

one of the draftsmen. The Solicitor General is far too busy to give attention to this work. He has to advise on all sorts of points that arise, but he may be advising one minute and drafting a Bill the next minute. I trust that the few matters I have mentioned will be given due consideration by the proper authorities. I support the motion.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 6.4 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 14th August, 1946.*

Questions:	Page
Wool exports, as to distribution of war-time profit	270
Soldier land settlement, as to concessional reduction of rents	270
Air services, as to Albany license and extension to Esperance	271
Education—(a) as to Goomalling school accommodation	271
(b) as to road tax on bus-service vehicles	272
Legislative Assembly, as to attendances of members	272
Railways, as to Government subsidy to benevolent fund	272
Dutch steamer "Bonaire," as to attitude of Fremantle Lumpers' Union	272
Bills: Coal Mines Regulation, 1R.	273
State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment, 1R.	273
Business Names Act Amendment, 1R.	273
Electoral Act Amendment, 2R.	289
Railway (Hopetoun-Havensthorpe) Discontinuance, 2R.	291
Milk, Message, 2R.	293
State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, Message	300
Marketing of Barley, Message	300
Cattle Industry Compensation, Message	300
Motions: Electricity supplies and breakdowns, to inquire by Select Committee	273
State Hotels, as to use as community hotels	276
Public works standing committee, as to legislation for appointing	283
Traffic Act, to disallow angle-parking regulations	285

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### WOOL EXPORTS.

*As to Distribution of War-time Profit.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, Is the State Government aware of the amount held by the Commonwealth Govern-

ment (as distinct from the profit accruing as a result of the British Government's war-time purchase plan) from the profit made on fellmongered wools on tops exported to India, and any other transactions made with wool provided by Australian woolgrowers, stated to total in all more than £7,000,000?

2, If so, will he inform the House of the correct details of the various amounts and of the total involved?

3, Has the State Government made representations to the Commonwealth that this amount should be distributed to woolgrowers either in proportion to their contributions to the total production of the Commonwealth during the war or in any other manner?

4, If such representations have not been made, will they be made?

The MINISTER replied:

1 and 2, Authoritative information has not yet been received from the Commonwealth Government.

3, A request has been forwarded to the Prime Minister for definite information concerning proposals for the disposal of funds which have accumulated from the operations of the Central Wool Committee during the war.

4, Will be further considered when information referred to in No. 3 is received.

#### SOLDIER LAND SETTLEMENT.

*As to Concessional Reduction of Rents.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

1, Has the Government decided to extend to ex-Service personnel of the recent war the concessional reduction of 50 per cent. in respect of land rents as was done to ex-Servicemen of the 1914-18 war?

2, If so, is it proposed to introduce legislation this session?

3, Will the concession be extended to all ex-Service personnel, and will it cover leases already held as well as leases taken up since the war, or only the latter?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2 and 3, This matter is at present under consideration and a statement will be made when a decision is arrived at.

## AIR SERVICES.

*As to Albany License and Extension to Esperance.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Transport:

1, To which company has a license been issued to conduct a passenger air service from Perth to Albany?

2, Was an application to run such a service received from any other aviation company operating in this State, and if so, what was the name of that company?

3, What is the capacity of the aeroplanes which are at present being used on the service?

4, Are they equipped with the best safety precautions, including two-way radio communications and a radio compass?

5, If not, in view of the type of country to be traversed, and the possibility of bad visibility, is it not essential that planes should be fitted with such devices, and what justification is there for granting the license for machines not so fitted?

6, If the company to whom the license has been granted is not the company which first applied, what were the reasons influencing the granting of a license to the company that has obtained it?

7, Is it intended to extend the service from Albany to Esperance, and if so, when; and if such extension is approved, will it be possible for mails to be dropped at intervening places at present ill-served with communications?

8, Will he lay all the papers relative to the above matters upon the Table of the House?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Airlines (W.A.) Ltd.

2, Yes. MacRobertson-Miller Aviation Co. Ltd.

3, Two eight-passenger, one four passenger and one three-passenger.

4, These planes are not equipped with two-way radio communication and radio compass.

5, It is desirable and to this end the company has on order two of the latest De Havilland aircraft fitted with all such devices. Delivery of the first of these is expected in December.

6, Airlines (W.A.) Ltd. first applied on the 28th January, 1938, whereas the first record of any similar application from the MacRobertson-Miller Aviation Co. Ltd. is dated 11th October, 1944.

7, No application has been received to extend from Albany to Esperance.

8, Yes.

## EDUCATION.

*(a) As to Goomalling School Accommodation.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Education:

Is he aware—

1, That because of the gravely inadequate accommodation at the Goomalling School, classes are being held in the golf and tennis pavilion on the outskirts of the town and about a mile from the school proper?

2, That because of extreme damp and wet, the close proximity of a creek and the absence of a satisfactory recreational area for the very young children in the classes, this site for school purposes, even temporarily, is considered most unsuitable?

3, That as the children have to cross the railway line to reach the pavilion, parents are in a constant state of worry and uneasiness regarding the safety of their children?

4, That the organisations owning the pavilion agreed to the use of the building by the department as an emergency only until the end of August?

5, That the inadequacy of the accommodation at the Goomalling School is of long standing, as is evidenced by the fact that the department has been obliged previously to make use of another building in the town which they had to vacate to allow the present owner to use as a residence?

6, Is any action being taken to provide immediately, even temporarily, the more suitable and urgently required additional accommodation at the school?

7, If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes; but no other accommodation is available, even temporarily.

3, No: the department has no evidence that such anxiety exists.

4, No: the tenancy of the golf club house has been extended until the 30th September.

5, Private accommodation has been rented at Goomalling from the 23rd July, 1945, only.

6, Yes: immediate steps are being taken to remove the Wongamine School building for use as a classroom at Goomalling.

7, Answered by No. 6.

(b) *As to Road Tax on Bus-Service Vehicles.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Education:

1, In view of the heavy road tax on school buses and of the fact that by not having to pay it, local governing authorities are given an unfair advantage over private contractors, will he take steps to protect the latter by adopting a set price per mile for conveying children to school in lieu of the present competitive system?

2, If not, will he give his reasons for not doing so?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, The road tax referred to would not exceed an average of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per mile travelled on school bus routes. Experience has shown that the advantage given local governing authorities over private contractors when tenders for school bus services are submitted for acceptance is outweighed by the department's anticipated guarantee that the roads to be used will be maintained in trafficable order, thus ensuring the comfort and safety of the children, and that a superior type of bus will be used.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

### *As to Attendances of Members.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

1, In view of the statement which appeared recently in the Press that the member for Subiaco probably holds the record of attendances since being a member of Parliament, will he ascertain from the official records and indicate to the House in their order those members of the Legislative Assembly who occupy the first three positions of highest attendances from 1936 to 1945, inclusive?

2, Do the attendance records give a true impression to the public, particularly in view

of the enforced absence from sittings of the House from time to time of Ministers, and to a lesser extent members, on public business?

The PREMIER replied:

1 and 2, This information is kept in the Parliamentary records and strictly is not within the province of the Premier. All records in this connection are kept by the Clerk Assistant and are available to any member for his perusal.

## RAILWAYS.

### *As to Government Subsidy to Benevolent Fund.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Railways: What was the total amount of subsidy paid by the Government to the W.A.G.R. Benevolent Fund during the period from the 1st July, 1945, to the 30th June, 1946?

The MINISTER replied:

There is not a fund known as the W.A. Government Railways Benevolent Fund, but if the Railways and Tramways Death Benefit Fund is referred to, the amount of the subsidy for 1945-46 was £6,000, as provided on page 112 of the Consolidated Revenue Fund Estimates.

## DUTCH STEAMER "BONAIRE."

### *As to Attitude of Fremantle Lumpers' Union.*

Mr. DONEY asked the Premier:

1, Is the Government taking any action to offset the reported intention of the Fremantle Lumpers' Union to support the Waterside Workers' Federation in the decision by the latter body not to load the Dutch steamer "Bonaire" now berthed at No. 1 wharf, Fremantle?

2, Since Fremantle is in Western Australia, and because Holland is a friendly nation, whose Near Eastern trade we are rapidly losing owing to action of the type referred to in question 1 does he consider that State jurisdiction is involved and that immediate action should be taken in this and any future similar disputes?

The PREMIER replied:

1 and 2, Where the matter comes within State jurisdiction, such as the use of the Fremantle slipway for Dutch vessels, it has been satisfactorily adjusted by negotiation

by State authorities. Extensive repair work has also been undertaken on Dutch ships by the State Engineering Works.

The difficulty in connection with the "Bonaire" has been discussed with the local Commander of the Royal Netherlands Navy, who recognises that the State Government has no jurisdiction.

### **BILLS—FIRST READING.**

- 1, Coal Mines Regulation.  
Introduced by the Minister for Mines.
- 2, State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Transport.
- 3, Business Names Act Amendment.  
Introduced by Hon. W. D. Johnson.

### **MOTION—ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES AND BREAKDOWNS.**

*To Inquire by Select Committee.*

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [4.38]:  
I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the existing and estimated future requirements of electric current for power and lighting purposes in the metropolitan area and the adequacy of the existing plant and present authorised extensions to meet such requirements and whether and to what extent any additional generating or distributing plant is desirable to safeguard the continuity of electric current for industrial and private purposes in the metropolitan area and in particular:—

- (1) The causes and circumstances of and related to the recent breakdowns in supply.
- (2) What measures should be taken to avoid a recurrence of the like character in the future.
- (3) To what extent (if any) industrial users of electric current should acquire private auxiliary or emergency generating plants.

This motion arises from the power failure at East Perth, but more particularly from the fact that the Nedlands and Claremont local authorities requested the member for Nedlands and myself to raise this question in the House and to move for the appointment of a Royal Commission. At the time of the trouble there were some words in the two local authorities referred to, and the Minister for Works stated definitely that he would not agree to the appointment of a Royal Commission. So it is no use com-

ing to this House to run up against a brick wall after that definite ultimatum. We have consequently decided to move for the appointment of a Select Committee. The object is not really either to secure a Royal Commission or a Select Committee; it is to obtain certain information and I hope that, when the matter is clearly before the Minister, the House will agree that the questions we desire to have answered are reasonable questions, and that the Minister will either grant this particular means of obtaining that information through a Select Committee, or else that he may perhaps be in a position, from his knowledge, which we have not got, to enable Parliament and the State to get the information through the State Electricity Commission.

My first thought in regard to this motion is, "Thank God the trouble did not occur during the war." My second thought is to congratulate, together with those who have already congratulated them, all the workers in the Electricity Department for what they did in maintaining supplies and attending to the desperate repairs which came on them so suddenly in two different forms. I wish to deal with the motion in two phases, and I hope to keep it short because I think it explains itself. The wording has been gone through by the Leader and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party, who are both King's Counsel, and we could not have a word less than is used in the motion as it is now set out.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear!

**MR. NORTH:** One word I added to the final draft is the word "distributing." The public know only what they have read in the Press about this matter. They know, for instance, of the Collie troubles, and that before the major break occurred there was trouble with the 12,500 unit generator plant. I use the word "unit" because the word "kilowatt," which means unit, is a long word and a tongue-twister. The 12,500 unit generator was incapacitated, I understand through the Press, because the turbines—the steam generating plant—failed or had to be overhauled. We then learned in the Press that a very big and intricate job was undertaken by the workers at the Power House, and that this work would not, under normal conditions, have been done locally. It is a feather in the cap of those concerned to have attempted that job which, as we

know, was carried through successfully. Then came the major break in the 25,000 unit generator. I happened to be up at the time—it was about half an hour after midnight—when the light glowed at about half pressure for a few minutes, and then went out. No one amongst the public is really aware of what happened then.

I may probably be asked by the Minister why I, as a member of Parliament, did not go to the Power House and find out for myself what happened, instead of coming here, and asking questions in this elaborate and formal way. Well, anything I find out for myself is not really authentic. We want an official set-up of the position. So, when the Nedlands Road Board and the Claremont Municipal Council wrote to me in identical terms, requesting a motion for a Royal Commission—which has been transmuted now into a motion for a Select Committee and the wording has also been transmuted—I felt that the natural course was to go through with the procedure, as is now being done. The public also learnt through the Minister that what happened to the 25,000 unit generator was an unforeseen accident and, as far as I am aware, that is all the public knows. There was some discussion about sectors. It was also stated in the Press that a certain portion of the big dynamo had to come out and be replaced by some new mechanism which the East Perth power house authorities had in stock. That was intricate work and took more than two weeks, toiling day and night, to complete. Again, the whole State will compliment those concerned in getting that big repair done.

Those are the things that we know through the Press, but what the local authorities want to know, and so do many members of the public including manufacturers, are not those things. They want more details in certain directions. One way of getting them would be to have a Royal Commission, as I have said, and that may possibly be obtained through the State Electricity Commission. I will now state the questions, as I see them, in more detail. If I were a member of a Select Committee dealing with this matter I would like to hear them answered. The first one is—

1, Did the 25,000 unit generator fail because of overloading previously for long periods, during several years?

That is an idea that many people have. The next question is—

2, What extra plant, during the war, would have been necessary to correct this position?

By that question I mean to ask, if there had been no war what could we expect to have been added during that period to keep the position on a normal basis. The next question is—

3, As the major breakdown in the 25,000 unit generator occurred in one portion of the dynamo, is there not a likelihood of a similar failure occurring in other parts of the generator, or in the other generators in the East Perth Power House?

That is a reasonable question for the public to ask because if it is true that the big dynamo burnt out in one section through overloading—and that is purely a guess on my part—then it is quite likely that the other dynamos that were working at high pressure and had not been repaired would be equally liable to fail between now and the time when the new plant at Fremantle is available. Questions 4 and 5 are—

4, If the breakdown was not due to previous overloading to what cause was it due, and what actually happened?

5, Since the Fremantle Power House is to be on 50 cycles, does this mean that the East Perth generators will be scrapped or converted to 50 cycles?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: That might be answered now.

Mr. NORTH: They might all be answered now.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Why not submit them in your motion?

Mr. NORTH: That is one of the questions I would like answered by the Minister even if we get the Select Committee. The motion might not be carried and I want to make quite clear to the House what we are after. I do not want this matter to be thrown out with no motion and no answers. The next question is—

6, Have the existing and estimated future needs of the metropolitan area been examined by the State Electricity Commission since, and in the light of, the power failure?

As far as we are aware, the Fremantle power house was decided on during the war, and announcements were made at that time that there would be a new power house which would cost in the region of £1,000,000 for the purpose of distributing the load and to prevent the danger of breakdowns. Now

we have had this new experience which might cause the Electricity Commission to examine whether or not there should be further provision made to prevent breakdowns in the future. The next questions are—

7, If so, does the examination reveal that the Fremantle power house with two generators of 25,000 units each will suffice?

8, What margin of reserve capacity is planned to carry on supplies during breakdowns?

9, To what extent should industries and hospitals be equipped with private auxiliary or emergency plants?

10, Are all the generators in the East Perth plant in continuous operation, or is it possible to spell any of them to meet emergencies?

All these are reasonable questions, the answers to which could presumably have been obtained by moving for a report to be laid on the Table, without any contentious arguments. But I have received requests from local authorities, and I am doing my best to meet their wishes, knowing that a Royal Commission, as such, has been refused. I have no particular knowledge myself as to what should be the position with regard to reserve plant. The Minister for Works is concerned with the running of industries here with the aid of the cheapest possible rate of current. He has to ensure that it is produced as cheaply as possible in order that our industrial concerns may meet the competition that exists with other States. I feel that if the idea of a general breakdown, such as the one we experienced quite recently, gains ground and there is such a possibility in connection with other plants in Australia, it is necessary that the authorities throughout the Commonwealth should confer with the object of setting up an Australian engineering standard of electricity production of such a nature as to provide reserve capacity and power to meet emergencies. We should have some basis of uniform power and preparation against such possibilities in the future so that we shall not have the spectacle of one State hanging on by the skin of its teeth and able to under-sell current against others.

It is obvious that when the State Government here decided to erect the new plant at South Fremantle it did not want to instal plant of a purely emergency capacity, knowing that it would merely add to the cost of the production of electricity. On the other hand, what has happened in the past could

possibly happen again. We know what occurred in this State and what has occurred in other States. We should therefore endeavour to reach agreement on some form of standard power house with a plant that would provide a reasonable reserve, say one of 25 per cent., to meet emergencies that must occur. We know from our knowledge over the years of what has happened in connection with the East Perth power house, that, irrespective of how careful a Government may be and quite apart from the overloading of the present plant which has to supply current to centres 30 miles or more away, there are enormous opportunities for a breakdown.

I know that at Cottesloe, where the district is subject to frequent storms, a short breakdown is experienced sometimes as often as twice in a month. Some of us have rigged up Alladin lamps in our homes so that in the event of a breakdown we can turn off the switch and have light by that very simple means. Some have been ingenious enough to attach a globe underneath the shade of the Alladin lamp and have provided themselves very effectively with lighting arrangements by that means. We know that even transformers break down; there are line failures; there are all kinds of stoppages. The public could learn a lot from the Electricity Commission either as the result of the appointment of a Select Committee, or directly, if that body is in a position to give the required information without its being wrested from them. The Commission might be able to inform the public of the measures taken to prevent a breakdown in future.

Leaving aside "John Citizen" with his smaller troubles, such as his being deprived of electric current for lighting and cooking purposes—which could be overcome if a gas or wood stove were installed—the use of his refrigerator—which could be overcome if he installed a gas or kerosene plant—or the enjoyment of his radio set—which could be overcome by installing gas valves which are on the market in different parts of the world—let us admit that all these steps could be taken to safeguard against inconvenience in future in the event of intermittent failures—members will realise that we will always be liable to intermittent failures although such failures would not be general nor would they last

for any great length of time. Leaving aside "John Citizen," I repeat, the motion refers to the difficulties of hospitals, dental surgeons and industries. These various institutions and persons require to know how far they should be provided with emergency or alternative plants. That is an important question that should be answered.

If the expense of providing surplus plant has to be undertaken by the big firms and consequently the added expense has to be included in production costs, those concerns will be competing under unfair conditions with industrial concerns operating in the Eastern States, unless steps are taken, as I have suggested, to secure a conference with the object of inaugurating uniform conditions. I hope it is quite clear to the Minister for Works that my purpose is to secure the appointment of a Select Committee to obtain answers to the questions indicated on the notice paper in my motion, and also to secure information in more detail respecting the items I have mentioned during the course of my remarks. If he feels that these can be answered completely and thoroughly through the Electricity Commission, I shall be satisfied.

It is my duty to move for the appointment of a Select Committee also because there are questions that may occur to other members which I have overlooked. The subject is of such importance and the loss due to failures at the power house so great, such losses being not only in time and trouble but in loss of transport, that it is the duty of some member to bring the matter before the House so that it may be ventilated and dealt with to the best of the ability of the Government in order that we shall all know where we stand in future and what steps have been taken to meet an emergency that may arise in the future. By that means consumers will have a clear knowledge of their position and will know what they may expect. I submit the motion standing in my name.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

### MOTION—STATE HOTELS.

*As to Use as Community Hotels.*

**MR. PERKINS** (York) [4.57]: I move—

That where a local community desires to take over a State hotel to be run by it as a "community hotel," on a co-operative basis, giving good service and using profits for financing

local amenities, this House considers that the Government should adopt a policy designed to make possible and further this objective.

Members should be under no misapprehension as to what the wording of the motion means. It refers specifically to State hotels and the concurrence of the Government is necessary because without willingness to sell on its part it will be impossible for the objective indicated in the motion to be achieved by any local community. I should say something at the outset about the reasons for the introduction of this proposal. There are seven State hotels that may be involved, namely, the State hotels at Wongan Hills, Bolgart, Bruce Rock, Kwoylin, Corrigin, Dwellingup and Gwalia. Any one of those seven State hotels could be involved. Two of them—those at Kwoylin and Bruce Rock—happen to be situated in my electorate. Specific requests for the introduction of this motion have been received from the Bruce Rock area.

As to the Bruce Rock hotel, it is many years since the building was erected. Over that period some improvements have been effected to the original building, but the hotel at present is considered to be not satisfactory by the people of the district. I think the State Hotels Department agrees that the building is unsuitable for the needs of the district. There have been complaints from time to time about the service being given by the hotel, apart from the unsuitability of the building. I am aware that the difficulties have been somewhat abnormal during the war years and that we can expect some of them to be corrected now that the labour position is easier.

The Minister for Justice: You mean that the hotel has been mismanaged?

**MR. PERKINS:** I do not mean that the hotel has been mismanaged. One might as well infer that the State Hotels Department has been mismanaged, because it is very unfair to place the blame on the local management when the blame might properly attach to someone higher in the scale.

The Minister for Justice: I think that statement is an evasion.

**MR. PERKINS:** It is not an evasion. Surely I am entitled to make my statement as I think fit, and I have explained the meaning of my statement. At the present moment I do not say where the blame attaches.

The Minister for Justice: I am entitled to speak from my experience.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister may put any interpretation he likes on my remarks and members are entitled to do the same thing. I know what my feelings are, and I know the ideas I desire to place before the House.

Mr. Thorn: Why not blame the department? The State hotels are badly managed.

Mr. PERKINS: If the Minister puts the wrong construction on my remarks, I cannot help it.

The Minister for Justice: It was your own statement.

Mr. Thorn: They are badly managed.

Mr. PERKINS: The people have been dissatisfied with the general service that has been provided by the State hotel at Bruce Rock. I am not saying where the fault lies. The Minister can probe the department and find out for himself. That dissatisfaction was strongly expressed at two largely attended public meetings, and the opinions which I am expressing today are not only my own but they are also the opinions I heard advanced by representative citizens at those meetings. It was definitely stated that the public were not satisfied with the service being provided at Bruce Rock by the State Hotels Department. If the Minister cared to go into the State hotel at Bruce Rock at any time during the summer months, he would see the difficulties under which the local management is working.

The Minister for Works: I think you should invite him to go in.

Mr. PERKINS: I am prepared to do so; that would be one way of getting him to go there. The conditions existing on such occasions, especially on Saturday nights, are absolutely disgraceful. The lounge accommodation is totally inadequate, and with the increase in lounge drinking which has occurred during the war years and which many people consider should be encouraged for the reason that it brings about more leisurely drinking than occurs when a lot of men are standing around a bar and struggling to get drink as quickly as they can be served, it is common to find the lounge full to capacity and people sitting on the stairs and even on the floors. The conditions, in fact, are

such that I am sure the Minister would agree with me in describing them as disgraceful.

The Minister for Justice: I have stayed at the hotel at Corrigin.

Mr. PERKINS: I am not speaking of the Corrigin hotel; I know very little about it; I am speaking of the Bruce Rock hotel. I suggest that if the Minister does not know of the conditions prevailing there, he should make an examination for himself. Then he would be competent to speak about the conditions.

Mr. Watts: If he went there incognito, he would be.

Mr. PERKINS: The residents of the district, at two very largely attended meetings, expressed their dissatisfaction with the conditions existing, and the Minister cannot get over that point—

The Minister for Justice: The hotel at Bruce Rock is not large enough.

Mr. PERKINS: —unless he is going to say that the people in that area are absolutely unreasonable in their demands. As an outcome of those meetings, certain resolutions were passed, some relating to the immediate management of the hotel, requesting that more staff be made available. I am pleased to say that this request has largely been met by the department. The people, however, seek to have a major change brought about. They desire to adopt a policy that has been successfully followed elsewhere, and to this end specific requests were made to the State Hotels Department. These requests were that the hotel at Bruce Rock be made available by the State Hotels Department for the local people to take over on a community hotel basis. Three suggestions were made. The third suggestion would not be strictly in accord with the wishes of the people, but it was regarded as a step that could be taken to meet their wishes in some degree while the bigger project was being carried out.

The Minister for Justice: They condemn the hotel and then want to take it over.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister should wait until I have finished my remarks.

Mr. Thorn: They want to make a hotel of it.

The Minister for Lands: They would want it for nothing, too.



Mr. PERKINS: They suggest raising the necessary capital to buy the hotel straight-out from the department and convert it into a community hotel.

Mr. Thorn: There's the reply to the Minister for Lands.

Mr. PERKINS: If the Government is not prepared to sell the hotel, the second suggestion was that it be leased by the department to a local co-operative company at an appropriate annual rental for the use of the building and fittings.

Mr. Mann: Nothing wrong with that!

Mr. PERKINS: If the Government is not prepared to accede to either of those requests, then the people ask that the department should approve of a local advisory committee being formed, consisting of representatives of the local authorities and other representative citizens, to act as a liaison between the people of the district and the local management of the hotel, as well as the general management of the State Hotels Department.

The Minister for Justice: The accusation generally is that the hotel is mismanaged?

Mr. Thorn: Why is the Minister not satisfied with the hon. member's statement?

Mr. PERKINS: None of the requests has yet been agreed to by the department. I do not know whether the last word has been said by the department, but the letter in reply did not necessarily imply that the requests had been finally refused. I have brought the motion before the House on behalf of my electorate in order to give members an opportunity to voice their opinions on the principle underlying the motion, and I have no doubt that if the general body of opinion in this House is favourable to the principle, the Government might take a very different view of its attitude to the requests of the local people as compared with what could be expected if the majority of opinion in the House were hostile.

The actual proposal for setting up a local co-operative company provides for the issuing of £1 voting shares; that is to say, these shares would be issued at their face value of £1. Any resident of the district could take up shares purely for the purpose of enabling the holder to have a voice in the management and control of the co-operative company. The money subscribed would be very useful as part of the capital of the

company, but the primary purpose would be not to obtain the actual capital but rather to obtain a body of shareholders to exercise the final control over the company. A similar principle has been adopted in other cases. Probably the issue of such shares would not exceed 500 or 600, but the issue could be varied indefinitely, in order to meet the wishes of the people who desired a voice in the management of the company. The balance of the capital, it was proposed, should be raised by the issue of debentures carrying a maximum rate of interest, and the bulk of the capital would be raised by these means.

Mr. Watts: What do you mean by a maximum rate of interest?

Mr. PERKINS: In any co-operative company, it is usual to limit the rate of interest or dividend to be paid on shares or debentures, because the principle of the co-operative company is that the returns obtained from its activities should go back into the company for the welfare of those concerned rather than be paid out in the shape of exorbitant returns on the capital subscribed. The idea is to make a maximum rate, but if sufficient profit were not earned, the maximum rate could not be paid. If the business were prosperous, however, it was not desired that any very fat return should go to the debenture holders. Any additional capital required, it was considered, could be raised by an ordinary bank overdraft, perhaps with the Rural and Industries Bank, in order not to take the business entirely away from the Government.

The Minister for Lands: That is very decent of you, I think.

Mr. PERKINS: So far, the Government has not agreed to any of those proposals. But we are hopeful that if the members of this House state that they endorse the principle set out in the motion, the Government may look favourably on the proposal. I think I should state some reasons why members should support this general policy. First of all, it does not abate in any shape or form the principle of community ownership. At present, these State hotels are owned by the community of Western Australia as a whole. The proposal is to transfer the ownership of part of the assets of the Government in the shape of State hotels, or this one particular State hotel, from the

community of the State as a whole to the local community, which is using the asset and providing the profits.

The Minister for Mines: Would you like that principle to apply to the railways?

Mr. PERKINS: The railways are in a very different category. It is not possible to divide the railways into units, whereas hotels are naturally divided into units, and few people outside the district involved have any interest in a local hotel. On the other hand, in regard to a utility such as the railways, the interest is one that is spread over the State. That is an important point, because the interest in a State hotel is definitely restricted to the particular area that hotel is serving and has quite a limited range around the centre. It is also considered that by bringing the control right back to the spot where the business is taking place, greater efficiency in the control of the enterprise will be achieved. In saying that, I do not mean to make any reflection on the efficiency of the State Hotels Department as a whole, or on the efficiency of the local manager of a State hotel.

Mr. Thorn: That would not be hard to do.

Mr. PERKINS: It is only natural, however, that where the whole management is localised, there will be a greater chance of the maximum efficiency being achieved. Naturally, conditions vary greatly from one district to another, and it is most unlikely that the central management of the State hotels, in Perth, will be fully conversant with the differences which exist between a hotel such as the one at Bruce Rock and that, say, at Dwellingup in the timber area, or Gwalia in the Goldfields area. I am afraid that in any Government department a certain amount of rigidity is unavoidable, and in those circumstances it means that where changes in policy might be effected very quickly where the management is purely local, in order to meet rapidly changing conditions, in the case of a concern such as a local State hotel controlled by a central Government department, a very much longer time is required to effect changes. Also, in regard to a local co-operative concern, where the local people can see that each and every one has a very great interest in the efficient and good management of the concern, all of them act as policemen, in some shape or

form, in seeing that efficient management and proper conduct of the hotel are achieved.

Under the present set-up, if any of the local people are dissatisfied with the management and general conduct of a State hotel and make a complaint to the central department, the way in which such a complaint is received is not one that makes those people anxious to repeat their advice. That was one of the reasons why the third suggestion of a local advisory committee was made to cover the interim period while a change of ownership was effected: To enable the local people to make their suggestions through a recognised local body and avoid any suggestion of pinpricking on the part of local people at the management of the local concern.

I do not think I need labour that point, because we have had a similar experience in many other concerns. One could indicate numerous departments where management on the spot is more flexible and satisfactory than management from a very great distance away; in fact, in our co-operative organisations in Western Australia generally, it has been found desirable to have the local units under local boards of management entirely responsible to their own shareholders on the spot, with a very loosely-knit co-ordinating body in the shape of the co-operative federation over all.

The point I particularly want to make is that the final responsibility must rest with the management on the spot. That is something which cannot obtain in any Government department. I know that it is absolutely impossible, because in that instance we are dealing with public money and there must be proper supervision, and it is absolutely inevitable that the result must be a central department in which rigidity such as I have mentioned before is very evident. I do not think any blame need be attached to the manager of the department for such rigidity because, by the nature of things, it is inherent in the Government concern. If the Government agrees to the proposals, whatever profits are earned after interest on the share capital and debentures and bank overdraft has been met will be used for the provision of local amenities of one kind or another.

The Minister for Justice: Will you not have a sinking fund?

Mr. PERKINS: That was not necessarily contemplated, so long as proper depreciation is allowed. That, however, is something which can be decided as experience dictates. I mentioned earlier that the local hotel was regarded by local people as being totally unsatisfactory to serve the needs of the district at present.

Mr. Triat: Private hotels also are regarded as unsatisfactory.

Mr. PERKINS: Some are; but some are much more satisfactory than State hotels. They vary, of course. The proposal is that the profits should be used for various kinds of amenities. It is suggested that very considerable alterations will be necessary to the local hotel. A great amount of additional capital will be required, besides what is necessary to purchase the building from the State Hotels Department, to provide for those extensions. It is proposed to provide, as part of the building—not necessarily anywhere near the bar—suitable women's rest-rooms, writing-rooms and lounges, not necessarily for drinking in. There will also be need for a great increase in the lounge accommodation generally—the lounge usually associated with the bar trade—and a general re-organisation and extension of the premises.

The Minister for Justice: The hotel is really too small for the district?

Mr. PERKINS: Probably it is. In effect, the facilities which it is aimed to provide by this local co-operative venture are the kind of facilities which are usually associated with a club. The difference is that in this case the facilities will be available to everyone and not just to the members who happen to have subscribed the capital to the concern or, using the analogy of a club, the club members. As a matter of fact, the question of a club has been considered, but it should be realised that if the same kind of facilities were included in a community hotel as are usually associated with a club, people would secure nearly all the benefits of such facilities with the additional benefit that they would be available to everyone. That is a very important point in a country district, because obviously in such a district visitors to the town and people passing through, as well as residents from outlying districts, need such facilities. I am very much afraid, however, that it would be a

very difficult matter indeed to get any private concern to provide them.

The idea in this instance is to use the profits normally associated with the hotel business to provide and subsidise such amenities. It might be possible as time went on if the efficiency of management which is aimed at were achieved and very good profits were obtained from the bar trade and the house part of the hotel, for other amenities to be introduced as well. It is a very desirable principle to further because, when all is said and done, whatever profits are earned are gained from the local people, and it seems quite the proper procedure to put those profits back into facilities for the people in the district. I hope it is a principle that members in this House will support. I do not know very fully the reason for the lack of enthusiasm on the part of the State Hotels Department with regard to this proposal, but I understand that the department views with some disfavour the loss of revenue. I would point out, however, that if the change were agreed to, it would not be the absolute loser of that revenue. In the first place, the State hotels at present contribute nothing to local government rates.

The local road boards have to provide all the facilities—roads and other services—that make it possible for an hotel to operate. In districts where private hotels exist they pay a large amount to the local authorities in rates, while the State hotels pay nothing. Therefore if the State hotels were transferred and became local community hotels they would be liable to pay rates and would meet their share of local government expenses. When run as community hotels they would pay a large amount into revenue by way of company tax. As far as I can judge from the accounts of the State hotels, as presented to us by the Auditor General, if those hotels were run as private trading concerns they would contribute more to Consolidated Revenue than they now do by way of profits.

The Minister for Justice: No.

Mr. PERKINS: I am told that they pay no license fees.

Mr. Mann: They do not pay rates or taxes.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not say what the State hotels may have done in the past but I notice, from the Auditor General's

report, that £180,000 has been paid into Consolidated Revenue since the State Hotels started. For the year ending the 30th June, 1945, the net profit was only £2,179, after meeting interest on capital, ordinary depreciation and a small sinking fund. The total amount for depreciation and sinking fund seems to come to only £5,847 for the whole of the seven State Hotels.

Mr. Thorn: The Government would get that for the leases.

Mr. PERKINS: The net profit is only £2,179 on seven State Hotels.

Mr. Mann: The hotel at Corrigin should show a profit of £2,000 at least.

Mr. PERKINS: Members can see that, from a financial point of view, these hotels are much less than a goldmine. It is more than possible that if the State hotels were transferred to private ownership, as distinct from local co-operative ownership, they would return more to Consolidated Revenue by way of taxation, licensing fees and ordinary local government rates and taxes, than they now do by paying their profits into Consolidated Revenue.

The Minister for Justice: You have not taken into consideration the difference in the accounting systems, as between Government and private enterprise.

Mr. Abbott: That of private enterprise is more accurate.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know what the differences in the accounting systems are, but we have presented for our information a trading and profit and loss account for the year ended the 30th June, 1945, certified by the Auditor General. If the Minister now tells us that that report is not correct, he is making a very serious statement.

The Minister for Justice: If you do not know, I will tell you the difference later.

Mr. PERKINS: Apparently over the years £180,000 has been paid into Consolidated Revenue, but the best that the seven State hotels could do was to provide £2,179 last year and £2,941 the previous year, which are very small amounts when compared with the total capital that is tied up in them. I have looked at the Act governing State trading concerns and I notice that in Section 10 it is provided that an amount shall be paid into Consolidated Revenue, which is

supposed to be roughly equivalent to the taxation that would have been paid by private enterprise. I cannot understand how it is arrived at, but the Minister may be able to give us some information when speaking on the motion. It appears to me that the State Hotels are something less than a goldmine to the Government and if it does intend to refuse this request from the local community I do not think it is justified in doing so on purely financial grounds, or even that it is justified in expressing opposition.

I do not wish to assume that the Government intends to refuse the request. In addition, there is the added incentive for the local people to take over State hotels because, as they are now run, they do not provide much help for district activities. Where privately-owned hotels exist, when money is required for any worthy purpose in the district, the first request is usually to the local hotelkeeper to provide some of the cash necessary in order to carry out whatever work the people running the effort have in mind. I believe hotelkeepers generally are fairly generous in the help that they make available. State hotels are in an entirely different category and I do not think the local communities bother to go to them for such help. There may be some cases where help has been given by them, but I know of no great help given by State hotels to local district activities.

The principle of community hotels, owned by local co-operative concerns, is by no means new. There is a flourishing example in this State already at Cunderdin, where the hotel was taken over by the community not long ago.

The Minister for Justice: It could not help flourishing, no matter who ran it.

Mr. PERKINS: I was in that hotel recently, and the standard of management achieved there is very good indeed and the work being done is very satisfactory.

The Minister for Works: Hear, hear!

Mr. PERKINS: I hear the Minister for Works applauding that statement. That hotel is in his electorate, and I have no doubt he knows a lot about it and can support my praise for what has been done there. The example of Cunderdin is firing the imagination of people in many other districts.

The Minister for Justice: If you asked Mr. Connolly he would probably tell you that it helped him considerably.

Mr. PERKINS: I hope the Minister will elaborate on his statement when he is speaking.

The Minister for Justice: What is peculiar about it?

Mr. Thorn: If it helped Mr. Connolly it would help the Government.

Mr. PERKINS: I think Mr. Connolly helped the people of Cunderdin in the taking over of that hotel. There are examples of community hotels in other States, and for many years there has been a community hotel at Renmark in South Australia. I have no doubt that some members of this House have visited that hotel. There are various other community hotels in the Eastern States, all of which, as far as I know, are giving entire satisfaction to the districts they serve.

Mr. Thorn: There is one at Barmera.

Mr. PERKINS: The member for Toodyay seems to have some knowledge of this subject also, and it appears to bear out my remarks. Wherever community hotels, run by local co-operative companies, have been started, they have met with the approval of the district and of the travelling public. That being so, it is only natural that more and more local communities will desire to provide that kind of service in their own districts. In the case of private licensees it is a matter of negotiation between the licensee and the people of the district. If the licensee is non-co-operative or if any trouble arises the Licensing Board is there, I take it, to iron out the difficulties, but I do not wish to deal with that phase of the question. This motion deals purely with the policy of the State Government.

The Minister for Justice: We are not arguing against community hotels.

Mr. PERKINS: I am pleased to hear that, because it is practically the statement that I desired to get from the Government. If it agrees to the principle and is prepared to be helpful wherever such requests arise in districts served by State hotels—because it is in such districts that the Government is most intimately concerned—I have no doubt that everything can be done by negotiation between the communities and the State Government.

The Minister for Justice: A State hotel is a community hotel.

Mr. PERKINS: Perhaps, but the objective is to transfer the hotel from the community as a whole to the community in that particular district. In my opinion the success of the community hotel principle has been entirely due to the fact that interest is kept up through the local people having the management in their own hands, and therefore having every incentive to make the business a success. Throughout my speech I have tried to avoid any unfair criticism of the State Hotels Department. I know the difficulties that have confronted that department, especially during the war years, but by reason of the rigidity of Government administration it is inevitable that such a department is unsuited to the conducting of an hotel business, which requires flexibility in its management if the best service is to be given and the best financial return obtained.

Mr. Cross: Why do you not want to take over badly run private hotels?

Mr. PERKINS: The member for Canning is introducing a different principle. If he wishes to arrange for badly run private hotels to be taken over, he is at liberty to make whatever arrangements are necessary.

Mr. Thorn: He will probably be in a position to take over a few himself, in the near future.

Mr. PERKINS: The people in the districts where State hotels are located may be prepared to put up the necessary cash to start co-operative concerns and take over the hotels and in that case my point is that the State Government should certainly not put any obstacles in their way and should, if possible, adopt a policy that would help such local communities to achieve that desirable end.

Mr. Watts: There is no badly run hotel at Bruce Rock to take over.

Mr. PERKINS: The State hotel has a monopoly in that instance. If the wishes of the people are not met in the case of a local community which desires to take over a State hotel the Government will be faced with the position that the money will be available with which to finance a co-operative concern. If the community in question does not take over the hotel that is already there it is inevitable that applica-

tions will be made to the Licensing Court for a new license, either by way of a license for a new community hotel in the district or a license for a club to provide the facilities to which I have referred. Personally I would rather that some amicable arrangement could be arrived at between the local community and the State Hotels Department. I am afraid that if any fresh license is granted and a new building is put up in which the local people have an immediate concern, the Government establishment may be left in an unfortunate position.

Mr. Watts: That is almost a certainty.

Mr. PERKINS: I have the further suspicion that the Government will realise the fact, and that all obstacles possible will be put in the way of any further license being granted by the Licensing Court.

Mr. Thorn: There is no doubt about that.

Mr. PERKINS: I hope that will not be the position. I can imagine the Government being faced with a proposal to start a new concern in opposition to the one it has already got.

Mr. Cross: You would not want two hotels at Tammin.

Mr. PERKINS: There is no State hotel there. It is very much better that an amicable arrangement should be arrived at between the local people concerned and the State Hotels Department than that a disagreement should be started between them and finally between the people concerned and the Government. The essential thing about the motion is the principle involved. The case that I have presented tonight deals with one district, Bruce Rock. The situation could just as readily arise in any of the other six districts served by the State Hotels Department. I am concerned that the House should carry the motion which is to the effect that the State Government should help and not hinder any satisfactory proposals that are put forward by local communities to take over State hotels in those districts where they operate. I have no knowledge of what is happening in any other area but my own. If the House supports the motion I have no doubt it will give the Government a good idea of what public opinion stands for in this State. If assistance can be rendered to the district concerned I have

no doubt that the position will prove to be quite satisfactory so far as Government establishments are concerned, and that the steps taken will provide a more satisfactory service to the people of the district.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

## MOTION—PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE.

*As to Legislation for Appointing.*

MR. MANN (Beverley) [5.50]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce legislation for the appointment of a Public Works Standing Committee representative of both Houses of Parliament, but on which the number of members of the Legislative Assembly shall be greater than the number of members of the Legislative Council, so that no public work to cost more than £30,000 shall be authorised unless it has first been investigated by such standing committee.

I will follow the same procedure as I did last year when I moved a similar motion, except that the first motion referred to the sum of £50,000 instead of, as in this case, £30,000. I do not intend to cover all the ground I covered before, but would refer to the Minister's reply to my speech on the previous occasion. It was the nature of that reply which induced me to raise this question again. If he had roundly condemned the proposal and said it was entirely useless, there is little doubt I would have refrained from re-opening the question. His reply was to the effect that there might be some good case in support of the motion, but he respectfully suggested that, support of it, I did not present to the House any case for consideration. He went on to say that the hon. member had told the House that under the present system the control of public works was in the hands of the Cabinet or the Government, and that that was quite true and desirable.

I put this to the Minister for Works that there is no desire, as expressed in the motion, to embarrass the Government in any way or to restrict it in its work. The whole idea, which in principle is operating throughout Australia, in Commonwealth circles and in other State Parliaments, is that there shall be a Public Works Committee appointed by Parliament to investigate the expenditure of money. If after the investigation the

Government still desires to spend the money it can do so. The committee would have no control over Parliament or the Government in that direction. It would merely act as an advisory body, informing Parliament as to how the money should be spent.

Mr. Cross: Do you not think the Government has already the necessary expert advisers?

Mr. MANN: If we were to adopt the hon. member's idea I should say we ought to abolish Parliament. Some day members on the opposite side of the Chamber will be sitting on these benches.

Mr. Fox: Never!

Mr. MANN: Let us assume that they do so in 10 or 15 years' time; the day will come when the change will occur. When members opposite are sitting on this side of the House they may then say, "Of what use is the Opposition?" His Majesty's Opposition is just as important as is His Majesty's Government. If the idea of the member for Canning is carried out, let us alter the whole constitution of Parliament. Let us have purely a Government bench and no Opposition. That is what is meant by his interjection.

Mr. Cross: Surely you would not put your opinion against that of expert engineers.

Mr. MANN: The committee would not do that. It would call upon the experts to give advice so that the House itself might know all about any measure that was brought before it, the full details concerning any expenditure involving a sum greater than £30,000. A layman may have just as much knowledge of a particular subject, apart from the technicalities associated with it, as an expert and his views may be of some benefit to the House and the public.

Mr. Withers: You would not create another board, would you?

Mr. MANN: A body of men would be appointed to the committee and would be paid for the work they did. The member for Perth has admitted that a similar committee appointed by the Commonwealth Parliament was the means of saving millions of pounds to the taxpayers of Australia, irrespective of what Government was in office.

Mr. Doney: The same thing applies in South Australia.

Mr. MANN: I ask the Minister for Works why he would not agree to the proposal. It

does not concern past operations and there will be nothing for him to be ashamed of. The intention is to spend several millions of pounds on a water supply scheme, on the Fremantle harbour, and possibly on the uniform gauge between Western and Eastern Australia. If the State is to progress, there must be money to finance these big undertakings. I put it to the House candidly, even though the Government has had a long period of office, that this side of the House is at least as important as is the Government side.

Mr. Watts: It is just as responsible to the electors.

Mr. MANN: And to the country.

The Minister for Justice: My experience is that Governments will not spend enough money.

Mr. MANN: I quite agree. That is a helpful interjection. I put it to the Minister that the money should be spent wisely.

The Minister for Justice: I think it is.

Mr. MANN: Time will tell whether the Wundowie scheme will be another loss to the State or not. The information I have is that that scheme is by no means the commercial success we are led to believe it is.

The Minister for Works: You should not take Mr. Baxter, M.L.C., seriously.

Mr. MANN: I do not worry about him. I have had information from fairly sound experts that the Wundowie scheme may crash.

The Minister for Works: Duncan Raine is not your expert?

Mr. MANN: The same remarks are said to apply to the alunite deposits at Lake Campion. I put it to the Minister; what objection has he to raise to the appointment of the suggested committee? He said that I had put up the case wrongly because I referred to bureaucrats in the Civil Service. If that is so, I withdraw that remark. We in this House were elected by the people of the country to represent them in Parliament, either in Opposition or on the Treasury bench, and we as well as the public are entitled to know the facts. I do not see why any objection should be raised to this proposal. The member for Perth has had a long experience in the Commonwealth Parliament and he has referred to the success which has followed the appointment of a

similar committee there. If it is a good thing for the Commonwealth Parliament to adopt such a policy, it should be good enough for the Government of this State. This is not a political bogey that I am putting up. It does not in any way interfere with the administration by the Government.

Whenever Bills are brought before Parliament involving an expenditure of over £30,000 they should be examined by members of the suggested committee, which would be representative of both sides of the House, and which would make a thorough investigation and report to the House. We know what the procedure is. The Minister concerned brings down a Bill for the construction of some great water scheme. No doubt some member on this side of the House will secure the adjournment of the debate for three or four days. The Minister will have his experts to advise him, whereas we on this side of the House have not the faintest idea what it all means. No-one is able to grasp a big question of that sort in a few hours or even a few days. That is very unjust to this side of the House as well as to the people of the State who have to find the money. I see no reason why this policy should not be adopted so that Parliament may know exactly how large sums of money are being spent. It would be of great use to the House to know that by a majority decision the committee found that the money was not being wisely spent, or to know what the views of a minority on the committee might be. Last session the member for West Perth had the idea that this proposal would curtail Government expenditure. It would do nothing of the sort.

The Minister for Works: It would slow it down.

Mr. MANN: Why? The committee would be sitting throughout the whole year and while Parliament was not in session. The Minister would know his programme 12 months ahead and what his expenditure would be. The committee would be informed accordingly, so that when Parliament assembled the necessary Bills would pass the House much faster than they do now. If we stonewalled the Bills, which we should do very often—

Mr. Watts: But do not.

Mr. MANN: —but do not, necessarily the measures would be delayed. When the old

Labour Government was in Opposition it stonewalled every measure from start to finish.

Mr. Watts: The old Opposition.

Mr. MANN: Yes. I again ask the Minister to give the motion the consideration which I feel it deserves. I have tried to point out that he himself saw many virtues in the proposal when it was before the House previously; and, as I have been so polite to him, I sincerely hope he will reconsider his decision and agree to the appointment of the committee.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

### MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

*To Disallow Angle-Parking Regulation.*

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [6.2]: I move—

That new regulation No. 106A, made under the Traffic Act, 1919-1941, published in "The Government Gazette" of the 5th April, 1946, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 30th July, 1946, be and is hereby disallowed.

Before the publishing of the regulation the position was that in respect of vehicular traffic in St. George's-terrace we had what was known as, I think, parallel parking, that is to say, parking parallel with the kerbing. What is required under this new regulation is that we should continue with the angle parking which is now observed in the terrace. I do not wish it to be thought that, right or wrong, we should disallow the regulation forthwith. Far from it! What I really desire is that the debate should elicit information enabling us to balance the benefits against the disabilities, so that we may arrive at a conclusion upon the merits of the method. I am hopeful, naturally, that the Minister will in reply enumerate the benefits that are supposed to attach to this new method and that he will—I think he can; I am referring to accidents—give us data concerning a comparison of the accidents under the parallel parking and the accidents which are occurring today under the new method.

If it can be shown that angle-parking, as allowed under the new regulation, results in such additional convenience and benefit as might be expected to outweigh the increased risks and the hugely increased



number of accidents, let the regulation stand. But if the contrary be shown, then I certainly think we should disallow the regulation and revert to parallel parking until such time as we devise some method as safe as, or safer, as well as more economical of space, than was parallel parking. It is generally conceded that those who park on the angle run very serious risks indeed as they back out with the object of joining in the general swim of passing traffic. The driver of the parked car has generally a partially obstructed—sometimes for that matter, a completely obstructed—view of the position both to the right and left of him, and certainly no view at all, it might properly be said, from the rear of his car, which is the point where danger threatens him.

The Minister for Justice: Space for parking is becoming exceedingly limited.

Mr. DONEY: That is so. I quite realise the reasons that led up to the change. I have not had any conversation with those in authority on the matter, but am assuming that car-owners who occupy offices in the terrace experienced considerable inconvenience because of the congestion at certain points. I would presume, of course, that they lodged a complaint with the traffic Branch of the Police Department and that the department, anxious to oblige, brought down the new regulation to which I am taking exception. I would like to point out, too, that on the occasion when the driver of a car is moving out from the parking area, he has, in addition to his own judgment, to rely upon the presence of mind, driving ability, alertness and—this would be of some consequence—the sobriety of the driver in the passing vehicle. The man in the passing vehicle would be to the rear of the man in the parked area, and might be driving at any old speed.

The Minister for Justice: There has been no accident through that parking up to date.

Mr. DONEY: I am afraid the Minister is in error.

Mr. Seward: I saw one the other day.

Mr. DONEY: I would be extremely glad to learn from some official source that the Minister is correct, but he is apparently in error in thinking that the new method is entirely successful. The consensus of opinion

on the part of car users who pass along the terrace is that the new method is an absolute menace to safety not only when cars are driven out from the kerb but also which cars are passing down the general stream of traffic along the terrace. I do not know where the Minister obtained his information; but if it is correct I might just as well have not brought forward my motion.

The Minister for Justice: I do not know of any accidents.

Mr. Cross: Very few accidents occur in the city proper.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. DONEY: Members who probably have not made even the investigation which I have into the matter obviously know a great deal more about it!

The Minister for Works: How does that come about?

The Minister for Justice: It is rather strange.

Mr. DONEY: It obviously has come about. How it happened I cannot say. I do not know whether the present system gives complete satisfaction to the members of the Police Force doing duty in the terrace, but I believe nevertheless that it does not. There have been very frequent accidents.

The Minister for Justice: They must have been minor ones.

Mr. DONEY: I did not say they were fatal.

Mr. Watts: Is the Minister going to wait for a fatal accident before giving this question consideration?

The Minister for Justice: Not necessarily, but you will always have accidents wherever you are.

Mr. DONEY: That is all that can be said for the innovation. I know there is a saving of space by the adoption of this new method.

The Minister for Works: So far as I am aware, no one has been injured during the period this parking has been in operation.

Mr. DONEY: I have heard references to minor accidents leading probably to a few bruises to persons, but certainly to serious damage to cars. Usually at the commencement of an innovation of this kind people exercise more care than they are likely to use a little later when they become accus-

tomed to the conditions. It has been my experience, passing up and down the terrace, that cars move along there no slower than they do on ordinary roads. I find they frequently move at a great speed.

The Minister for Justice: They do not move nearly as quickly as they do in Melbourne.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know whether Melbourne is the only other town where angle-parking prevails; but whether that be so or not I am aware that Melbourne has had it some two or three years. This would lead one to assume that the system must be reasonably successful. Anyhow, the saving in space is nothing great. I believe that where previously three cars could park when parallel to the pavement—one car behind the other—under the present arrangements four cars now park where three did before. This point must also be taken into consideration, that some cars and trucks abut into the roadway to the extent of 15 or 20 feet. The Minister will admit that that means a heavy restriction upon the space for traffic in the terrace, and certainly that cannot do any good. It might be that the streets in Melbourne are wider than those here, although I am not prepared to say that that is so. I could easily have gone to the traffic branch of the Police Department and received from it the information which I am seeking, but that information would have been given to me alone. I want to give to the public the benefit of the publicity that comes from airing a matter of this kind in Parliament. I hope the Minister when he replies will endeavour to give the House a comparison of accidents, be they big or small, under the old method of parking and under the new, together with a list of the benefits supposed to ensue from the method now in operation.

The Minister for Works: This is an experiment.

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

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [7.30]: I second the motion. In my view the regulation which has been imposed and which the hon. member seeks to disallow has converted the finest thoroughfare—in fact the only really fine thoroughfare—in the City of Perth into a street which is little better than Hay-street, which is notoriously narrow and unsatisfactory from the point of

view of traffic. Many of the motor vehicles which are now parked at an angle are up to 20ft. long and they absorb that much of St. George's Terrace on the side on which they are parked. If, on the other side—as is the case in some portions of the roadway—there is a similar vehicle, the width left for the very considerable traffic is very small indeed. It is alleged, I have no doubt, that the regulation was introduced in order that more vehicles might be parked in St. George's Terrace and that aim, I have no doubt, has been achieved; because, as the hon. member pointed out, it is possible to park four cars or thereabouts where previously three were parked. But it has been done at such a cost, so far as the serviceability of the road is concerned and from the point of view of increasing danger both to those who travel in vehicles and those who walk, that it distinctly has not been justified.

It is extremely difficult for a person who has parked his car to remove it. He has to reverse into the oncoming stream of traffic without being able to give any indication of his intentions until he is in that stream of traffic, and, worst of all, without being able to see what he is doing. He cannot see anything. He is on the right-hand side of the vehicle and has to go backward. The visibility is only on one side and he is simply inviting trouble if there is the slightest amount of negligence or lack of caution on the part of anybody coming down the street behind him. We know from bitter experience that one cannot always expect the highest degree of caution from other people. One very often imagines that one is travelling in a cautious manner—and probably one is—but the other fellow can bring a driver into difficulty if he is in the slightest degree negligent.

I do not think we are justified—and in this respect I am much firmer than the member for Williams-Narrogin—in leaving this regulation in its present form because I am convinced that it will not be very long before there will be some serious accident in consequence of it. I know that there is a considerable demand for the parking of vehicles in the centre of the city, and I know perfectly well that it is most inconvenient to have to park a vehicle perhaps one-third or even one-half a mile away from the place to which one wants to go, particularly if the weather be inclement and

particularly if one has to give transport to people who are in any way old or infirm. Presumably in order to make some contribution towards the relief of that difficulty, this regulation was brought into operation. But it is not a deserving regulation. The problem should be tackled in a city such as Perth, in which the traffic will from now on undoubtedly steadily increase, in quite another manner.

In other cities of the world, far more crowded and far more thickly populated than this one, means have been found to cope with the necessity for the parking of vehicles within a reasonable distance of where people who use them wish to go, by the provision of parking areas—not all of them on the ground. In many cities of the world buildings have been acquired for the purpose and a number of floors have been available for which large lifts have been provided; and on these floors the vehicles are safely parked, are easily accessible, and are easily brought back to the street level by the mechanical means which are supplied. I venture the suggestion that there should be an investigation into ways and means of achieving similar desirable results in Perth, where there is more opportunity so far as space is concerned than there would be in many of those cities to which I have referred.

The promulgation of this regulation is simply tinkering with a problem which deserves a good deal more attention. It is a regulation which so far from really achieving any desirable objective is quite likely to occasion loss of life and certainly damage to property before very long. However many extra vehicles it may provide parking space for, it is only a drop in the bucket so far as the solution of the problem which has been upon us and is coming more strongly upon us as traffic increases—and it will increase—is concerned. Speaking for myself, I recommend this House to disallow the regulation; and I ask that it be disallowed as an indication to the Traffic Department and to the Government that this problem should be tackled in quite another way in order to find a solution which will be a far greater contribution to the settlement of the problem and will stand for many years to come; because I am convinced that by inquiry and thought, that can be brought about.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [7.36]: There are some surprising factors with regard to this motion. In the first place it was introduced by a country member.

**Mr. Watts**: What has that to do with it? We have to drive about the city as much as you do.

**Mr. CROSS**: The hon. member who introduced the motion, so far as I know, has never driven a car in his life.

**Mr. Doney**: It is hardly worth while denying that, I suppose, but it happens not to be correct.

**Mr. CROSS**: And he had the effrontery to come here and say that he had not consulted the Traffic Department and had no details and no knowledge of the accidents that had happened in the city.

**Mr. Doney**: That is quite right.

**Mr. CROSS**: I think the hon. member would be better advised to look after the problems of the city of Narrogin.

**Mr. Doney**: I think you might be better advised to mind your own business!

**Mr. CROSS**: In any case, angle-parking has only been in operation a matter of a few weeks in Perth, and is in the nature of an experiment.

**Mr. Watts**: Who told you?

**Mr. CROSS**: No-one will say that the whole problem of parking in the city is not due for overhaul. As the member for Williams-Narrogin admitted, angle-parking will permit of 33 per cent. more cars being parked in the Terrace.

**Mr. Doney**: No, 25 per cent.

**Mr. CROSS**: The hon. member said that four cars could be parked now where three could be parked before, which means an increase of 33 per cent.—or did when I went to school.

**Mr. Doney**: For once you are right; I concede you that point.

**Mr. CROSS**: There are some distinct advantages to be gained from angle-parking in Perth. When speaking about this motion today, an insurance manager told me that since angle-parking had come into operation there had been a sharp drop in the number of claims for minor accidents in the city. What happened when we had parallel parking—and everyone knows it—is that a man would pull in and someone

would come along and probably bash in his wing or radiator, and the unfortunate victim would find, when he returned to his car that the party who had done the damage had gone, and it was useless reporting the matter to the police. Now a motorist can get in to the kerb and get out, and that is something he could not do before. That is one advantage. If the hon. member would go to the trouble of going to the Police Department, where a chart is kept showing every fatal accident in the last ten years, he would find that there have been very few fatal accidents in the city area.

Mr. Doney: No-one is disputing that.

Mr. CROSS: In the narrowest street of all, Hay-street, where there is a tramline, there are hardly any accidents.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There is only one-way traffic in Hay-street.

Mr. CROSS: That only operates between Pier-street and Milligan-street. Members can see trucks parked two out from the north kerb of Hay-street, between King-street and Milligan-street, any day of the week. Those trucks hold up the traffic. I am not advocating angle-parking in Hay-street.

Mr. Watts: It is a wonder.

Mr. CROSS: I think there are advantages in it.

Mr. Watts: In Hay-street?

Mr. CROSS: Not in Hay-street. If the Leader of the Opposition would listen carefully to what I say—

Mr. Doney: No-one ever does that.

Mr. CROSS: The truth is that something had to be done immediately. I can see no good in this motion, particularly when it comes from a member who admitted that he had made no inquiries from the proper authorities. Those authorities had sent men to every city in Australia to see their traffic problems in order to make a genuine attempt to give immediate amelioration to our conditions. If the hon. member had moved for a Select Committee to go into the whole question of parking for the present and the future of this city, to see what could be done, and if some bus stands could be moved altogether from the city streets to a central parking station, as has been done in other modern cities, he would have done

some good. As was indicated by the Leader of the Opposition, when he tried to bolster up the weak case put forward by the member for Williams-Narrogin, the time is overdue for a thorough inquiry into this matter with a view to solving these traffic problems. The matter of parking, whether parallel or angle parking, is one of the greatest problems that has to be faced by the Traffic Department. In my opinion, there will have to be more than one parking station for buses, and it will not want to be on the streets. There will have to be general parking places for cars, and they will not want to be on the streets.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

The Minister for Works: There is considerable doubt as to whether a Government should provide parking facilities for privately-owned motor vehicles.

Mr. CROSS: They do not do it in other cities of the world. This is a job that the municipal council could tackle, as it comes well within its province. There are very few vacant spaces in the city area. It might be necessary to make provision for parking cars on roof tops, or underground. It would be possible to resume portion of the Government gardens, and shift the flowers further down.

Mr. Thorn: What about King's Park?

The Minister for Works: No chance!

Mr. CROSS: The member for Williams-Narrogin should have moved for a comprehensive inquiry to deal with traffic problems—and there are other questions relative to parking. At the alley-way leading to Boan's in Murray-street, one can see, any day, the whole of the traffic in the street held up while a truck backs out and two or three more go in. These trucks hold up the trams and all other traffic. This is a matter for a committee to deal with. The motion brought forward is ridiculous in the extreme, and I intend to oppose it.

On motion by the Minister for Works, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [7.48] in moving the second reading said: This very small Bill is to amend Section 17 of the

Electoral Act, and that section provides for the qualification of electors. The Bill does not propose to interfere with the qualifications as to age, naturalisation, or how long a person has lived in Western Australia, or some other aspects of the section, but it does propose to amend paragraph (c) of Subsection (1), which provides that a person, who has lived in the district for which he claims to be enrolled, for a continuous period of one month immediately preceding the date of his claim, shall be entitled, subject to the provisions of the Act, to be enrolled as an elector, and when enrolled, and so long as he continues to live in the district for which he is enrolled, to vote at any polling place in the district at the election of a member of the Legislative Assembly for that district.

So that an elector may claim the right to vote in a district, the Act, as it stands, provides residence for a period of only one month in that district. This Bill proposes to make that one month three months. I have had it in mind for a long time to present a Bill on these lines for the consideration of the House, because it seems to me that the existing state of the law is placing something in the nature of a premium on the itinerant elector. If such an alteration as I now propose to the measure would deprive a voter of his right to vote in another district—the district from which he came—I would in no circumstances propose it without at least making provision for the retention of such vote, but I would point out that the Act already provides that the elector, although he may have left the district for which he was enrolled, is entitled for a period of three months after he has ceased to live in that district, to vote in it.

The Minister for Works: What if his name is struck off the roll in the meantime, as often happens?

Mr. WATTS: It certainly should not happen, and will not happen if the three months' proposal that I now bring before the House becomes the law of the land, because no electoral officer would, in those circumstances, even presume that the elector was not entitled to remain on the roll from which he came, although if the law remained at one month he could assume that at the expiration of that period the elector might be enrolled elsewhere. That is why

I intend to ask, in Committee, that the House consider not accepting the second proposal that is in this Bill; that is to extend the period of three months, to which I have just referred, by the same period of two months as I wish to extend the one month in order—as I thought at the time before giving this matter further consideration—to square up the amendment with the existing law, but it seems to me that there is need for reconsideration of that aspect of the matter, and I am more inclined now to leave the three months in both clauses, unless there can be some sound reason shown why the five months mentioned in the Bill should be incorporated in the Act. It seems to me that residence of one month in a district is simply putting a premium on the itinerant person. One month's residence is not in any way sufficient to give a man or woman, or any other elector—if there be any others—an interest in the district comparable with that which they had in the district from which they came.

The Minister for Justice: The elector could still vote for the district from which he came.

Mr. WATTS: If there is an election intervening within three months of his removal, and that is more satisfactory, because he would have his interest in and knowledge of the district and person or persons who sought to represent it far more in the case of the district he had left than of the district to which he had come.

Mr. Withers: Even if he never went back there.

Mr. WATTS: That does not matter, because if he becomes permanently domiciled in the new residence, at the expiration of three months he becomes an elector of that district, and if an election then intervenes he will record his vote properly and naturally in the district in which he then lives, but in the present circumstances of the law a man can go to a place and be there precisely one month, knowing nothing whatever about the affairs of the district or about the member for the district, and if there are large numbers of such electors they can exercise such an influence on the affairs of that electorate, to the exclusion and extinction of the rights of those who have resided there for years, that there is ample justification for careful consideration of this measure. Of course, after an election has

intervened and within the period of three months which I suggest as the desirable period, such person can go back to the place from which he came and then proceed to have no further interest at all in the district for which he voted and to the election of the representative for which he contributed.

It seems to me, whether or not it is desirable to extend the three months in the latter portion of Section 17 to five months, it is absolutely necessary and extremely desirable in the interests of fair representation and the rights of the permanent residents of the district, or those whose residence is likely to be permanent, that there should be a period of three months and not of one month between the time when an elector shifts into the district and the time when he is entitled to vote for it at an election. For those reasons I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—RAILWAY (HOPETOUN- RAVENSTHORPE) DISCONTINUANCE.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS** (Hon. W. M. Marshall—Murchison) [7.58] in moving the second reading said: In submitting this Bill for the consideration of the House, I would say that it is legislation of a nature that does not inspire one with much enthusiasm.

Mr. Watts: Like flogging a dead horse.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Such Bills always have a depressing effect and I feel that we would be more elated if we were considering a proposal for the authorisation of the construction of a railway, which is an indication of progress and prosperity. I do not think, however, that members will have anything to fear in giving favourable consideration to the measure now being submitted to them, because figures and facts can be produced to show that the pulling up of the Hopetoun-Ravensthorpe railway is justified in the light of the experience that the Commissioner of Railways has had with the running and operation of that railway, at the same time realising that there is a transport service being rendered which is efficient and satisfactory for the time being.

I suggest that the pulling up of this line does not cast any reflection on the Government that decided on its construction.

I point out that this railway is detached from the main railway system, and at the time when it was constructed the present system of railways—the general system of the State—was not extended so far eastward as to be in such close proximity to Ravensthorpe as it is today. Had that been the case when this line was constructed, instead of having a detached railway running from Ravensthorpe to Hopetoun, the Government of the day would have considered the advisability of linking Ravensthorpe with the main system, but I suggest that it would have been far too costly at that stage because the main system had not been extended eastward to the extent that it has been since.

When in 1909 the line was opened for operation, Ravensthorpe gave great promise of becoming a very flourishing and prosperous mining centre. It has equal prospects today, which statement may appear to be rather remarkable inasmuch as the mining activities do not indicate that there are any great prospects for the district. Ravensthorpe is situated in an auriferous belt of country which experience, prospecting, and mining in a small way have shown to be a belt with potentialities for producing much wealth. But metallurgical problems have been the trouble. Gold is an adulterous form of metal. She is one of loose virtue and has no compunction with whom she dwells. So gold is to be found allied to and smugly reposing with all sorts of minerals and base metals—

**The Minister for Works:** Especially base metals.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:—** Some of which are beyond our metallurgists to find a treatment that will divorce gold from her chosen mate. Such a problem was the cause of Ravensthorpe not being as prosperous a district as one might have expected, and gradually the problem began to be appreciated as one almost incapable of solution at the time. With the advance of science, however, there is every possibility that Ravensthorpe will yet come into its own. With the decline of mining in the district, there were equally optimistic individuals who endeavoured to exploit the agricultural pursuits and who gave some patronage to the railway when it was operating.

Mr. Watts: How long has it ceased to operate?

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Since 1935.

Mr. Watts: Then the line has been closed?

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** It was not closed wholly, but as from the 1st April, 1931, it was partially closed. It remained open for traffic for three months of the year to haul superphosphate and wheat. This partial closure continued till 1935. At the 31st December, 1935, it was found that, instead of the line being required to haul wheat and superphosphate for three months of the year, the period necessary to complete this haulage was seven weeks, namely, from the 3rd January to the 23rd February.

About July, 1935, the State Transport Co-ordination Act came into force and this proposition automatically became one for the Transport Board under Section 11 of the Act. Before the partial closure took place in 1930, the then Commissioner of Railways visited Ravenshorpe with a view to finding a way of arresting the mounting deficit on this part of the system. When he decided upon the partial closing of the line, no objection was raised from those engaged in the mining industry or from those following pastoral and agricultural pursuits. The people realised that the line was there to give service and that the value of the patronage was far below the cost of running the railway. I want members clearly to understand that there was and still is no objection by the residents of the district to what has been done; nor has any objection been voiced to the final pulling up of the line.

All the rollingstock and other equipment were removed a considerable time ago, but there are still rails, fishplates and telegraph poles valued at approximately £23,000, and it is estimated that these things can be recovered for a cost of about £8,500. They could be used most readily on the main system, thus avoiding the necessity for incurring capital expenditure for new material, which is in very short supply.

Mr. Withers: Could the railway formation be used as a road later on?

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I do not doubt that it could, but a road transport system has been operating since 1935, which seemingly has been ample to meet the needs of and satisfying to those directly concerned,

for no overtures have been made on the score of inadequacy of the road transport system.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: No ships call at Hopetoun now.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** That is so.

Mr. Hill: Is not Hopetoun finished as a port?

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Ships no longer call there.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** When the Transport Board made its inquiry in 1935, it was quite satisfied that a road transport service, which would be more frequent, would easily cope with all demands and give a more satisfactory service. It inquired, too, into the shipping section which was supplying an outlet for Ravenshorpe by medium of road and rail from the port of Hopetoun. I want to emphasise that point thoroughly. Early in 1938 shipping facilities at the port of Hopetoun ended and they have never been resumed since, as far as I am aware. So the position today is that even if Parliament desired to re-establish the railway system for the people in this district, I am confident it would be more economical by far, and would give the people a much better service, to link Ravenshorpe with the main railway system at, say, Newdegate or some other point perhaps more convenient. It would cost almost as much to reconstruct the Hopetoun jetty, in addition to a complete renewal of the railway system itself, as it would to construct a railway from the nearest siding on our present main railway system.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Hopetoun is a very hazardous port, anyhow.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** That is so. Notwithstanding that we have the advantage of the rural industry side by side with the mining industry, never at any time did the traffic returns equal the cost of maintenance and operation of this particular system. There was a gradually mounting deficit which has now reached the colossal figure of £166,925. I would remind members that the administration and running costs of a railway detached from our main system, such as this railway, is invariably much more costly than any section linked up with our main railway system. That was a factor which had some influence on the colossal de-

feet accumulated on the working of this short system. In order that members may have a clear indication of the impossibility of running the system with any chance of making revenue and expenditure balance, I will quote the figures for the ten years from 1925 to 1935. They are as follows:—

	£
Earnings .. .. .	14,122
Working expenses .. .. .	36,102
Interest .. .. .	49,059

The total loss was £71,039. These figures include the maintenance of the Hopetoun jetty which until 1935 was controlled by the Railway Department. It was then handed over to the Harbour and Lights Department. Before the jetty could be put into commission again, a fairly round sum of capital would be involved. In 1940 a Bill was drafted to discontinue this railway. As far back as 1930 the then Government gave consideration to the desirableness of pulling up the line. In order to show that each Government was very careful about the matter, I point out that the Government of 1930 decided not to entertain the idea at that stage because of the possibility of a revival of mining at Ravensthorpe. The Government of 1940 would not proceed with the pulling up of the line, although a Bill was drafted to authorise it. In November, 1940, however, the Under Treasurer advised the Secretary of Railways that there was no objection to the cessation of the debit for interest on the capital involved; but the cost of the line remained in the department's capital account. That is the position today.

Agriculture has declined materially since it was first commenced in the district and there is nothing in the way of industrial progress at the moment to indicate that the present transport is inadequate or insufficient. I therefore submit the Bill to the House and hope it will be passed, so that the Commissioner of Railways can utilise the remaining assets to some advantage in our main railway system. Further, the capital account of the Railway Department will be relieved of the total indebtedness on this line. That will be a relief, small as it may be, to the department; at present the capital account stands at £79,026. I feel the Government would definitely hesitate to give consideration to the introduction of a measure of this kind unless it was well satisfied that the present transport facilities were both efficient and adequate. The Government be-

lieves that it has no alternative and it feels that no injury would be done to the people in the district, who have been satisfied for the past six years with the present road transport. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Hill, debate adjourned.

## BILL—MILK.

### Message.

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

### Second Reading.

## THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. J. T. Tonkin—North-East Fremantle) [8.20] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals with a subject of some interest and very great importance. Milk is a staple food and its adequate supply is a necessity to all modern communities. The Bill is substantially the same as the one introduced by me last session, which was received quite favourably by this House, but which finally came to rest in another place. Unfortunately, that Bill was introduced somewhat late in the session and that fact militated against its successful passage through Parliament, but the same criticism cannot be levelled against this Bill, which must stand or fall on its merits. No criticism can be stated on the score that members have had insufficient time in which to study the contents of the Bill and to endeavour to amend it as they may believe it should be amended.

It will become obvious when the Bill is studied just where the amendments which have been made are included; but they are not of a very substantial nature and most of them are the result of a conference which I called between officers of the Department of Public Health, representatives of the Milk Board, and officers of my own department, with the Minister for Health in attendance. The object of the conference was to endeavour to devise means for greater co-operation and co-ordination between the activities of the Department of Public Health, officers of the Milk Board, and officers of the Department of Agriculture and, as a result of requests submitted



by the Commissioner of Public Health, a number of small amendments have been included in this Bill.

The measure does not provide for compulsory pasteurisation. When the Bill reached another place last session, the speaker who was responsible for having it held up dealt at some length with the vital necessity, as he termed it, for making provision for compulsory pasteurisation. He went to some pains to draw a very terrible picture of what might happen to people who continued to drink milk which was not pasteurised. He referred to his own experiences in the medical profession and mentioned that he had seen people suffering from undulant fever which resulted from contaminated milk obtained from cows suffering from contagious abortion. He said that the only way in which such diseases might be prevented would be to have the milk pasteurised, and he made it very clear that nothing short of compulsory pasteurisation would satisfy him so far as the Bill was concerned. He said he regarded the Bill as his first opportunity to do something big for preventive medicine, and he was therefore going to endeavour to accomplish that. To that end he suggested that the passage of the Bill might be delayed so that at some future time, at their leisure, members of another place might have a full opportunity of moving necessary amendments to the Bill.

I admit that the whole weight of expert medical opinion is in favour of pasteurisation. Anyone trained in medical bacteriology is unlikely to come to any other conclusion than that to which medical experts have come and to which the member in another place of whom I have spoken has come. But medical bacteriology is a circumscribed field and there is other microbiology outside the field of medical microbiology. While it is true that milk might contain harmful bacteria, it is also true that milk contains bacteria which are not injurious.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Which are beneficial.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes; and in killing the one, we must kill the other.

Mr. Doney: Must, or may?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Must. The knowledge that typhoid germs could be taken in small doses into the human body in such a way as to build up immunity was responsible for one of the greatest ad-

vances in medical treatment in the twentieth century. I refer to what is known as vaccination. It is common knowledge that there are certain diseases which humans contract only in childhood before they build up immunity; and that after having built up in their bodies what medical people term anti-body, they are no longer a prey to these various diseases. Milk is the first human food and Nature has a way of enabling the human frame to adjust itself to meet threatened attack. It builds up an immunity to meet a new source of danger, and it may be that in milk one could find definitely helpful bacteria which are there for the purpose of enabling the human frame to build up an immunity to germs which will inevitably attack the body at some time or other. If we pasteurise milk, and so kill not only the harmful germs but the useful bacteria as well, we may be doing far more harm than good. I am not saying that we shall be doing so but there is a possibility, and whilst we have any doubt about it are we entitled to prescribe that such a thing shall be compulsorily done and leave no option? I submit that it is only when we are absolutely certain that we know what we are doing that we are entitled to prescribe compulsion.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: We do it with vaccination.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But there is no doubt about that.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: There is a doubt.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: With regard to vaccination, we know that the introduction into the bloodstream of certain germs causes the building up of anti-body resistant to a terrible disease. We know, therefore, that we are justified in doing it. But we cannot put the pasteurisation of milk in exactly the same category because when we pasteurise milk the object is to destroy all the bacteria in that milk.

Mr. McLarty: Is the medical profession unanimous in regard to pasteurisation?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not altogether, but pretty well. I have a statement from, I think, Dr. Hugh Nichol, in which he throws some doubt upon the matter and suggests that the medical profession might give it attention from another angle. While the profession is not altogether unanimous the weight of medical opinion is in favour of it and, I repeat, it is no wonder

because the particular study of bacteriology which doctors go through can lead them to no other conclusion. But if they extended their field of study to take in microbiology other than medical microbiology I think they would have some doubt about this.

Mr. Doney: Are you sure they have not extended their studies?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Yes, because it is not included in their course of study, and no man has the capacity to study everything on every subject.

Mr. Doney: That is feasible.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Their course of study is limited to that which is prescribed for the course of medicine, and does not cover the whole field of microbiology by any means, although I would not say that some physicians have not studied beyond the actual curriculum prescribed by their course. But if we have recourse to a number of things that happen in nature we cannot but have a doubt as to whether it is desirable to destroy all bacteria in milk. Members know that in order to get certain clovers or legumes to grow properly it is essential to introduce into the soil certain bacteria; the plants will not grow without it. If we sterilised soil—if we put it into a hot oven—and then endeavoured to grow these plants, they simply would not grow because the bacteria necessary to start them off would have been killed. It is true that we might kill a lot of diseases that were in the soil, by making it sterile in that way, but we would also kill the bacteria that is necessary to stimulate the plants into growth. Now, might it not be that in milk, which is the first food a human gets, there are some useful bacteria which are essential to our proper development? We know that America has gone in extensively for pasteurisation, but I read not so long ago that a prominent American said that 40 per cent. of the people who were examined for the Services were rejected as being unfit. That is a high figure. Whilst I am not entitled to deduce from that that pasteurised milk is responsible for that state of affairs, I am entitled to believe that it might have been a contributory factor.

Mr. Doney: Is pasteurisation largely practised in the United States?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Yes, it is very largely practised.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It is compulsory in some States, I think.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The Victorian Parliament several years ago passed a Bill providing for compulsory pasteurisation, but it has not been able to implement it and the measure is not in operation. There is pasteurisation in New South Wales, but anyone who sees the conditions under which the milk is sold will agree that it is a farce because, after having been pasteurised, the milk is allowed to be sold in bulk. I have seen the milk, after having been pasteurised, in 10-gallon drums, and open to just as much contamination as it was before; and, of course, with no useful bacteria to combat what would be done by the harmful bacteria introduced into the milk.

The Minister for Justice: What is the position in Sweden?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** It is true that Sweden pasteurises its milk, and that Great Britain does too. The authorities in Great Britain intend to extend pasteurisation by making it compulsory for every town with more than 10,000 inhabitants.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: With sealed bottles for distribution?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Yes. If pasteurisation is to be adopted—and I believe it will eventually—the only satisfactory method is to have the milk distributed in sealed bottles—not bottles into which one can push the cardboard tops with one's fingers, or where the pasteurised milk is taken round on a cart and bottled before it is delivered. The milk should be taken from the cow and, after having been pasteurised, and without becoming open to contamination at all, be bottled mechanically with a top which will cover the lip of the bottle and not leave it open to further contamination.

Mr. Fox: They do that now.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** No, not altogether. It is interesting to see what has happened in the town of Whyalla where a very wealthy organisation has not thought it necessary to adopt pasteurisation. I have here the "B.I.P. Review" which is a book issued by the Broken Hill Pty. Coy. of Australia. The company at Whyalla believed it necessary to take over the whole of the dairy herds in the town.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It took over the whole of the local government too!

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** So it took over the dairy herds and is now responsible for seeing that the cattle are fed and milked. The milk is then bottled and all the private people do is distribute it after it has been delivered by the company in bottles. The herds are tested for T.B. and no new cows are brought in unless certified free of T.B. The company has stated that, having taken the precaution to test its cattle to see that they are free of T.B., and having taken care to see that the dairy is kept clean and that there is no possible opening for contamination after the milk is obtained from the cows, pasteurisation is not necessary. The B.H.P. is a very wealthy company and the cost of pasteurisation would not affect it in the slightest degree. It could easily afford to put in the machinery requisite for pasteurisation if it felt that it was necessary. They say they do not regard it as necessary. The statement in this review reads as follows:—

Milk Treatment. The production of practically all the milk for a town of 7,500 people in one dairy is unusual and as the milk is produced under the most hygienic conditions and handled from cow to bottle without exposure to the air pasteurisation was considered unnecessary.

Mr. McDonald: There are especially favourable conditions there.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Yes, but at the same time that does not overcome the argument used in another place that, no matter how clean the dairy is or what precautions are taken after the milk is obtained, unless we pasteurise we cannot destroy the streptococcal infection that comes from mastitis or contagious abortion. If the cows in Whyalla were suffering from those disorders the germs could get into the milk and the people consuming the milk would get those germs into their systems if the milk was not pasteurised. The argument for pasteurisation is that, in order to destroy all germs that are harmful to the human being, we must pasteurise the milk, but in so doing we destroy all the other bacteria as well. The Bill does not provide for compulsory pasteurisation, but it does encourage pasteurisation.

Mr. Triat: It provides a sealed container, straight from the cow.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Not only does the Bill make provision to encourage pasteurisation, but it takes power

to ensure that such pasteurisation as is done will be done properly.

Mr. Cross: We do not want mice in the bottles again.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** It will guarantee to people who prefer pasteurised milk that they will get a good quality product. No person will be permitted to be employed in a treatment factory, on the machinery that is being used, unless he is a competent person, and the process will be under close supervision and inspection to ensure that the milk is being properly pasteurised and that the work is being cleanly done. Whilst the Bill does not say to everybody "The only type of milk you can have is pasteurised milk" it does say to them, "If you want pasteurised milk you can have it, and we will guarantee that it will be a good quality product." To those who prefer raw milk it says "We are not going to oblige you to have pasteurised milk against your will. You can have raw milk, but we will do all we can to improve the conditions at the dairies, to ensure that the milk that you get is produced under hygienic conditions. We will also watch its distribution to endeavour to give you a good, clean, wholesome food." I submit that that is a far more sensible approach to the matter than to say at this stage, "The only milk you can drink is pasteurised milk, whether you like it or not."

There are other factors entering into this question that oblige me to take this attitude. To pasteurise milk requires a lot of expensive machinery, which in these days is very difficult to obtain. The experience in Victoria is sufficient to prove that. Although they have had their Bill passed for about two or three years they have not been able to implement it, through inability to get the necessary machinery to do the job. I think members will agree that if we were prepared to say that we would make provision for pasteurisation it would be necessary to ensure that the pasteurised milk would be sold in bottles, and therefore bottling equipment would be just as necessary as pasteurisation machinery. I had a survey made of the existing pasteurisers in the city, and also of the bottling capacity. We need approximately 20,000 gallons of milk daily in the metropolitan area, and the pasteurising equipment has a total capacity of 5,190 gallons.

For practical purposes it is doubtful whether the vats that are here could be used effectively more than twice daily, and under the circumstances it would only be possible to pasteurise 10,380 gallons, approximately half of our requirements. All of the pasteurisers are of the batch-holder type, some old and some in doubtful condition. They are not thermostatically controlled. The plants have a total bottling capacity of 1,500 gallons hourly if pint bottles are used, but it would be necessary to make provision for a high percentage of half pint bottles, which would reduce considerably the gallonage capacity per hour of the bottling plants. Allowing for breakdowns and inevitable hold-ups it is doubtful whether the bottling equipment available, even if worked continuously, could bottle our daily requirements, particularly when allowance is made for the time required for cleaning. It is also very doubtful, because of structural limitations, whether the pasteurising and bottling capacity of the majority of the depots could be greatly increased. A much greater volume of milk could be pasteurised if high-temperature short-term A.P.V. pasteurisers were installed, but they would have to come from England. They could not be expected for about two years, and the present-day plants would require to be re-modelled and some would have to be entirely rebuilt.

There is another factor to be considered. The existing depots are not advantageously placed for distribution. Once we stipulate pasteurised milk and no other, and that it must be delivered in bottles, we must have depots so placed that the distribution of the milk in bottles is simplified. It would not do to have all the depots in one section because that would complicate very seriously the problem of distribution. So any major plan for the distribution of pasteurised milk would require the plants to be distributed far better than they are today.

Mr. McLarty: Compulsory pasteurisation would weed out a lot of the small depots.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, and it would necessitate the bigger depots being advantageously placed in order to save time in running from the treatment depot to the subsidiary holding depots or to the consumers concerned. By way of illustration, there is no depot from Charles-street, North Perth, throughout the whole of the northern suburbs to as far as Midland Junction. Some people might argue that we

could make do with the equipment we have, that we could overcome the shortages by permitting every milk vendor to instal a small pasteurising plant. That is the very last thing we want to do, namely, to multiply the number of treatment plants to such an extent that they would be located all over the place. We want a limited number of properly-placed treatment plants so that the least amount of supervision will be necessary in order to ensure an absolutely clean and high-quality product.

In view of the experience in Victoria, it is far better for us to pass a Bill which will encourage pasteurisation and improve the methods under which it will be carried out, and let popular demand bring about the change-over. If more and more people require pasteurised milk, there will be an incentive for the firms to acquire the most up-to-date pasteurising equipment. As the demand grows, so will the supply look after itself, and if all the people reach the stage of requiring pasteurised milk and no other, there will be no attempt to sell any other.

Mr. Seward: What would be the capital cost of installing a new pasteurising plant?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That would depend upon its size.

Mr. Seward: Of course.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would be very costly, running into some thousands of pounds, and would add about  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. per pint to the cost of milk. This would not be any deterrent to those people who desire to have pasteurised as against raw milk. For the reasons I have advanced, however, I am not prepared at this stage to recommend to the House that we should stipulate compulsory pasteurisation and nothing else. Even if we passed such a provision, we could not implement it for some time. The Bill makes provision for the Milk Board to submit to the Minister any schemes for improvement, and if we agree to the Bill as printed and constitute the board and in two or three years' time the board believes it opportune to bring in compulsory pasteurisation, such a scheme could then be submitted.

Mr. Watts: Without further legislation?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It could be submitted to the Minister. In view of what I have said, I would not attempt to do by way of regulation what I

would not ask Parliament to do now by way of legislation. To bring down an amending Bill would be a simple matter. I feel sure that, acting upon the recommendation of the Milk Board, any Minister would bring down the necessary Bill and ask Parliament to agree to compulsory pasteurisation. I think that course would be far better than endeavouring to make provision now to compel people to do something which is not practicable in existing circumstances; nor are we yet convinced that it is absolutely desirable. As I have already said, there is a doubt, and while a doubt exists, we have no right to adopt compulsory measures.

Mr. Doney: The doubt has apparently been overcome in the Old Country and in the other States.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, or else it has been ignored.

Mr. Doney: I hardly think the authorities would do that seeing that the health of the public is involved.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Or they have been prepared to take a risk.

Mr. Doney: They would hardly do that in the circumstances.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The existing Milk Board has been operating since 1933 without permanence. This Bill is designed to make the board permanent and to give it added power, and the object of the measure is to give the people a good, clean, wholesome milk supply. I am confident that if the Bill be passed, it will enable the board to do all that is necessary to bring that about. The existing legislation is inadequate. There are too many weaknesses in it. When the board endeavours to take certain steps to discipline dairymen, it finds that there is a loophole somewhere or other and it is frustrated, and this difficulty is a deterrent to the board's endeavours to effect the necessary improvement. With added powers, however, the board will feel more confidence in itself and will endeavour to rectify the admitted weaknesses to be found at present.

I ought to say in fairness to the men engaged in the dairying industry and also in fairness to the board that a very big improvement has been effected in this State since the legislation was first passed in 1933.

I know there are still a number of dairies that are not satisfactory, and in many of these cases the fault does not lie with the dairymen, but it is due to their inability to obtain the requisite material to put the dairy in proper condition. We have had to endeavour to get special permits for supplies of cement or timber to enable dairymen to do work that they are anxious to carry out but could not do because material was not available. When material becomes more readily available, we shall find a very big improvement in the standard of the dairies throughout the State and in the condition in which those dairies are kept.

So I do not blame the men in the industry at all. I compliment them on what they have been able to do in very difficult circumstances. During the war period, which has been a period of very great difficulty, they have been able to maintain a milk supply for us, and for that we should be very grateful indeed. Although it has not satisfied us absolutely at all times, in the circumstances, an excellent job has been done, and when the shortages that are apparent today can be rectified, we can confidently look forward to a very big improvement. The dairymen themselves are just as anxious for the Bill as are the Government and the people generally. It is not proposed to alter the constitution of the board.

Mr. Cross: Is there no provision for a retailer on the board?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No. The board which the present Bill provides for is similar to that set out in the measure introduced last session. There will be two representatives of the consumers nominated by the Minister and two representatives of the dairymen elected by the dairymen representative of two groups of dairying districts. The dairying areas will be divided into two groups and each group will select a representative who must be a dairyman. Should he cease to be a dairyman, he will no longer be eligible to sit on the board. The fifth member will be nominated by the Minister and that nominee shall be the chairman of the board.

Mr. McLarty: It is rather difficult to define the groups.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Does the hon. member mean under the Bill?

Mr. McLarty: Yes.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I do not think there will be any difficulty found in that direction.

**Mr. Watts:** We will solve it if you cannot do so.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Provision is made in the Bill for the prevention of the supply of milk which has been adulterated. Unfortunately, there has been some experience in that regard. The original milk has been watered down and the product thus made to go a little further. We do not want that to happen, and steps are being taken to prevent the practice.

**The Minister for Works:** It has been a very wet winter!

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The use of separators in places where the treatment of milk is carried on will be prohibited, for very obvious reasons. The Bill also provides for a more expeditious hearing of appeals against decisions of the board to refuse licenses. Under the existing legislation, it is a lengthy process which often results in considerable loss to the men concerned. Under the Bill, if the board refuses a license the unsuccessful applicant has the right of appeal to the Minister and, should the Minister uphold the appeal, the applicant will be compensated for the loss of income incurred during the period he was without a license.

**Mr. Watts:** Will licenses be transferable?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** No. Nothing in the Bill will enable a person who is already licensed to have the right to apply for another license. An individual will have to apply to the board for a license.

**Mr. Cross:** He will still be able to buy an extra quota.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** There is no interference with that, but such an individual will have to apply to the board for its approval and for a license.

**Mr. McDonald:** Will the licenses be permitted to create a monopoly value?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I do not see how we can avoid that which has already grown up. A definite interest has been created and, apart from confiscation, we cannot prevent that.

**Mr. Watts:** Will you prevent any more being created?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** The Bill will not prevent that.

**Mr. Watts:** Do you not think it ought to?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I do not see how that could be done.

**Mr. McDonald:** Do you not think that the benefits of such a monopoly should be enjoyed by the people instead of by the recipients?

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** If a man desires to supply milk and there is a market for it, we cannot refuse him a license.

**Hon. J. C. Willcock:** It is done under the State Transport Co-ordination Act.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** That is so.

**Mr. McLarty:** But in this case the interest is already built up.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** As the member for Murray-Wellington has pointed out, this interest has grown since 1933 and has been gradually built up. It would be extremely difficult, and I do not think possible, to come in now and take away something for which people have paid cash.

**Mr. McDonald:** Yes, but I would like to see in this instance, as well as in connection with hotels, no opportunity to pass on those rights.

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I hope the member for West Perth will not ask me to deal with beer as well as milk—one subject at a time.

**Mr. McDonald:** You may know more about it than I do.

**Mr. Rodoreda:** Or about whisky.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** An important provision of the Bill refers to the testing of cattle for tuberculosis. There is on the statute-book the Dairy Cattle Compensation Act. Cattle have to be submitted to a clinical examination and if found to be suffering from tuberculosis are destroyed, and compensation is paid to the owner. Under the Bill it will be obligatory on dairymen to submit their herds for testing, and a proper tuberculin test will be made. If diseased animals are found in a herd, they will be destroyed and compensation paid up to a limit of £20 per beast destroyed. The owner of

the beast so destroyed must apply for compensation and state the amount he wants. If there should be disagreement between the applicant and the board as to the amount payable, the Bill contains provision for an appeal to the Minister who will appoint an arbitrator whose decision in the matter will be final.

In providing for compensation up to £20, it will be agreed that the amount stated is satisfactory, taking all things into consideration. To build up the amount necessary for the compensation fund, the money already in the Dairymen's Compensation Fund and the Milk Vendors' Compensation Fund will be taken into the new fund, which is to be known as the Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund, to which the Government will also make a contribution as well as the dairymen and milk vendors, so that the fund may be kept solvent. If for any reason there should be insufficient money in the fund to meet the required compensation payments, provision is made for an advance from Consolidated Revenue to make up the deficiency, but any such amount so advanced must be refunded to the Treasury when sufficient money again accumulates in the fund as a result of contributions from time to time. One rather important amendment in the present Bill as compared with the measure introduced last session is that the legislation will no longer make it obligatory on local authorities to issue certificates to enable dairies to be licensed.

It was argued last session that there would be difficulty in this respect and it was suggested that the Government was imposing too great a task upon the local authorities, who would not be able to get round the different dairies to enable them to be examined in time to furnish the necessary certificates. I have looked further into the matter since the point was raised in this House, and I am satisfied we can meet the situation adequately by allowing the board to rely upon its own inspectors to ensure that the standard of a dairy is satisfactory. We have as a basis the existing licenses; and under the system of inspection, which will be improved as a result of the Bill, I do not think there is very much doubt about having the dairies brought up to a satisfactory standard to meet the requirements of the board. The other amendments are mostly of a minor nature and are the result of a

conference which was held. They are designed to give the Commissioner of Health a better opportunity than he had under the old Bill to ascertain exactly what is happening in regard to milk production and supplies. It also gives him the last say on a number of matters with which the board desires to deal. Those amendments are in my opinion an improvement on the Bill submitted last session and I accordingly commend them to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Message.*

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

## **BILL—MARKETING OF BARLEY.**

### *Message.*

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

## **BILL—CATTLE INDUSTRY COMPENSATION.**

### *Message.*

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

*House adjourned at 9.14 p.m.*