will be confronted with tremendous difficulties, but many like difficulties will have to be faced by all parts of Australia. I have long contended that the two chief problems that Australia has to face in the post-war period are these: How can we establish and maintain the volume and value of exports that will enable us to buy the things we must import if we are to ensure that our standard of living is to be maintained and improved and the country is to be developed?

We must buy and we must import; we cannot do that unless we have a large export trade. That is the first problem and it affects not only the North and North-West of Western Australia, but the whole of the Commonwealth. It is something we have to face. The second problem is closely associated with it. That problem is: How can we maintain the purchasing power of the Australian pound? Unless we can manage to accomplish these two things, I do not think that any of our attempts to establish social security and amelioration or anything else, will come to much. Leaving other parts of Australia out of account, there are in Western Australia a great many things waiting to be attended to. The work of rehabilitating our industries will be diffi-

cult and it will be for the Government and Parliament to put first things first. Amongst those first things I have no hesitation in including the help that is necessary to put our North and North-West on their feet again. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [7.55] in moving the second reading said: This small Bill seeks to amend the State Government Insurance Office Act, 1938-1943, in three directions. The most important proposal is to give the State Insurance Office authority to undertake insurance business for local governing authorities and friendly societies. Under existing legislation the State office is permitted to handle employers' liability and motor vehicle insurance business only.

For some years local authorities and friendly societies have been making representations for the State Insurance Office to be empowered to handle their business. The most interested of the local authorities has been an organisation known as the Great Eastern Road Board Association, which comprises 21 road boards. These boards are desirous of pooling the whole of their insurance business and conducting it through the State Insurance Office. They feel that by forming a pool and having it administered by the State Insurance Office they will effect a substantial saving in expenditure. The financial advantage that the boards would obtain by dealing with the State Insurance Office would be applied to the benefit of ratepayers and of the respective district.

Friendly societies have also been insistent that they be permitted to operate with the State Insurance Office and to form a pool similar to that proposed by the road boards. They, too, state that this would result in a substantial lessening of their expenditure which would be directed to the benefit of their members. There will be no compulsion on any governing authority or friendly society to insure with the State office. If they wish to continue their present arrangements, they may do so. The Bill provides that business may be undertaken

with local authorities separately or with friendly societies separately, or with any number of local authorities or any number of friendly societies desirous of forming a pool or other mutual scheme. In the Bill the term "Local authority" is defined as meaning a municipal council, a road board, a local authority within the meaning of the Health Act, 1911-1944, a vermin board, a water board, the board of management of a hospital within the meaning of the Hospitals Act, 1927, or any other statutory board that the Governor by Order in Council may declare to be a local authority for the purposes of the Act.

The second amendment provides that the State Insurance Office shall act as agent for any State Insurance Office, or department, operating in the other States. It frequently happens that persons insured in other States are transferred to Western Australia. In this regard it would be an advantage to them to be able to pay their premiums to, and transact other business with, the Western Australian office. It would also save considerable formality and interstate correspondence in the event of a death and would expedite the settlement of a claim.

The remaining amendment deals with the administrative control of the State Insurance Office. The Act states that the office shall be managed by an actuary, but it was found during the term of office of the late Government Actuary that this was not necessary. The small amount of actuarial work required could be carried out economically by a consulting actuary. Also, it would be practically impossible to obtain an actuary permanently for the position, as there are very few men in Australia today with the necessary qualifications. The amendment therefore provides that the office shall be administered by a manager instead of by the State Government Actuary.

Those are the three proposals embodied in the Bill. As already stated, the important item is that providing for insurance business between the State Insurance Office, local governing authorities and friendly societies, a proposal on which these bodies are in agreement. As a matter of fact, the local authorities have been insistent for a long period upon the introduction of legislation along these lines, and the matter has been stressed at numerous conferences. The proposal to establish a pool should appeal

to Mr. Thomson who has frequently advocated the inauguration of a pooling system of insurance.

Hon. A. Thomson: What do you mean by a pool? Will they receive a commission?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They will form a pool and the local authorities will pay into it and the State Insurance Office will manage it at a rate to be fixed. After consultation with the State office and inquiries having been made, they consider they will save a tremendous sum of money.

Hon. A. Thomson: In effect, it means they will be able to reduce insurance costs.

The HONORARY MINISTER: Absolutely! That is the idea. I trust that members will be in agreement with the Bill and, if any further information is desired, I shall be pleased to supply it in Committee. The Great Eastern Road Board Association went to a lot of trouble to collect information and is definitely of the opinion that it would be of tremendous advantage to local authorities if they were given an opportunity to do this business.

Hon. W. R. Hall: How many boards does that association comprise?

The HONORARY MINISTER: Twenty-one.

Hon. W. R. Hall: What about the other 100?

The HONORARY MINISTER: They will have an opportunity to do the same thing and it will be of tremendous assistance to them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. A. Dimmitt, debate adjourned.

BILL—SOIL CONSERVATION.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [8.3] in moving the second reading said: As its title indicates, this Bill provides for the establishment of statutory machinery to enable steps to be taken for the conservation of soil resources and for the mitigation of erosion. This is now recognised as a problem of major importance. Erosion is not a recent threat to human security; it is as old as agriculture. It had its genesis in those far-off times when man, to make a living, first began to strip the natural cover of protective vegetation

from the land. Over extensive areas his cultivation of the earth has resulted in complete destruction or extreme impoverishment of those soil resources upon which he was dependent. When this has occurred on a large scale the consequence has been the disintegration and disappearance of civilisation from the affected regions.

Archaeological discoveries have indicated the part that erosion has played in undermining and obliterating many ancient civilisations, the ruins of whose cities have been found under uninhabitable deserts that once were fertile and wealthy countries. But these evidences of the ravages of soil from the maladjustment of man's activities passed unnoticed for many centuries, and it is only within approximately the last decade that public consciousness has been aroused to the danger. A few short years have been sufficient to raise the problem of erosion control and soil conservation from a position of comparative obscurity to that of a national policy in many countries. It is claimed that erosion caused by man's mismanagement of the soil is taking place in almost every country with the exception of those in north-western Europe. The immunity of this part of the world is considered to be the result of the adaptation of agriculture to the climate and is an interesting study for those who are seeking to combat erosion.

Perhaps the most potent factor drawing attention to soil erosion was the world-wide publicity arising from the soil conservation activities instituted in the United States of America in 1933. In that year a Soil Erosion Service was established with an appropriation of 5,000,000 dollars, and soil and water conservation projects were commenced in many erosion problem areas. In 1935, Congress passed the Soil Conservation Act which definitely committed the Government to the policy of soil conservation. This was followed by the passing in many States of soil conservation district laws.

Surveys demonstrated that over 150 years, but mainly in the last 50 years, 100,000,000 acres of cultivated land in the United States had been irreparably damaged by water erosion, and 4,000,000 acres had been destroyed by wind action. Areas of similar extent had suffered severe damage, and more than half of the arable land of the country showed some signs of erosion. Recent reports indicate that over 1,200 soil conservation districts have been established, cov-

ering over 600,000,000 acres of farm land. During the past eight years, despite war conditions, over 8,000,000 acres have been reclaimed. That shows the extent to which the problem has grown in America and what extensive steps have been taken by that country to combat it. I think, too, that we have ample evidence of the success achieved by some of the methods employed.

Throughout Australia, where the position today, according to responsible authorities, is very comparable with that which existed in the United States in 1934, the battle against man-induced erosion has been joined, and most States have taken action to prevent further deterioration of the land. Erosion is affecting to varying degrees the soil fertility of all the States, particularly in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. It has been said that worse examples of water erosion can be seen in Australia in open grazing and cultivated lands than in the United States of America and Canada. The Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission has reported that the people of Australia do not realise the magnitude of the menace of soil erosion to large sections of the country. If a national calamity is to be averted, the Commission states, drastic action is necessary within the next decade. Unless better methods of land-use are adopted, erosion will spread to wider areas.

The greatest contributory factors to erosion are considered to have been overstocking, overcropping and the wholesale denuding of timber from the land. Pastoralists and agriculturists are now being instructed on the dangers in connection with these matters. In all States plans have been put into operation for the education of landholders in the readjustment of farming technique and the use of land in harmony with natural conditions. The erosion problem is serious in New South Wales, where, in the eastern and central divisions, which include virtually the whole of the State's agriculture and 90 per cent. of its livestock, some 50 per cent., or approximately 60,000,000 acres, the majority highly fertile and in moderate or good rainfall areas, are suffering actively from erosion. It is stated that in one part an area of over 500,000 acres of what was once mostly fertile land is beyond economic reclamation. For economic productive purposes it has

been lost to New South Wales. Another 1,000 square miles of land has been severely eroded by wind action and is probably irreclaimable. Those figures indicate that in New South Wales the problem is a major one, and that considerable time and the expenditure of large sums of money will be necessary in order, in the first place, to prevent any further extension of erosion; and, in the second place, to try to reclaim whatever it is possible to reclaim in the areas so seriously affected.

The same story can be told of Victoria, where soil erosion is considered a major problem, which has caused serious deterioration of agricultural, grazing and timbered land throughout the greater part of the State. In 1941, 45 shire councils, representing over half the area of the State, reported serious erosion within their boundaries, and 119 councils reported erosion of varying degrees. The only districts in South Australia known to be free from erosion are those in the south-east. In the pastoral areas, the problem is reported to be serious and the disappearance of soil is increasing the difficulty of regeneration. In Queensland and Tasmania, the problem is less acute. However, Queensland in company with New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, has established a soil conservation service.

In Western Australia, erosion is widespread in the agricultural areas, but only a small portion is classed as seriously damaged. Erosion is increasing, and it is believed that if remedial measures are not taken the position will deteriorate rapidly. It is considered, however, that the harm already done can be more easily remedied than in the other badly affected States. A Soil Erosion Committee was set up in Western Australia in December, 1936. It was later enlarged and reorganised as a Soil Conservation Committee and is now composed of Mr. W. V. Fyfe, the Director of Land Settlement, as Chairman; Mr. G. K. Baron Hay, the Under Secretary for Agriculture; Mr. I. Thomas, the Superintendent of Wheat Farming; Mr. T. N. Stoate, the Deputy Conservator of Forests; Dr. Teakle, the Plant Nutrition Officer; Mr. A. R. Clifton, Officer in Charge of Irrigation; Mr. H. R. Powell, Superintendent of Horticulture; and Mr. C. P. Murray, Sheep Adviser of the Rural and Industries Bank.

In 1939, the committee obtained returns from 373 farmers as a result of questionnaires sent to 664 farmers nominated by 55 road boards in the wheat-farming and mixed-farming areas of the 12-25 inch rainfall belt. These revealed that farmers generally were aware of the problems of soil erosion and were ready to collaborate with any authority established to control the menace.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What number of replies was received?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Out of 664, no fewer than 373 were received. The replies generally conceded that erosion was due to faulty management, and that conservation would be achieved largely as the result of proper adaptation of soil management, use of wind breaks, and proper soil cultural and cropping methods. Over 20 per cent. of the farmers who replied reported moderate to severe damage from wind erosion, but less than 10 per cent. reported moderate to severe incidence of water erosion. The reports left no doubt that erosion was on the increase. In 1940 the Royal Commission on the Pastoral Industry sent questionnaires to sheep and cattle stations throughout the State and received replies from 281 stations. The replies covered a vast area—about 100,000,000 acres—in the North-West, Central and Kimberley areas, and revealed no erosion on 162 stations, slight damage on 98, and severe erosion in 21 cases. A recent reconnaissance of the Ord River and its watershed by a licensed surveyor has revealed an amount of severe erosion. It is intended to table in Parliament the report on this survey when it is ready, and it is anticipated that the degree of erosion revealed will surprise members.

Officers of the Department of Agriculture, in the course of their advisory and research activities, have organised erosion control measures on a number of farms in the agricultural areas. This work has given valuable relief to the farmers concerned, but there is urgent need for the setting up of an organisation with the necessary statutory authority to deal with the matter. It is in recognition of this fact that this Bill is being submitted to Parliament for approval.

Turning now to the Bill itself, it will be noted that it is divided into six parts. The preliminary part deals with definitions and

the co-ordination of the Bill with related Acts which are enumerated in the schedule. Part (2) places the administration of the Act under the Minister for Agriculture and creates and adds to the Department of Agriculture a new branch to be known as the Soil Conservation Service Branch, the expenses of which will be paid out of moneys appropriated by Parliament. A commissioner of soil conservation will be appointed under, and subject to, the provisions of the Public Service Act. He will have the immediate control and supervision of the new branch and will be directly responsible to the Under Secretary for Agriculture. At this juncture I might add that it is considered that quite a small staff will be adequate to deal with the situation as it applies to this State at present.

An advisory committee will be appointed consisting of eight members, one of whom shall be the commissioner, and one from each of the Departments of Agriculture, Lands and Surveys, Public Works, and Forests, together with representatives from the farming community and the pastoral industry. As far as possible the members of the committee will be persons with a general or special knowledge of soil conservation problems. The chairman will be appointed by the Governor, but provision has been made that the position shall not be held by the commissioner.

The third part of the Bill deals with the soil conservation service and states that the objects of the service shall be the prevention and mitigation of soil erosion, the promotion of soil conservation, the utilisation of lands in such manner as will tend towards the attainment of those objects, and the education of landholders and the public generally in the objects and practice of soil conservation. The general functions of the commissioner and of the committee are set out in detail. Provision has been made for the setting up of soil conservation districts. These may be established in any part of the State and may be proclaimed by the Governor. Within those districts action may be taken to regulate the use of land, preserve vegetation, and generally to require action to prevent or mitigate soil erosion or promote soil conservation. In each district a regional advisory commission may be appointed with the object of

representing district opinion and assisting in the problems of the district. It is anticipated that these regional committees will help to mould public opinion and promote a consciousness of soil conservation importance.

Part (4) gives the Minister power to acquire land and create soil conservation reserves, should such action be found necessary, and to undertake on the reserves work for the control of soil erosion or for the purpose of research into the causes and methods of prevention of soil erosion. Part (5) gives the Minister power to establish areas of erosion hazard. These will be regions in which land is subject, or likely to become subject, to erosion. In every area the commissioner must prepare a scheme of operation for soil conservation or erosion mitigation, such scheme to be submitted to the Governor for approval. Where a scheme is instituted the Minister may enter into agreements with the owners, occupiers or mortgagees of the lands affected which will ensure the carrying into effect of the scheme.

Financial advances against approved securities may be made to owners or occupiers of land to assist them in contributing towards the cost of any scheme concerning which they have entered into an agreement with the Minister. The liability of owners of land to contribute towards the cost of soil conservation works is set out, as is also the right of any farmer to appeal to a local court against any action proposed to be taken in connection with his property. Provision is made in Part (6) for the preservation of trees, shrubs and vegetation on private property if it is considered that the retention of these trees, etc., are necessary in the interests of soil conservation. Authority is given to the Minister for Lands to vary or revoke the conditions of any lease granted under the Lands Act, 1933-39, if compliance with these conditions would tend to cause erosion on any land.

The Government desired to include in the Bill a provision to control the denudation of timber by Commonwealth employees, in particular those employed by the Telephone Department, but it was learned from the the Solicitor General that Commonwealth legislation, which overrides our State Acts, confers on their employees the power to cut down timber and excavate soil from any

land. It is plain, therefore, that our only course is to seek some co-operative arrangement with the Commonwealth authorities in this connection.

That, I think, covers the main provisions of the Bill, the importance of which cannot be over-emphasised by the Government. A great deal of thought and consideration has been given to its drafting, and every avenue has been explored in an endeavour to cover all the powers necessary to deal with a question that is of national importance and must be tackled with energy if we are to save our inheritance. That there is a job to be done, and done quickly, is evident from the information I have given to members. If there is any document that would emphasise the urgency of tackling the problem it is that constituting the report of the Commonwealth Rural Reconstruction Commission, wherein it is stated that if a calamity is to be averted drastic action is necessary.

I think that members who give consideration to this problem—more especially if they have had access to the various reports on what has been done elsewhere, particularly in the United States of America in recent years—will agree that, while the position may not be as serious at present in this State as it is in other States of the Commonwealth there is no doubt that the problem is getting worse year by year and that the sooner we tackle it the sooner we will assist the agriculturalists, the pastoralists and those who are cultivating our lands, to a better knowledge of what is required if they are to make the best use of the land that they occupy. Primary production has played a great part in the economy of this State for many years and in view of the reports that we have received and the figures that I have quoted to the House tonight, I feel sure that members will agree that the time has arrived when we should have statutory authority to deal with the menace of soil erosion, whether by wind or by water. I hope the House will agree that the provisions contained in this Bill are such that they should be put into operation without further delay.

There is a tremendous amount of information available on this subject and I have not endeavoured to give to the House anything but a comparison of the problem in the United States of America with that in the States of Australia. A further com-

parison is that between the Eastern States of Australia and this State. I hope that in Western Australia we will take advantage of the experience in those other places and that without any undue delay we will make it possible for this State to deal with a problem which, if it is not dealt with in the near future, must necessarily assume greater proportions. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. W. J. Mann, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 8.30 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 10th October, 1945.

	PAGE
Questions : Price fixing, as to extension of Commonwealth powers	1139
Water supplies, as to Coolgardie Townsite mains	1140
Goldmining, as to permit for purchase of tracteur	1140
Dalkeith hot pool, as to filling of basin	1140
Workers' Homes Board, as to rating of land	1141
Motions : Tourist traffic, as to separate Ministerial control, defeated	1141
Public Works Standing Committee, as to legislation for appointment, defeated	1151
Soldier settlement, as to proposed legislation, defeated	1161
Gaols, administration, site, etc., to inquire by Royal Commission, defeated	1170
Sanitary site, South Perth-Canning districts, to inquire by Select Committee	1170
Bills : Police Act Amendment, 3R., passed	1141
Supreme Court Act Amendment (No. 1), 2R.	1160
Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment, returned	1161

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

QUESTIONS.

PRICE FIXING.

As to Extension of Commonwealth Powers.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Premier:

1, Has his attention been called to a statement appearing in the Press on Saturday, the 6th October, complaining of the delay by certain State Governments, in carrying out undertakings alleged to have been given at the Premiers' Conference in August, to pass legislation to extend Federal price fixing powers after the war?

2, Is he aware that the Government of Western Australia is mentioned as one of the State Governments that gave this undertaking?