

that the errors of the past are not repeated. Taking the broad principle of this Bill, I do not see any necessity for it, and I am afraid I cannot support it.

On motion by Hon. H. S. W. Parker, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 8.20 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Tuesday, 6th November, 1945.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS.

*As to Shortage and Service Releases.*

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Health:

1, Is he aware that there is still a shortage of medical officers in various country centres?

2, Has he any information as to the possible release of medical officers from the Services in the near future?

3, If not, what steps (if any) is the Government taking with a view to having sufficient releases made to cater adequately for the health of the community?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2 and 3, The State Government is co-operating with the Commonwealth in order to secure the services of medical officers. The Commonwealth proposes to retain partial control under National Security Regu-

lations to enable an even distribution of medical officers until the position reverts to normal.

#### CRICKET GROUNDS.

*As to Assistance from Physical Fitness Fund.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Education:

1, Is he aware that there is great difficulty for cricket clubs to obtain grounds for their game, owing to the impossibility of maintaining such grounds during the war in the metropolitan area?

2, Has the question been considered of assisting the local authorities, as for instance in Cottesloe, with finance from the Physical Fitness Fund to assist rehabilitation of such grounds?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, Yes.

#### AIR SERVICES.

*As to Applications to Operate.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Transport:

1, Has he any knowledge of applications to the Transport Board for permission to run an air service to various parts of the State from the city?

2, If so, what are the particulars?

3, Has he any objection to such applications being granted, assuming everything is in order?

4, Would such improved facilities for fast travel have any appreciable effect upon railway revenue?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes. The Western Australian Transport Board has applications from two firms for licenses to operate air services between Perth and country centres.

2, The applications relate to the conduct of an air service between Perth and Albany with landings at intermediate towns in the South-West and Great Southern districts.

3, The granting of licenses is a function of the Western Australian Transport Board.

4, I would not endeavour to forecast the effect of air services upon railway revenue, but the future policy in regard to air services is now under consideration.

## COUNTRY WATER SUPPLIES.

*As to Treatment of Brackish Water.*

Mr. LESLIE asked the Minister for Works:

1, Is he aware that in the coal regions of West Virginia (America) it has been conclusively demonstrated that brackish water can be converted into excellent potable water by putting the water through beds of granular ion-exchange synthetic resins?

2, Is he aware that because of the installation of this system a mining town in West Virginia will have an ample low-cost potable municipal water supply, drawn from local wells yielding only brackish water, thus obviating the necessity for the costly haulage of water from a source very many miles distant?

3, Have any investigations been made into the practicability of this method being introduced into the dry areas of Western Australia, particularly the north-eastern wheatbelt, where underground brackish water is available in abundance?

4, In view of the enormous economic value such a method, if capable of successful application, would be to Western Australia will he, if such investigations have not already been made, arrange for full inquiry and investigations to be undertaken at the earliest possible moment? If not, why not?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, An article to this effect appeared in a recent publication by the American Cyanamid Company.

3, Owing to shortage of technical staff, only limited research has been possible to date.

4, Yes.

## COOKING STOVES.

*As to Electric and Gas Fittings.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Health:

1, Does the Government favour facilities for electric and gas cooking being extended as far as possible having regard to our climate?

2, If so, will he take up with the authorities the question of the release of men and materials for such purposes in the metropolitan area, having specific reference to municipal gas facilities in North street, Cottesloe?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The State Government favours the provision of all reasonable amenities for the citizens of the State.

2, Approaches have continuously been made for manpower releases for men for State industries and the hon. member's co-operation with the local authorities would help in such specific cases.

## BILL—MARKETING OF ONIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS.

*Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise-Gascoyne) [4.35] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is to provide for the reference to the Commonwealth of certain powers in connection with the control of prices. Immediately after the outbreak of war, the question of the necessity for price control received the consideration of both State and Commonwealth Governments. The Parliament of this State passed a Price-fixing Prevention Act and, in collaboration with the Commonwealth, established a prices branch in this State. An officer of the State Public Service was appointed Western Australia as Deputy Prices Commissioner, and he has acted on behalf of the Commonwealth in connection with price fixing until the present time. Between the beginning of the war and April, 1942, the Commonwealth, under National Security Regulations, declared certain articles coming within prices control. Action was taken in connection with other goods under State legislation; but in 1942, under the National Security Regulations of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth took action to control very many specified commodities and also services, and as from that time the operation of the State Act virtually ceased.

It was under the Commonwealth National Security orders and under the direction of the Commonwealth Price Fixing Commissioner that the authority was assumed and the control implemented in this State and in other States. There is a certain measure of doubt in regard to the period when the National Security orders shall end. The legal position is therefore somewhat uncertain.

certain, and considerable doubt centres in the point as to what is the date to be considered as the cessation of hostilities. Legal authorities of the Commonwealth have expressed the view that the cessation of hostilities will be on the date when the peace treaty is signed between the belligerent nations. So with the doubt as to the National Security Act lapsing within a certain period, and that doubt also bringing in the point that the prices regulations may be challenged at any time even though the Act itself remains in force, action is necessary to continue the control of prices to prevent inflation.

I do not think there is any doubt whatever that the cessation of prices control would cause chaos in all the Australian States today. At the end of the last war the inflationary tendencies were very great and prices of many commodities soared by anything from 50 per cent. to well over 100 per cent. in the case of some goods in everyday use. During this war the disturbance to the general economy has been even greater than during the last war period, and there is a much larger demand for both consumer and capital goods. I think, also, it can safely be said that there is a greater accumulation of money, the wherewithal to purchase those goods irrespective of prices. It follows that the inflationary tendencies that ensued after the last war will be marked, for a considerable period in the future. The seriousness of the effects of such inflationary tendencies must, I think, be obvious to everyone, and if, whether in regard to foodstuffs or materials of all sorts so much in need in every section of the community, they force prices to skyrocket, it will be bad for all sections of the community.

There will also be a serious position in industries supplying construction materials, all the industries ancillary to the building industry, which in turn will seriously affect our housing position if prices are allowed to get out of control. Without doubt there will be an increase in the demand for such commodities as timber, bricks, cement, rubber and all the requisites for homes and, indeed, many articles of foodstuffs in addition to those in everyday use. It would be a bad thing for the public and private construction of buildings to be as seriously affected as it could be if prices are allowed to go uncontrolled. If prices are not controlled in the near future, many materials

such as textiles will be in the same position and many goods will be put out of the reach of the people who most need them.

There is also the effect on the wages position. Firstly, there is the inability of persons on lower wage rates to buy the necessary commodities and, secondly, the ultimate effect—though there would be a lag in it—of forcing up the wage rates because of the uncontrolled prices that would affect wages, including the basic wage. The whole position would be very damaging to the individual, damaging to Western Australia's internal industries, and it could be damaging also to our export industries, because it would increase our difficulties in producing at a cost at which we could export profitably. There would be serious repercussions in all sections of industry, including rural development and the production of commodities necessary for the re-establishment of our returning service personnel, and the re-establishment and reconstruction of the farms where repairs and maintenance have had to be delayed. All those things will be seriously and prejudicially affected unless there is some control of the price level.

One bad aspect of the inflationary tendency of prices, following conditions such as those we have just passed through, is that a boom is created at inflated prices, and it takes a long time to overcome that. Where the prices are transferable to land and properties there is always chaos following the getting out of control of values in that way. While the debts would be incurred at the higher rates, when the fall came there would be serious losses of capital and heavy liabilities for the people affected. There is also the effect of uncontrolled prices on the State's affairs. The State expects to launch, in the near future, a considerable loan programme. Works of all kinds will be undertaken in all directions, as and when materials and manpower are available, and in many districts. If those costs are to be seriously affected by artificially inflated prices, that would re-act very detrimentally on the State for many years to come. The total loss over a period of years could easily be a colossal one.

I do not think we need look very far for it to be quite clear to us that the control of prices must continue. We know of the experiences of the purchasing public in the matter of commodities that have

been released, from time to time, from price control. Most of those commodities are those needed in the average home in order to maintain health. They are commodities needed in the homes of workers in all walks of life, and in all industries, yet as soon as price control is relinquished prices immediately, and without warning, double themselves. We have had that experience in this city during the last week or two, in the case of fruits produced in this State. The Commonwealth advised the Premiers of all States that this subject was to be discussed at the last Premiers' Conference, and prior to that conference reports were obtained from the Crown Solicitor and the Deputy Commissioner of Prices in this State. It was found that the High Court, a long time ago, decided that one State could not legislate to fix maximum prices for goods sold in another State for use in the State so legislating.

We could therefore be seriously embarrassed in interstate trade unless a law existed to enable control, within the State of purchase, to keep within limits the prices of commodities purchased for sale and use from another State. That would seriously embarrass the State forced to purchase from another State many manufactured and processed commodities. The Deputy Commissioner of Prices of this State gave his opinion that, both constitutionally and practically, the control of prices after the war could not effectively be handled by the States, and should be controlled by the Commonwealth. When the complete reports of the two officers concerned were reviewed by the Government, they appeared to leave no alternative but that the power should be vested in the Commonwealth.

At the Premiers' Conference held in August last with all the States represented, I informed the Prime Minister that I was prepared to submit legislation to the State Parliament authorising that the control of prices should be vested in the Commonwealth for a period of three years. The Premier of Tasmania gave a similar assurance, and the Premier of Victoria promised to refer the matter to his Government for consideration and decision. The relative portions of the Commonwealth Powers Act submitted to the Western Australian Parliament subsequent to the Constitutional Convention read as follows:—

Profiteering and prices (but not including prices or rates charged by State or semi-Government or local governing bodies for goods or services).

When the Bill was introduced into our State Parliament, the Legislative Council amended this provision to the one word "profiteering". Thus at that stage the provision specifically mentioned in this Bill was taken out of the measure presented at that time and part of it was passed by the Legislative Council. Other States at that time passed the legislation, those States being Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia, but it remains for the other States to pass legislation of this kind to retain control of prices during the period of inflationary tendency. Subsequently, however, the proposal contained in the original agreement was submitted to the people of Australia as part of the Referendum. The people of Western Australia, as members will recollect, carried it by a large majority, and it can therefore be said to have the endorsement of our people. As distinct from that, however, we are in a period when chaotic conditions would arise if we permitted the inflationary tendency due to the causes I have mentioned to force prices out of all reasonable reach for commodities so much needed by the average householder.

Mr. North: Is the State's control insufficient?

The PREMIER: I have already explained that it is insufficient and that, particularly in regard to interstate goods, the only way to control prices is to give the Commonwealth authority to exercise the power over trade as between State and State.

This Bill is a very simple one. It provides for prices control to be referred to the Commonwealth for a period of three years commencing from the date when the measure comes into operation. As members will notice, a safeguard has been inserted to ensure that the reference of power is a temporary one. There is a difference of opinion between constitutional lawyers as to whether a transfer of powers in this way can be made for a limited period or whether the powers, once given to the Commonwealth, are permanently given. Since that doubt exists, the Bill provides that, should temporary reference prove to be illegal, then the reference itself will be invalid. Members will find that that precaution is taken in the Bill s

that the transference of power will be temporary. In this respect, the Bill follows exactly the Commonwealth Powers Act already passed by this Parliament.

I think South Australia was the first State to introduce such legislation and has included a similar provision, so the Bill, which is a short one, sets out in the preamble the approach to this problem—whereas certain agreements were reached and certain arrangements were made for the transference of these powers for a certain limited period.

Mr. Watts: Why is this Bill supplementary to the Act of 1943?

The PREMIER: Because it is considered that that Act does not give the necessary authority in regard to prices control of specified commodities which may be from time to time proclaimed as commodities and services coming under control.

Mr. Watts: Why would not a separate Act unattached to the 1943 Act suffice?

The PREMIER: I have been advised by the Solicitor General that this is the correct way to approach the matter. He was asked whether an amendment of that Act would be the right course to adopt, and we were told that this was the course to follow in order to make it definite that all the provisions I have outlined as being necessary may be given effect to.

Mr. Watts: Does not that imply activity under the 1943 Act by the Commonwealth?

The PREMIER: I am not sure, but the Solicitor General was very definite that this is the correct way to approach the matter and give effect to prices control, particularly for a limited period.

Mr. McDonald: A three-year reference.

The PREMIER: Yes, and the provision must be made in a specific Bill. With this explanation and anticipating that the House will be in entire accord with the control of prices as an urgent necessity for the present, I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

## **BILLS (2)—RETURNED.**

### **1, National Fitness.**

With an amendment.

### **2, Land and Income Tax Assessment Act Amendment.**

Without amendment.

## **BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [4.57] in moving the second reading said: This is a one-clause Bill and has for its object something similar to that of the legislation just proposed by the Premier except that, under this measure, we propose not to refer the matter to the Commonwealth but to make sure of continuing the Act of 1939-43. Section 15 of the Act reads—

This Act shall continue in force during the continuance of the war in which His Majesty is at the commencement of this Act engaged and for a period of six months thereafter and no longer; but the expiration of this Act shall not render recoverable any rent which during the continuance thereof was irrecoverable, or affect the right of a tenant to recover any sum which, during the continuance thereof, was under this Act recoverable by him.

The portion of the section we are most concerned about is the first four lines declaring that the Act shall continue in force for the duration of the war and six months thereafter. The Premier has explained most of the points that I intended to advance in support of this Bill. He explained that according to legal interpretation, the measure would continue in operation until all the signatories have signed the peace treaty, but, so far as Australia is concerned, the Act will continue for such time until the Governor-General of Australia declares by proclamation that the war is at an end. It is impossible to foretell the date on which such proclamation will be made; and if precedent is to be followed, we shall have to wait until all the signatories have signed. It is quite easy for the peace settlement to take place while Parliament is in recess, in which event this State would find itself without a fair rents Act.

Everyone will agree that, in view of the existing demand for housing, if we suddenly found ourselves without any legislation covering fair rents, rents would certainly soar sky-high, and I do not think any member of this House—indeed, any person in Western Australia—desires that to happen. The main function of the parent Act is to peg rents as at the 31st August, 1939, and to provide for the ascertainment of a fair rent. The Act applies to leases of all kinds, whether verbal or written, and leases

of all kinds of premises. I have been informed by an officer of the Commonwealth that he finds rents more fairly stabilised in Western Australia than in the other States of Australia. Western Australia is also one of the two States in respect of which the Commonwealth has not insisted upon its own rents legislation being put into force. The Commonwealth considers that our legislation is doing a particularly good job and so has not found it necessary to apply its own legislation. We have been working continuously under our own Act since it was passed and we ought to be proud of that fact. Mr. Sheehan, of the Crown Law Department, who was appointed an adviser to landlords and tenants alike, has, in the last two years, interviewed no fewer than 11,000 people and given them advice upon this legislation.

The Prime Minister recently notified the people of Australia over the air that this rents legislation, so far as the Commonwealth is concerned, must be kept in force. That statement alone indicates that we should be careful to retain our own legislation: otherwise, in the event which I have explained, our legislation will simply lapse and the Commonwealth legislation will take its place. Another factor which must be taken into consideration is that rents are a very prominent factor in the fixation of wages by the Arbitration Court. The rise and fall of rents in various districts of the State sometimes has a remarkable effect on the basic wage. The member for Geraldton will agree that for a long time the basic wage for the Geraldton district was higher because of the higher rents prevailing there. The Premier said that a relaxation of the legislation governing price-fixing would result in prices of commodities rising considerably; so far as rents are concerned, we would find ourselves in a chaotic position if there were no legislation controlling them.

The Bill contains one amending clause, which simply carries the present Act on to the 31st December, 1946, or for the duration of the war or six months thereafter, whichever shall be the longer period. The principal Act provides for the period to be the duration of the war and six months thereafter.

Mr. Watts: Are you afraid of opposition to the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: No, but I am afraid that if I do not explain the

legislation, it will be said that the Minister has merely thrown the Bill into the ring.

Mr. Watts: Whichever way you go, you are bound to be wrong!

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I am briefly explaining the position. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that there should be no opposition to our own legislation being extended for a short period. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Abbott, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—STATE ELECTRICITY COMMISSION.**

Report of Committee adopted.

## **BILL—ELECTRICITY.**

*In Committee.*

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: As no amendments are listed in the notice paper, I propose to take the clauses in bulk; therefore, if any member wishes to speak to a clause he must seize his opportunity when it occurs.

Clause 1—Short title and commencement:

Mr. McDONALD: I understand that this Bill is very largely a re-enactment of the 1937 Act, with those amendments which have been made necessary by the establishment of a proposed electricity commission.

The Minister for Works: The Bill is in Committee.

Mr. McDONALD: I wish to make a suggestion.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the member for West Perth resume his seat, unless he is making a personal explanation. So far, I have only put Clause 1.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—Act divided into parts:

Mr. McDONALD: I wish to suggest to the Minister that if there is any alteration of a material nature, he might draw the attention of the Committee to it. I have looked through the Bill in conjunction with the Act of 1937, but have not had time to give it careful scrutiny. In case anything might have been overlooked, the Minister might mention any departure of consequence, as it would assist members to know what is being proposed.

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid the Minister cannot do what the hon. member requires, unless he deals with a clause which is being considered by the Committee.

Mr. McDONALD: He might consider each clause as we come to it.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 3 to 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—No further generating stations to be erected except under this Act:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In reply to the member for West Perth, I would point out that this clause contains the main alteration of the Act which this Bill consolidates. The Bill requires any local authority or supply authority to obtain the consent in writing of the commission before certain things are done. Under the present Act no such permission or consent is required because, under that Act, no authority is set up within the State. It has been thought advisable to call upon any local authority, or person or company, to seek and obtain the consent of the proposed electricity commission before doing any of the things set out in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of Subclause (1).

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Kalgoorlie local authority supplies electricity to its own residents and, to some extent, to persons outside the municipality. What would be its position if it desired to add to or repair its plant? If, in fact, there is no supply provided for other than the supply existing, will the municipality be under an obligation to obtain a consent in writing for the purpose of repairing its plant or to instal any additional main generating unit which may be required? The municipality may find it necessary to erect a cable to some outlying portion of the municipality without obtaining the consent in writing of the commission. How would that affect the position of a municipality as a supplier of electricity today?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Nedlands has asked two questions. The answer to one is no, and to the other yes, so it was impossible for me to reply when he invited me to do so. A local authority will certainly be able to carry out necessary repairs and things of that nature without referring the matter to the commission; but, as mentioned in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c) of Subclause (1), such an authority would have to obtain the

consent in writing of the commission to undertake the construction or the establishment of any generating station or the installation of any additional main generating unit, or to extend any transmission works. That practice has been followed since the Electricity Advisory Committee was established in 1938. Members are aware that that committee had no legal powers, but it was available to be consulted by local authorities on matters associated with the generation and distribution of electric power.

Practically all the authorities concerned consulted the committee about any major alteration or extension of their existing schemes, and I think it will be found that on every occasion that the committee advised the local authorities they adopted the advice. This clause gives legal effect to a practice which operated while the Electricity Advisory Committee was in existence. It is advisable that local authorities operating power schemes should consult the commission and obtain its consent in writing where they propose to make alterations of the type listed here. I cannot imagine that there will be any difficulty about the local authorities approaching the commission and, where the proposals are considered desirable, they will certainly be approved. The overriding supervision of the commission will ensure that all extensions to be made in the future will be in accordance with a policy of co-ordinating, so far as possible, the future development of power schemes in the different parts of the State.

Mr. WATTS: When I first saw this clause I was of the same opinion as the member for Nedlands, but I do not now think it is necessary to raise the objection he has brought forward. At the same time, I do not quite agree that the explanation given by the Minister is the one needed to settle the doubts raised. The definitions used in the principle Act enter into this matter. If the phrase "extend any transmission works" means that a local authority has to consult the commission if it wants to supply current to a few consumers down a side street, that is thoroughly unreasonable.

The Minister for Works: That would not apply.

Mr. WATTS: As I read the Bill that is not what is going to happen.

The Minister for Works: No.

Mr. WATTS: Transmission works do not include that portion of the works used in distributing current to consumers. In the principal Act "Transmission works" is defined as—

any main line, and all poles, switches, transformers and apparatus pertaining thereto for the purpose of conveying electricity from a generating station to any distribution works.

"Distribution works" is defined as—

any works, including lines, poles, switches and transformers and all other apparatus for the purpose of distributing electricity to consumers.

It seemed to me that as this was restraining the extension of transmission works it had nothing whatever to do with the extension of current to consumers from a distributing station, but only from some transmission centre that the commission controls. That is the point the Minister had in mind, I think, and it satisfies me that there is no need to differ from this clause.

Mr. McDONALD: I thank the Minister for his explanation. I think there is no reason why the Committee should not accept this clause. Under the 1937 Act permission to do these things had to be obtained from the Minister. It is now proposed that the permission shall be obtained from the commission. As the clause is much the same as the section in the parent Act, which has worked well for the last eight years, we should take no exception to it.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister should give some explanation with respect to Subclause (3). It seems to me hardly feasible that persons so placed should be required to sell at a price not in excess of the prescribed charges which, I take it, are not likely to vary. There might be a considerable distance of, say, a quarter of a mile or a mile between houses to be connected and the generating station. That would entail considerable expense in connection with transmission works. The demand and the supply would both be relatively small. The cost per unit would be greater than in the case of a place closer to the generating station. The Minister might give more attention to the matter of the prescribed charges. It seems to me that they would need to be somewhat in excess of the charges relating to a house closer to the generating station.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This is re-enacted from the principal Act. The provision there is Section 8, Subsection (3).

The prices to be charged in these circumstances are not to be in excess of the prescribed charges. The authority to prescribe the charges will still remain, and they will be prescribed taking into consideration the facts of each particular case.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Linking up schemes:

Mr. WATTS: Here there is power for the commission to regulate prices on a certain basis. It seems to me that we are going to be subject to prices control by Commonwealth authorities. During the war considerable increases in prices were allowed by the Deputy Prices Controller for electricity supplies in country centres. In some cases the increases were fairly considerable. I am a bit concerned about any conflict that may take place between the Deputy Prices Controller, who, I presume, will still be in control in this State, and the commission in regard to the charges for electricity. This matter is of considerable interest to consumers where prices have been increased by as much as 1½d. a unit. I would like the Minister to express his views as to what would be the position if such a situation arose.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The decision of a Commonwealth price fixing authority would be supreme if it had power to fix the prices to be charged by State Governments and local governing authorities. I doubt whether it would have that power.

Mr. Watts: The Bill excludes both, but not the concessionaires.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. It might very well be argued—I do not know whether it could be successfully argued legally—that a concessionaire operates on behalf of a local authority and might, therefore, be regarded as not coming under the price fixing control scheme. In any event the prices fixed by a Commonwealth authority would be maximum prices.

Mr. Watts: They are always the minimum.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not always. Hundreds of instances can be quoted of goods that have been sold at below the maximum price fixed. The responsibility of this commission would be to arrive at what it considered to be reasonable charges. If those charges were below any maximum fixed by the Commonwealth—the Commonwealth came into the matter a

all; even with concessionaires—then the commission could proceed to make its proposed charges operative. However, I am not able to say in any clear-cut way that the Commonwealth prices control system would cover concessionaires operating, on behalf of local authorities, electric power plants in country districts. There should be some control over the concessionaires.

Mr. Watts: By this commission! To that I am quite agreeable.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The local governing authority itself would desire that there should be control. It would probably prefer to have the matter decided by the electricity commission and not the Commonwealth authority. I am unable to give a clear-cut assurance that the Commonwealth authority would not extend its operations so as to cover concessionaires operating electric power schemes in country areas.

Mr. WATTS: One instance came under my notice where there was an agreement between a local authority and a concessionaire to supply current at so much a unit. The local authority saw no reason to vary that arrangement during the war, or when it was approached. Application was made to the Deputy Prices Controller and leave obtained for a substantial increase in the price so that it ultimately rose by 1½d.

The Minister for Works: Was the local authority consulted?

Mr. WATTS: Not by the Deputy Prices Controller. I thought, and still think that it is a most unsatisfactory position to have all sorts of people attempting to control prices. However, I am satisfied for the time being.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 14 to 17—agreed to.

Clause 18—General powers:

Mr. DONEY: I have not had time to do much more than glance through this rather long clause, but I would like to know from the Minister whether it contains any reference to the rights of the supplying authority regarding the cutting down of trees, bushes and undergrowth where the effect would be the disturbance of soil.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not think there is any such reference in this particular clause but there will be in some other part of the Bill. I give the hon. member the same assurance that I gave him

on an earlier Bill that the chairman of the Electricity Advisory Committee and the person likely to be appointed to the position of Commissioner of Soil Conservation will consult with the object of drafting an amendment to provide the measure of protection required regarding the cutting down of trees for the purpose of erecting power lines.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 19 to 54, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## **BILL—SOUTH-WEST STATE POWER SCHEME.**

*In Committee.*

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—Short title and commencement:

Mr. DONEY: Members will recollect that when referring to the name of the scheme the Minister indicated that he felt a little dubious as to whether the title, South-West State power scheme, was adequate, having regard to the possible extension of the scheme to the Great Southern. I do not know that it is a matter of very vital importance, but the Minister considered it such as to warrant his mentioning the matter at some length. If we are to have a descriptive title at all it should be exact and proper and certainly should correspond to the geographical sections of the State to be covered. For that reason I move an amendment—

That in line 1 after the word "South-West," the words "and Great Southern" be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did mention this idea when I moved the second reading of the Bill, and would have been prepared to give it further consideration subsequently if the idea of extending the title had been favourably received by members. However, it was regarded rather on the contrary. I think the member for Pingelly suggested that nothing of the kind was really necessary and that it did not much matter what the scheme was called so long as it was quickly established and its operations spread over the widest possible area. The member for Bunbury asked what was in a name and suggested that the proposed title of the scheme should not be altered. I am not sure whether any other member dealt with the point, but as the result of

the discussion I abandoned the idea of altering the title and I think it rather late and a bit difficult to make the alteration now. Had the point been regarded seriously by members during the second reading debate, I would have had the requisite amendments drafted for inclusion where necessary. A similar amendment might be required in other parts of the Bill if we accept the one now before the Committee. In the circumstances I think we should allow the Title to stand without alteration.

Mr. DONEY: I can hardly agree that it is too late to consider changing the name of the scheme, for that is a relatively simple matter. I would prefer that the Minister had been impressed by his own arguments rather than by those of members who objected to any such change. I myself took up the point and agreed with the desirability of changing the name as suggested by the Minister himself and, in fact, I had anticipated that the Minister would have moved the amendment which I have placed before the Committee.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 2 and 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Approval of report and adoption of recommendations:

Mr. DONEY: Here again, in order to be consistent, I must raise an objection to the clause as it stands. The Minister will recall the many reasons I advanced against the adoption of the clause and I shall not reiterate them at this juncture. The terms of the report have been varied and appear in the Bill in a form different from what they are in the report itself. It is difficult for me to accept in toto a report that has been departed from in a material manner.

The Minister for Works: The proviso to Subclause (1) of Clause 5 gives the necessary discretion in regard to alterations.

Mr. DONEY: That discretion is to be exercised subsequent to the assumption of powers by a commission which has not yet been appointed, and it could not have any reference to changes made as between the substance of the report and the powers given here. It is wrong to approve the report and adopt the provisions and recommendations as they stand now, because we have already departed from them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am not clear what the hon. member means when he says we have departed from some

of the recommendations of the report of the Electricity Advisory Committee. Nothing has yet been done to put the proposed South-West power scheme into operation. The time when the recommendations of the committee may be departed from would be some time prior to the putting into operation of the scheme or during the course of putting it into operation. As I mentioned when the hon. member was speaking, we take power in another clause, to enable alterations to be made to the report and recommendations of the committee.

Mr. Doney: For subsequent use.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will apply for all uses. The commission will be legally authorised to make whatever alterations are considered necessary in carrying out the scheme. It will not be bound in any way if it feels that alteration should be made in one respect or another. It would be unwise for Parliament to bind the commission 100 per cent. to the report and recommendations of the committee.

Mr. Watts: If it did, the Bill would not be acceptable in some aspects.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would not. What Parliament is asked to do is to approve the report and adopt the recommendations made therein. It is not asked to bind itself absolutely to the report and recommendations, because in a later clause we give to the commission the discretionary right to make such alterations as circumstances at the time may justify.

Mr. DONEY: One instance of what I am referring to occurred when we passed the Bill to confer powers and impose obligations on the State Electricity Commission. We have already decided that we will have seven commissioners, whereas if we had adopted the recommendations in the report we would have had four commissioners. We cannot have it both ways. I think the Minister is dealing with the discretion allowed to the commission when the scheme is in operation and working, at which stage it will have the right to vary anything which may appear in the report. That right does not extend to the members of the Electricity Advisory Committee.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the point raised by the hon. member is a finicky one, if I may use the term.

Mr. Doney: You know how finicky the law is.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This Chamber has already agreed to the number of the proposed commission being seven. If another place similarly agrees Parliament will have made a decision regarding the number of commissioners. I do not think there is anything inconsistent in Parliament, in a general way, approving of the report.

Mr. Doney: What do you mean by "general way"?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I use that term because in a later clause of the Bill we give to the commission reasonably wide discretion covering the carrying out of any works required to establish and operate the scheme.

Mr. Watts: You give the commission power to vary the recommendations in the carrying out of the works, but you do not give anyone power to vary the recommendations referred to by the hon. member.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Parliament as a whole will have to make a decision about the number of members of the commission, and the same Parliament will, I hope, adopt Clause 4.

Mr. Watts: Before the Bill goes to another place, will you consult the Solicitor General on the point raised?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. If it is thought that a slight alteration of the wording of Clause 4 will completely overcome the possible objections of a technical and legal character, we might alter the wording of the clause in another place.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Authority to acquire the undertaking of the Collie Power Company Limited:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 7 to 10 of paragraph (b) the words "if the gross purchase price payable under such contract exceeds the sum of one hundred thousand pounds" be struck out.

This clause gives authority to the commission, acting for the Government, to acquire the Collie Power Company's scheme at Collie. There is a proviso in the clause to the effect that if the contract to buy out the undertaking in question is based on a gross purchase price in excess of £100,000, no such contract shall be legally effective

unless and until it has been approved by the Governor. My amendment proposes to delete all reference to the figure of the gross purchase price, the idea being that no matter what the price may be the contract will still have to be approved by the Governor-in-Council. Such an amendment is in every way desirable, because in a matter of this kind the Government and the Governor-in-Council should approve of the contract before it is finalised. The contract price, if it becomes a matter of a straightout purchase, will be very substantial, and because of that fact it is advisable that the proposed contract shall be approved by the Governor-in-Council before it becomes legally effective.

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

Clauses 7, 8, Preamble, Title—agreed to. Bill reported with an amendment.

## RESOLUTION—GAOL SITE AND MODERN PRISON REQUIREMENTS.

*To Inquire by Joint Committee.*

Debate resumed from the 26th October on the following resolution received from the Council:—

That a Committee of three members of each House of Parliament be appointed to inquire into:—

- (a) The requirements for a modern gaol;
- (b) Whether the site selected by the Government, known as the Claremont site, should be used for this purpose;
- (c) If not, to report on and recommend any alternative site.

That the Committee may adjourn from time to time, and from place to place; may sit on those days over which the Houses stand adjourned; have power to call for persons, papers, and records; and shall report to His Excellency the Lieutenant-Governor.

Mr. SPEAKER: The question is—

That the resolution be agreed to.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.58]: This resolution represents, I think, a good instance of democracy at work. There is no doubt that the Government came to a definite decision through its experts as to the site for a gaol in the metropolitan area. Owing to the complaints, which began in a small way and ultimately spread to a large degree, on the part of the local authorities concerned, the Government has now seen fit, through the Chief Secretary in another place, to approve of the appointment of a

Joint Committee to make a further investigation into the question of a gaol site. It has also taken the opportunity to go into the matter of what a modern gaol should be like and should consist of. This action on the part of the Government has enabled this House and another place to select two or three members each to find out for themselves by evidence what a gaol should be like in 1945, and what is the best site in Western Australia for such an establishment.

Mr. J. Hegney: And what a modern gaol site area should be.

Mr. NORTH: Because of the manner in which the resolution is worded, it is open to some small misinterpretation on the part of the proposed Joint Committee. Paragraph (b) states—

Whether the site selected by the Government, known as the Claremont site, should be used for this purpose.

The next paragraph says—

If not, to report on and recommend any alternative site.

I see some slight danger there owing to the fact that the committee whilst going into the question and examining witnesses would also take the evidence of the experts who would come forward, and who following the views of the Government might say that the site already selected should be the one for the gaol. Where would the Committee then stand? Could it go any further after that? Indeed, it might have to go away for a long trip in order to find some further evidence which might counteract the local evidence. I feel somewhat sorry for the prime mover in this matter, the Town Planning Commissioner, who seems to have had a very heavy sea to travel in since taking up his official duties in this State. He seems to have been crossed quite often. There again his best evidence is being overlooked by the authorities, and by members who live in the district, including myself. I do not know whether I am in order in suggesting it, but if this Chamber wishes to get the best out of a Joint Committee, I would urge it to alter the wording of the resolution. Would that be possible, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: It is in order for the hon. member to move any amendment he wishes.

Mr. NORTH: Without affecting the position of the Upper House?

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member will be in order in moving an amendment.

Mr. NORTH: Having decided on the sort of gaol we want, I suggest that if we wish to obtain the best site in Western Australia we should amend the resolution, amalgamating paragraphs (b) and (c); otherwise there will be complications.

Mr. SPEAKER: Does the hon. member wish to strike anything out?

Mr. NORTH: I would have to move to strike out paragraphs (b) and (c) and insert a new paragraph. At this stage, however, I will conclude my remarks in support of the main resolution. A point to be considered in choosing a site in the metropolitan area is the convenience of the employees. In this generation, we pay a good deal more attention to the needs of employees than was the case in the past. If we were prepared to look for a site somewhere else in Western Australia apart from the metropolitan area, we would have to give every consideration to the question of enabling employees to be given reasonable conditions both in regard to accommodation and transport to and from the metropolitan area. I am sure the people of Western Australia would prefer to see some new site adopted—provided the convenience of the employees was considered—if it were found that the area now under consideration as a site for a gaol was likely to become a very beautiful and popular part of the metropolitan area in the future, and if the existing installations in that area—such as the sewerage works and the asylum—were removed; it has even been suggested that the asylum could be converted into a very good school building. In this State, there is a million square miles of land and hundreds of thousands of acres are in good rainfall areas. Surely we could find in all that country a place for a modern gaol and prevent that institution being placed in the metropolitan area!

Mr. Smith: There should be opportunities down Pinjarra way.

Mr. NORTH: It might even be established there. I do not see much enthusiasm on the part of the member representing that district. Perhaps he may be appointed a member of the joint committee. In that event, he might be converted to recommending Pinjarra as the site. We have a golden opportunity to make a new start now that

the war is over. Of course, we do not want to establish a gaol in a position like that of the Dartmoor Prison in England; we do not want to establish our gaol in the middle of the Nullarbor Plain. But we could establish it some distance from settlement, and in a good rainfall area. I support the resolution. I have not drafted an amendment along the lines I suggested, but perhaps some member who follows me may be prepared to move to strike out paragraphs (b) and (c) with a view to inserting a paragraph which would enable the committee to select a site somewhere else in Western Australia outside of the metropolitan area.

**HON. H. MILLINGTON** (Mt. Hawthorn) [6.5]: I am interested not in paragraphs (a) and (c) of this resolution but in paragraph (b). I submit that paragraph (b) contains reference to the only matter that is in dispute. Paragraph (a) is not challenged. No-one has suggested that the Government's experts—and they have gone to a good deal of trouble in this matter—are incapable of deciding what are the requirements of a modern gaol. Even if this committee, representative of the two Houses—a committee of lay-men—is appointed, I fail to see that it could suggest anything new that has not already been decided by the Government, which is in receipt of a full report from its own experts, and which even had an expert from the Eastern States—one who is an authority on the question of modern gaols—to give his opinion. If the committee were given the job of going into the requirements of a modern gaol, it would have to examine all the witnesses over again. I do not know whether it would go to the extent of bringing back Mr. Ackeroyd from the Eastern States. It might go further and get experts from New South Wales and Queensland; but I suggest there is no need for that.

**Hon. J. C. Willcock**: The committee goes over there.

**Hon. H. MILLINGTON**: Yes, that is another idea. Nobody has challenged the attitude of the Government or its proposals in respect of a modern gaol. I do know that this Government and past Governments have been opposed to Select Committees unless very good reasons have been given for their appointment. No reason has been given for the appointment of a committee

in this instance, to re-investigate what has already been well investigated by the Government's officials and those called in to assist.

**Hon. N. Keenan**: This is a Government proposal.

**Hon. H. MILLINGTON**: No-one questions the Government's proposal in respect of the requirements of a modern gaol.

**Hon. N. Keenan**: This resolution was moved by the Chief Secretary in another place.

**Hon. H. MILLINGTON**: That resolution was improved by someone else. I do not think this is the original proposal. The other place is responsible for it as it stands; the original motion was improved by another place, which is not an unusual procedure. The result is that we find what appears to me to be a ridiculous proposal. The resolution is divided into three parts, and one of the paragraphs is not in dispute. What gave rise to the Government's proposal to secure the backing of the two Houses? It was the fact that the proposed site has met with objections from those concerned, namely, the Perth City Council. The council has a considerable area of land on the coastal side of the City of Perth. Either by endowment, or by acquiring land, the council now has 3,700 acres. Part of that has been dedicated as a park. I think that Reabold Hill, the highest point in the City of Perth area, is somewhere in the centre of the proposed park site. The idea is that when we take visitors and citizens up to Reabold Hill on the road to City Beach, we can show them this modern gaol site, where 225 acres have been resumed! I do not know why 225 acres were selected, especially as I believe there is a proposal to establish a farm colony—a penal settlement—further out. There is already one in the Albany district.

**Mr. Watts**: We will talk about that later on.

**Hon. H. MILLINGTON**: I am opposed to the proposed site, and I suggest to every member who does not oppose that site that he should have no objection to a gaol being erected in any part of the metropolitan area, even in his own electorate. I attended a meeting called by the Perth City Council and, I think, the Nedlands Road Board. At that meeting a motion was carried opposing the erection of a gaol

on the proposed site or any other site within the metropolitan area, and urging the Government to give consideration to placing the prison outside the metropolitan area. During my period in office, owing to war causes, many prisoners had to be removed from the dangerous Fremantle area. That was because Fremantle was very vulnerable to attack, and it was not considered safe to leave prisoners there. So a gaol was established at Barton's Mill. I am not going to be led into the trap of saying that that is a suitable site. I know there is a valid objection to it. The fact remains that the policy of the Government at that time was to remove the gaol site outside of the metropolitan area.

Several reasons have been given as to why the proposed site is suitable for a gaol. One is that it is near the mental hospital. What town planner has ever declared that there is any association between a mental hospital and a gaol? Has it ever been suggested that those two institutions must be placed together? Also the fact is cited that Lemnos is situated in the area; but that is a hospital. There is the infectious diseases hospital, too, which does not cover much ground. That was placed in the district many years ago and it consisted of a series of ramshackle buildings, until the modern hospital was built. There is also a dogs' home; but does anyone suggest that a dogs' home is an immovable object? There were altogether 13 reasons for the establishment of the gaol on this site, and nearly all of them are negative.

I am reminded of a statement of Sir George Reid, who declared that a certain argument was supported by a "necklace of negatives." So is this site! In looking around for reasons for the establishment of the gaol in this particular place, the sponsors of the site submitted mainly negative reasons. I suppose that when the mental hospital was first placed there, it was well in the bush; and the same applies to the infectious diseases' hospital. We might just as well say that if this Government or any other Government proposed now to establish an old men's home it should be established on the finest building site in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Lands: That would not be any more than the old men are entitled to. They made it possible for all the big buildings to be built.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: The Minister is not going to trap me in that way.

The Minister for Lands: You are not easy to trap, are you?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Those men are entitled to the best.

The Minister for Lands: Then what are you grizzling about?

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: If today we had to choose a site for the Old Men's Home we would put it in a more suitable position. They would be given a greater area of land on which to move about, instead of having to go along the roads for all the drunken motor drivers to run over them. Walking along the road is the only exercise the men get at the moment; and they are entitled to the best.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must ask the hon. member to confine himself to the motion. There is nothing in it about the Old Men's Home.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: There is not but in choosing a site for public institutions we should take an entirely different stand from what was taken many years ago. The Old Men's Home is an instance of an institution being placed on a site which would not have been chosen in these days from a town planning point of view. I do not pose as an expert on modern gaol requirements, but I think all of us have a pretty fair idea of town planning and what is suitable and what is unsuitable within the populated metropolitan area.

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

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I was examining the reasons advanced by the Government for the appointment of this committee and, more particularly, the choosing of this site near Claremont, and known as the Claremont site, for the proposed gaol, and the statement that the requirements of a modern gaol had never been challenged—that is, what the Government considered the requirements for a modern gaol. I am prepared to take the advice the Government received—I presume, fully, in a report—of what constitutes the requirements of a modern gaol. I am aware of the advances made in criminology and I know the Government

has taken every care to consult authorities in that respect, so there is no difference of opinion there that I know of. The Government's proposal in that respect has not been challenged, and I therefore contend that there is no need for a Joint Committee to reconsider something on which members all agree. When it comes to the second question, whether the site known as the Claremont site should be used for this purpose, it is there that I part company with the Government.

It is true that a committee consisting of three members of another place and three members of this Assembly would be a committee of laymen, and they would have to say whether this site is suitable. I think that originally the Government's proposal was that the committee should consider whether the site was suitable. There are many sites that would perhaps be suitable for many institutions, but it might be inadvisable to select such a site. When a site was being sought for the Perth Hospital, it was suggested that a portion of King's Park be used. The then Premier, the member for Boulder, immediately said, "Hands off King's Park," not that a suitable site could not have been found in King's Park but his opinion was that that area should be reserved for the public, as a park. I do not dispute that a gaol could conveniently be built on the Claremont site but, in the light of modern town planning and the development taking place in the metropolitan area, I do not think we should limit the development of the city by placing a gaol on that site.

Many years ago, when the present Fremantle Gaol site was approved, it was possibly suitable, being about 12 miles from the metropolitan area, but I do not think that that is now a suitable site for a modern gaol and I do not advocate the gaol being left in the Fremantle district. I contend that a gaol should not be placed in any closely-settled district in the metropolitan area. The requirements of a modern gaol are different from the requirements of a gaol 50 or 100 years ago. I think the Fremantle site is not now suitable, even as regards area, and it is certainly not suitable, being placed right in the heart of Fremantle. During wartime, many of the prisoners were moved from the Fremantle Gaol to Barton's Mill, because of the danger, the danger to the prisoners confined in the gaol

and the danger of having a lot of criminals let loose in the community. No-one wants a lot of criminals loose in the community in either wartime or peacetime. It was considered that a gaol site should not be within easy distance of the coast.

We are not responsible for the present Fremantle Gaol site, but we will be responsible for whatever site we choose for a new gaol. It is to be a modern gaol, with all modern requirements, whatever they may be, and for that purpose I understand an area of 225 acres is to be reserved. I have also heard that there are to be buffer areas. I assume that people would not build in the immediate vicinity of a gaol. Inquiries made by the City Council and by the Nedlands Road Board go to show that the selecting of this site of 225 acres would mean that practically 1,000 acres would be involved and would not be utilised for residential purposes to expand the town. I am not going to advocate that the present gaol site is suitable and should be continued in use. It is true that the Commonwealth Government commandeered a part or the whole of the site during the war. I do not know whether that still obtains, or whether that is the cause of the hurry, because we still have Barton's Mill and I assume that the Fremantle Gaol is suitable for the incorrigible cases. It appeared that Barton's Mill was not suitable for such cases, when there were a number of escapes from there, but there must be someone, in Government departments or elsewhere, who can give advice as to how even the most dangerous criminal can be safely held, either at Fremantle or Barton's Mill.

It is remarkable if we have to go to the extent of rushing round looking for a new site for a gaol simply because the Commonwealth Government, after the war is over, still requires the present gaol site. Surely we should have ample time to select an area and erect a new gaol, considering that the present gaol belongs to the State! The proposed site is, I believe, within four miles of the G.P.O., as against 12 miles in the case of the present Fremantle Gaol, so it is proposed, apparently, to bring the gaol that much nearer to the heart of the city. We cannot blame those who, in the past, built the Fremantle Gaol where it now stands, but we will be responsible if we place the new gaol right within the metropolitan area. In town planning, certain

areas must be set aside for special purposes. The whole City of Perth has been zoned into residential areas, factory areas, and business areas, with building limited and regulated accordingly, so as to establish some order.

Surely the Government, in following a modern town-planning design, should have some regard to the future extension of the City of Perth. I can readily understand the objection raised by the councillors of the City of Perth and members of the Nedlands Road Board. I pointed out earlier that the City of Perth is involved not only because of the thickly inhabited portion but also because land has been purchased for residential purposes in one area to the extent of over 3,000 acres. Naturally, there is objection to further encroachment by what might be called the objectionable features of civilisation. If we had now to choose a site for the Mental Hospital, I do not think it would be placed where it is. We would certainly put the site further from Perth. I do not think we would now choose a cemetery site as close as is the present cemetery. I remember when there was a cemetery at East Perth, where there now stands a fine school building.

Though we criticise what has been done in the past, we are responsible for what is done now. If the Government is prepared to take the responsibility of saying that this site is the only one, well and good, but why refer the question to a non-expert committee composed of representatives of both Houses, who will have to go through exactly the same formalities and make the same inquiries as have already been made on the requirements for a modern gaol and the choosing of suitable sites? Until recently, Government policy was that the gaol should be removed from the immediate metropolitan district. I am not sure how far from the centre of Perth Barton's Mill is, but I think it is at least 20 miles. That site was considered quite suitable, except for the fact that it is in a water-catchment area. At all events, that was the modern idea, to remove the gaol site from the metropolitan area, but now the position seems to be reversed, and a site four miles away is suggested.

The Premier: Barton's Mill was a wartime expedient.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: It was considered good policy.

The Premier: It was considered expedient, because of the war.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: Of course it was an expedient.

The Minister for Lands: I have always had an idea that the member for Mt. Hawthorn did not have much knowledge of Government policy.

Hon. H. MILLINGTON: I do not know much about present Government policy, except as I see it here. It was recognised that it was good town-planning policy to remove the gaol site at least that distance from the metropolitan area. It was also considered good Government policy to look far enough ahead to purchase a site so that eventually the Mental Hospital might be removed, or in any case to obviate the necessity for extending the present Mental Hospital site. This is a complete somersault—20 miles reduced to four miles—and the reasons given that already in the district we have unfortunately a mental hospital, an infectious diseases hospital, a cemetery, a sanitary depot, a rifle range, a Commonwealth defence area, a dogs' home and I suppose other things, for some of which we are responsible and for some of which we are not. They are all negative reasons. In no case does any one of those things represent an irremovable object. As the extension of the town proceeds, I see nothing to prevent, when necessary, any of those objectionable things being removed.

The time has come when we consider that the gaol should be removed from the Fremantle area. I agree that that site is not suitable for a gaol, but I would not agree to the gaol being placed anywhere within the same distance—12 miles—of the inner metropolitan settlement. We are asked to appoint a non-expert committee to determine whether the Claremont site should be used for the purpose of a gaol and also to consider the requirements for a modern gaol. If the committee says that the Claremont site should not be used for that purpose, then it is sought to place on the committee the responsibility of reporting upon and recommending any alternative site. The reply to that is very easy. If the committee decided that the Claremont site should not be used for a gaol, its duty would not be to chase around and examine other sites which they as laymen

might consider suitable. Their simple duty would be to pass the matter back to the Government and say, "Since we do not agree that a gaol should be built within the immediate metropolitan district, we pass it back to the experts who deal with these matters to determine on a suitable site in an area outside the metropolitan district." Thus the third proposal is not one which could be competently dealt with by the proposed committee. Its members in turn would have to get expert advice as to where the site should be, even if it were outside the metropolitan district.

Since the proposal is that the gaol shall be established in the Mt. Hawthorn electorate, I say to other members representing metropolitan districts, of whom there are 17, that if they agree to this site being used for the purpose, they also agree that the gaol could be put in any electorate within the metropolitan district. I know the position in this growing district; it has increased to the extent of easily 4,000 people during the last few years. The whole town is spreading towards the coast. This is a very fine residential area, healthy and with high land, and it is near the coast. That is where the city of Perth is extending and that is where it should extend. I wish to make it abundantly clear that whatever subjects the committee discusses, I have the strongest objection to the adoption of the proposed site, and I have just as strong an objection to the erection of a gaol on any site within the metropolitan district. I am not merely quibbling about the proposal to put the gaol in the district I represent; I would object to its being placed anywhere within the metropolitan area, no matter where.

I will close by reminding members again that the Fremantle Gaol was considered to be in a very unsuitable area from a defence point of view, being so close to the coast. We are not responsible for that, but if we plan a modern gaol that may have to serve for another 50 or 100 years, as the present gaol has served, almost on the coast where it cannot be defended, near the rifle range and near the Commonwealth defence area, we shall be responsible. If the Fremantle site could not be defended during wartime and we now proceed to erect a gaol on the Claremont site, we shall have very soon forgotten that lesson of the war. Whether a committee is appointed, I am not

concerned, but I am concerned to make it known as plainly as I can that I consider the appointment of a committee unnecessary to deal with paragraphs (a) and (b) and am utterly opposed to a gaol being erected on the proposed site at Claremont.

**MR. WATTS (Katanning)** [7.52]: I have no objection to offer to the resolution in its present form. I can sympathise with the Government on its trouble in this matter. I have no doubt that the Government feels it essential to impose some responsibility upon members of Parliament in a matter of this sort. I admit that members are not altogether qualified to deal with all the subject-matter involved in this question, but as I have frequently stated here—and I feel I must adhere to my belief—it is desirable that members of this Legislature should be given an opportunity in many directions to assist in making the best possible provision for the people. While this is not one of the matters to which I have previously referred, I think we are justified in asking a section of both Houses to make some inquiry into the subject and to inform the House and incidentally the public of its views as to the best course of action to be taken.

I have no objection to the resolution in its present form though I think it might well include other matters. I assure the member for Mt. Hawthorn, however, that I am not without a great deal of sympathy for one point of view he expressed, and that is the position that may arise when there is a gaol that does not comply with what in my opinion is the first requirement of a modern prison, namely, as complete security as possible for the incarceration of prisoners. At the Pardelup prison in the vicinity of Mt. Barker, which I would like to tell the hon. member is in the district I represent, there is a state of affairs which gives the impression that unless a gaol is capable of holding the persons put in it, it is undoubtedly going to be a menace to the surrounding territory and impose upon the people who live in that territory a feeling that they and their possessions are not safe and that action should be taken immediately to alter the situation. The Minister, in introducing the resolution to the House said—

We want establishments of the Pardelup type for then we would have a great factor in regard to reform.

Further on in his speech he said—

If we have another intermediate gaol and then Pardelup, we shall be able to classify the prisoners in accordance with their character and disposition.

As I stated that this resolution should be added to, I move an amendment—

That a new paragraph be added as follows:—

(d) In view of the types of prisoners which have recently been kept at Pardelup Prison Farm and the number of escapes therefrom, whether such prison should not be closed and all prisoners kept in the modern gaol to be erected and Pardelup used for some other public purpose.

During the last few weeks I have frequently called attention to the situation that has developed at the Pardelup Prison, and I think that when members have heard all I have to say, they will agree that there is ample room for the proposed committee to add to its inquiries the matters mentioned in the paragraph I have just read. I should like to go back and say that this matter has gone on for a considerable period of years. Not long after I was first elected to this House, a number of escapes took place from Pardelup Prison Farm. In one case a property where there was no male person present at the time was visited by an escaped prisoner, and from that property various items including a suit of clothes and firearms were removed.

I would like to inform members that Pardelup is situated approximately 18 miles westward of the town of Mt. Barker in the district known as Forrest Hill. At Forrest Hill there is a large number of comparatively small farming properties, many of them of the orchard type, and the homesteads of the settlers are comparatively close together. In some instances they are less than a quarter of a mile apart, which is fairly close for a rural area. Consequent upon these escapes, the residents were a little concerned and made representations to the member for the district. The customary assurances were given that this was only a sort of casual occurrence, not likely to happen again, that suitable action had been taken, etc. I am not one who believes in making a mountain out of a molehill. No public representations were made at that time, but a little later a very similar thing occurred and on this occasion I had a discussion with the officer who was then the

Deputy Comptroller of Gaols. The report of the Comptroller General of Prisons subsequently will explain far more accurately than I can do what were the intentions of the department regarding the Pardelup Prison. I have the reports of the Comptroller General for the two years ended the 30th June, 1943. In the report for the year ended the 30th June, 1942, he stated—

Meantime, we may say that the present set-up provides for three important classifications:

At Fremantle . . . the more recalcitrant and unresponsive types, or short-term men.

At Barton's Mill . . . the clearing house containing the main body of offenders classified into three grades.

At Pardelup Prison Farm the best behaved and most responsive as well as the first offenders.

I repeat those words: the best behaved and most responsive, as well as first offenders. They were to be the prisoners who were to be incarcerated at the Pardelup Prison Farm under what is known as the honour system, where none of them is locked up at night, where every man is supplied with a separate hut in which to live, all of which I do not object to if it will result in the reformation of prisoners who have made their first slip in the way of crime. I would not object to it at all in those circumstances, and had those circumstances been valid and had the Pardelup Prison Farm contained no persons other than those, the remarks I am making this evening would not have been made. But to carry on! In the same report we are informed that in the previous year—that is, the year ended the 30th June, 1942—there were 20 escapes from Barton's Mill prison and nine from the Pardelup Prison Farm. So for the year ended the 30th June, 1942, there were nine escapes from the Pardelup Prison Farm.

I have no details of those escapes and I do not propose, therefore, to quote or give data as to the accuracy of which I am not sure; but I do know this, that those nine escapes were not favourably viewed by the people of that district. As I have said before, concern was expressed again to me by them, but I gave them verbally the assurance which had been given to me and which is mentioned in this report, and with that I think everyone was for the time being satisfied. The following year, however, the report discloses in regard to the Pardelup Prison Farm that there were two more escapes, but that in each instance the men

were recaptured. Again no action was taken by the authorities, except to recapture the prisoners. I am unable, unfortunately, to ascertain the average number of prisoners at the Pardelup Prison Farm during the period under review, because in the Comptroller General's report they are included in a number kept at Fremantle and at Barton's Mill; only the number of prisoners kept at the very small country gaols in other country centres are stated separately in the report. I do know, however, that as on the 15th August of this year there were 37 prisoners at Pardelup, and I am given to understand that that is about the maximum number which can be maintained there. In consequence, if there were nine escapes in one year, that represents 25 per cent. of the prisoners. And I point out to the House that there have been nine escapes this year, that is, from the 15th August. That is in three months.

Mr. Withers: Were they good conduct prisoners?

Mr. WATTS: They escaped from the Pardelup Prison Farm. I will now give details of the types of prisoners. In three months there have been nine escapes, that is, since the 15th August. On that day, if the Votes and Proceedings of this House be consulted—if anyone cares to read them again—it will be found that, in reply to certain questions asked by me, those prisoners, having taken the farm cart and horse, made their escape in the first instance in that vehicle. Having got themselves some three or four miles away, in the vicinity of Forrest Hill, they there misappropriated a motor vehicle, in which they drove 15 or 20 miles to a place called Narrakup. There they broke into a store and removed a quantity of goods. They then drove back to Forrest Hill and returned themselves, with the horse and cart, to the Pardelup Prison Farm, having first, I understand, hidden the goods which they had stolen outside the farm. They were at the prison at roll call the next morning, so that no-one was aware they had escaped until complaints began to be made by the various persons who had suffered by their minor depredations. Inquiries then resulted in their detection. In consequence, they were arrested and I understand that, mainly from information given by one of them, although I have not verified that point, they were arrested and taken to Mt. Barker and charged with escaping.

At the suggestion of the magistrate one of them was removed to the Albany gaol for greater security. The detention house at Mt. Barker was found to be so inadequate that three of the number who were locked up there for the night succeeded in prizing a sheet of iron off the roof and escaping, leaving one of their number behind. Whether he was asleep or just left behind was not made clear; anyway, he was left behind, but those who did escape, having managed to misappropriate a motor vehicle here and there, finally got themselves 100 miles or so along the line in the direction of Perth. There they were arrested, at Katanning and Wagin, on railway trucks, their supplies of petrol having apparently become exhausted and they being unable to obtain a further supply. They were duly locked up again.

All that does not disclose that there is much virtue in this honour system; but even then it would be possible to overlook all this were the types of prisoners such as could be classified as responsive to this type of prison treatment or as first offenders, as stated in the report of the Comptroller General for 1943, to which I have referred. So, in order that I might have some additional information in regard to the types of prisoners, I asked further questions in the House. I asked whether I could have a return of the prisoners at the Pardelup Prison Farm on the 15th August, 1945. I was very courteously informed that I could, and I am indebted to the former Comptroller General of Prisons, who has just retired, for the information which I now give to the House, being a return supplied by that gentleman quite recently to me. The first of the prisoners was a man named S. J. Bratt, who was imprisoned on a sentence of 18 months for gross indecency. His previous offence had been for false pretences, for which he was given 180 days' imprisonment.

The next is K. H. Butler, who received four years' imprisonment for stealing with violence. It will be noticed how comforting is the fact that there is a prisoner at Pardelup who has been sentenced to four years' imprisonment for stealing with violence, especially when I read the number of convictions he previously had. It will be realised how comforting that is to the settlers and other people to whom I referred, especially the ladies concerned, who are left frequently without any male protection

whatever. This man's previous convictions were for unlawfully assuming control of a motor vehicle in 1943; stealing in 1941, three more charges of unlawfully assuming control of motor vehicles in 1943; stealing, stealing and receiving, assault and stealing a wallet. I will not name the next man as he is a first offender. His offence was only false pretences. I now come to a prisoner named H. L. Carroll, who was one of the escapees on the 15th August and who was sent for greater protection to the Albany gaol, rather than leave him at Mt. Barker. He was in prison on a sentence of three years, and thereafter at the Governor's pleasure, for demanding money with menaces. Again, I repeat, what an interesting commentary is this on the persons who are responsive and likely to be kind to neighbouring people if they should take one of the excellent opportunities that are afforded them to escape. His previous convictions are: Stealing, stealing, receiving, unlawfully on premises, stealing, creating disturbances, etc. The next man is a gentleman named Clarke. He was in on five charges.

Mr. J. Hegney: An honourable gentleman?

Mr. WATTS: I said a gentleman. Sufficient! His crimes were stealing, unlawfully on premises, unlawful possession, stealing, and unlawfully on premises. He had previously had no less than three charges of stealing as well as one for unlawful possession and another for stealing and receiving. I now come to M. T. Crawford. The offence for which he was in for four years' hard labour was breaking and entering, which is akin to burglary; stealing and receiving, unlawful control of motor vehicle, escaping from custody, three charges of stealing; his previous convictions were for unlawful possession, breach of the Licensing Act, which I would not worry about, but it is listed here, and stealing and receiving. Then we have J. Colbrough, who escaped again a couple of days ago. He is the man who recently escaped from Pardelup.

I should mention that no fewer than three more prisoners have escaped in the last few days from this same prison. Colbrough, I understand, not only took a motor vehicle, but took the farm motor vehicle from the prison farm and managed to reach a place not more than 39 miles from Perth. It will be noted that these men do not necessarily

select vehicles belonging to people in the surrounding country; they even go so far as to take the motor vehicle from the prison farm itself. This last prisoner is serving an aggregate term of eight years. Among his offences are: Stealing, breaking and entering, unlawful use of motorcar and escaping from custody. I ask members to pay attention to this prisoner, as he is another one who has a previous conviction for escaping from custody, included in his aggregate term of eight years. Then we come to D. H. Ellis, who is imprisoned there on a charge of stealing. His previous convictions are: stealing unlawfully on premises, stealing and breaking and entering. In respect of these crimes he received various sentences. I now come to D. G. Gibbs, who is serving  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years' imprisonment for robbery with violence. I ask members to note that.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are they all in your electorate?

Mr. WATTS: Unfortunately; by reason of this infernal prison system, they are; but as they have no electoral rights I am not very much concerned about them. The people about whom I am concerned are those who have to live near them and for whom I do accept some measure of responsibility. This man was sentenced to  $3\frac{1}{2}$  years for robbery with violence. His previous convictions were: Disorderly conduct, unlawful assault and uttering. Then we have L. W. Harris, who is sentenced to three years' imprisonment for assault with intent to steal, but as he had no previous record, I suppose I should have excused him. The next man is T. Ingvardson, who was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for robbery with violence. His previous convictions of any major importance were: Stealing, unlawful possession, stealing and receiving, breaking and entering, stowaway, breach of the aliens regulations, etc. The next prisoner of importance is F. T. M. Lange, who was convicted for entering and unlawfully on premises to commit a crime. He was sentenced to three years' imprisonment with hard labour. Among his previous convictions are: Stealing, four charges.

Mr. Fox: Could you not quote some persons higher up who were guilty of robbery without violence?

Mr. WATTS: In 1943, three charges of stealing and receiving. I have nothing against the prisoners except insofar as the

are prisoners. I am obliged to make reference to them in order to establish the case that I wish this House to adopt, which is that it is necessary to take strong action in regard to this place if in the future we are going to use it as a prison at all. The next prisoner had an aggregate term of eight years and eight months for breaking and entering, stealing and receiving, and escaping from legal custody. He was also apparently known to be able and willing to escape when given the opportunity. His previous convictions were shop-breaking and larceny. Then we have another, unlawful possession of a motor vehicle, stealing, escaping from custody and breaking and entering. A little later there is another whose offences were breaking and entering, stealing and escaping from custody, with an aggregate term of seven years and nine months. His previous convictions had been larceny in company, larceny from the person, two charges of larceny and obscene exposure.

The next man had five years with hard labour for robbery with violence. His previous offences were stealing, vagrancy, three more charges of stealing, and being idle and disorderly. The next involves a charge of two years' hard labour for breaking and entering. I think the remainder come somewhere near the bounds of reasonableness except L. Whelan, who escaped from custody on the 15th August. He was in on seven charges including stealing, two of being unlawfully on premises, escaping, unlawfully assuming control of a motorcar, unlawful possession, stealing and larceny, and he got the biggest sentence of all for breaking and entering. His previous convictions were six charges of stealing, unlawful possession, and escaping from legal custody. Taking into consideration the charges that have been levied against these men, on which they have been convicted and are serving sentence, and taking into consideration the expressed intention of the Comptroller of Prisons, in the report that I read, on various happenings that have taken place at Pardelup, it is obvious to me that some drastic action must be taken either in respect of the type of person to be sent to Pardelup or, alternatively, in respect of the methods to be used in regard to their detention. So far as I can ascertain the staff there is carrying out a policy that has been laid down departmentally.

The members of the staff are not in a position to query who is sent to the prison. They receive the men sent and carry out the policy of putting them on the honour system and of leaving them in such a type of custody that escape is perfectly easy. With the type of prisoner that has been sent there it is quite obvious that the staff of four warders is not sufficient. I do not doubt, although for obvious reasons I have not made inquiries, that the womenfolk belonging to the warders there feel as much concern as is felt by the women in the surrounding country when it is known what type of person is to be found at Pardelup as prisoners. So I have no hesitation in saying that a period has to be put to this state of affairs. If we cannot arrange the matter so that the prisoners who go to Pardelup are of a type likely to be responsive to this sort of treatment, then we shall have to change the treatment or, alternatively—and in my view in these circumstances this would be a great deal better—close the gaol and make use of it for some other public purpose. I have no doubt there are other purposes for which it could be used. As it is very good land and capable of development, it might be practicable to turn it into a training school for future settlers, or into some kind of agricultural college. It might be practicable to do many things with it, but I do say that the situation that has existed there for the last few years, and more particularly in the last few months, cannot be allowed to continue.

Therefore it seems to me that the whole subject-matter of the Pardelup prison, and the methods adopted there, should be inquired into by the committee which this motion seeks to appoint. It would then be possible for the members of the staff to express their views as to what is wrong with the prison in which they serve. I have no doubt they would be prepared to express those views in evidence before that committee, and it would be a distinct advantage if they were permitted to do so. It would be as well if members of this House—those not on the committee—should have the opportunity of reading what the gentlemen in charge of the prison, and obliged to deal with the difficult cases there, have to say on this subject; as to whether or no it is desirable to continue the present practices or to alter them, or to

close the prison. Those are the reasons why I have moved this amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

**MR. NEEDHAM** (Perth) [8.23]: I gathered from the speech of the Leader of the Opposition that he is more concerned about the type of gaol and the kind of prisoners found there than the site itself. There is something to be said for that, but I am concerned about the site. The original resolution was to appoint a committee to inquire into where our gaol site should be. I have had an intimate association with this question from its inception. I had the privilege of introducing a deputation representing the City Council to the Chief Secretary when the question of the gaol site at Claremont was first mooted. I pointed out my objection to a gaol being situated anywhere in the metropolitan area. That deputation was representative not only of the City Council but also of other adjacent local governing bodies—Subiaco, Nedlands, etc. We had the pleasure of the Chief Secretary expounding the virtues of the proposed new gaol site at Claremont. I was not impressed by what he told us. As has been mentioned by the member for Mt. Hawthorn, there was a conference of the local governing bodies that I have already mentioned and the metropolitan members of this Parliament.

Members expressed their sentiments in very strong terms against the gaol site at Claremont. I went to see this site and whatever objections I might have had in the early stages of this agitation became stronger after I saw the site. I cannot imagine for a moment why in these days any Government should agree to establish a gaol site in the midst of a growing population. The Premier interjected during the speech of the member for Mt. Hawthorn that the selection of the site at Barton's Mill was a matter of war expediency, if I heard the interjection correctly. We know why Barton's Mill was chosen. At the time that was done, we were practically on the eve of invasion, and great danger would have resulted had the Fremantle gaol been allowed to continue. The Government of the day at that time acted promptly and did much good to the community by establishing the gaol at Barton's Mill. That was a wonderful piece of work, despite the fact that on occasions the inmates of that place

have temporarily regained their liberty. I also want to say that the present policy of the Government from the penological point of view is to be commended.

The site and conditions obtaining at Barton's Mill certainly constitute a much needed reform. I have already spoken on that matter in this Chamber. The time has long gone past when a man or woman suffering confinement because of a misdemeanor should be judged from the prison uniform worn. I commend the Willcock Government which commenced that policy and the Wise Government for continuing it. The member for Gascoyne said that the establishment of Barton's Mill was a matter of expediency but I venture to say that the resolution we are considering is one of evasion. The Government itself should determine where the gaol site should be whether it is in the metropolitan area or somewhere else. Having determined that, it will require money with which to establish the gaol on the particular site selected. Then Parliament will have its remedy. The Government will be required to place on the Estimates provision for the necessary money required to establish the gaol on the new site. Thus Parliament will have the last word in saying whether or not it will vote the money for the erection of the gaol on the selected site. I would say that instead of referring this matter to a Joint Committee that is representative of both Houses of Parliament with a view to providing advice to the Government on this expert matter, the Government should take the necessary action itself, and the course proposed in the motion is to my mind an evasion of Government responsibilities.

The Chief Secretary told Parliament very plainly that the action I have already mentioned was taken upon the advice of experts, including someone from the Eastern States. The advice given to the Government was that the Claremont site was ideal. On the other hand we have heard opinions expressed that the site is not ideal. Let the Government take its courage in both hands and indicate that it will establish the gaol on the Claremont site or somewhere else, and then come to Parliament for the necessary appropriation. That would be a real test, a much better test than a Joint Committee on the lines suggested. The committee would have to

invoke expert assistance and that expert assistance might be from the same expert source that the Government has already taken advantage of, and about which the Chief Secretary has already spoken. In the circumstances, I oppose the resolution even in an amended form. I do not think the Joint Committee should be appointed at all. The Government should make up its own mind as to where the gaol should be established and then seek the necessary appropriation from Parliament, which would then have the right to say whether or not it would grant the funds requested.

**MR. ABBOTT** (North Perth) [8.32]: I support the resolution in its present form. The first portion is of importance even if only for the reason mentioned by the Chief Secretary, namely, that members should know something of the problems confronting prison administrators. I do not think that members of a Joint Committee could determine upon a proper site without having first made themselves thoroughly familiar with all aspects of the kind of prison for which they were to recommend a site. For that reason alone they would have to consider what type of prison was to be erected on the site chosen. Without having an opportunity to secure all the information that was before the Minister when the Claremont site was selected, I hesitate to criticise it with all the force that such a site would seem to justify. To me it seems most ridiculous to suggest placing an establishment that apparently, so far as we are aware, is for the purpose of keeping long-term dangerous prisoners in detention—it is suggested that the proposed modern gaol is to be used for that purpose—so close to the city.

It may be that more than one new prison building is required. One may be necessary for short-term prisoners whom it would be inconvenient to provide for at a long distance from the city, while another should be for the long-term prisoners. Whatever the reasons of the Joint Committee might be, in the event of the decision going in favour of the Claremont site I certainly would not be convinced. Like the member for Mt. Hawthorn, I cannot conceive a site that could be more unsuitable than the one suggested. When the site is selected it should, in my opinion, be sufficiently far from the metropolitan area to

allow for the expansion of the city. I think the proposed committee will be able to assist us in that direction. In my opinion, the widest possible publicity should be given on a question such as this, so that anyone likely to be affected will have an opportunity to put his views to the committee before its decision is arrived at. Therefore I think the appointment of a Joint Committee is essential and I shall support the motion.

**MR. READ** (Victoria Park) [8.36]: In the course of debates in this Chamber we have had what may be described as the battle of the sites. The first referred to a sanitary site.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order! We are not discussing the sanitary site now.

**Mr. READ:** Now we are discussing the gaol site. We must realise that the Gaols Department is in almost desperate need of a new metropolitan penitentiary and that the accommodation and amenities together with the existing facilities at the Fremantle Gaol have reached the stage where something has to be done to provide a site for a new gaol. The unfortunate and unfavourable position regarding the Fremantle Gaol, which was established very many years ago at a time when Fremantle was a small township, emphasises the fact that it is too near to the city today. The development of the city of Fremantle has been retarded because of the position of the gaol. From what we can learn, it is essential that we shall not repeat past mistakes in the area adjacent to the capital city of Perth. The Chief Secretary and his advisers, as well as the Comptroller of Prisons, have between them selected a site which is not acceptable to most of the inhabitants of the metropolitan area. The site is in a line with the continuation of Hay-street, about four miles from the General Post Office. The site comprises 250 acres and has buffer areas on the eastern and western sides of another 400 acres. That would alienate for all time approximately 1,000 acres that could be utilised in the further development of the City of Perth. On looking up what is considered to be the requirements of a modern gaol, I found the following:—

(a) A prison for the incarceration in total security of dangerous criminals.

(b) A gaol for the detention of convicted persons of lesser offences, and for persons serving short sentences.

(c) A barracks for the confinement of persons awaiting trial and those remanded for trial.

(d) Workshop buildings, exercise yards and working areas, both wall-enclosed and in the open, for the proper working of prisoners and for their instruction and rehabilitation.

(e) Administrative buildings and staff accommodation.

That is a conception of what will be needed to meet modern requirements, and I think the gaol should be far removed from the metropolitan area, always bearing in mind the need for accessibility by some main artery. One of the matters stressed is rehabilitation of prisoners by field work and dairy farming, and the proposed site would not lend itself in any way to that form of work. The Claremont site consists of a bowl or depression with high land all around, which would make excellent sites for homes. We have been told that the area would permit of homes being provided for 3,000 families, and they would be within a distance of four or five miles of the G.P.O. The surroundings are excellent; it is one part where experts have told us natural development could take place. The report of the Town Planning Commissioner states—

Consideration of the disposition of the people in the metropolitan area shows that the land areas between the city and the coastal beaches provide the best potential development for future residential accommodation. This coastal strip will provide thousands of working people with building sites having an economy of transport to industry and to beach and other recreation unsurpassed by any other area and in a situation well suited to the climatic conditions of the State.

Another aspect that I believe is not sufficiently appreciated is that the adoption of the Claremont site would involve encroachment upon University endowment lands. Endowment lands have been granted to the University for the furtherance of education, and no Government should alienate properties thus granted to the University. Later on when the value of the land increases the return from the leasing of it will provide revenue for all time. In some of the older cities, this source of income represents the major portion of university revenue.

Other speakers have pointed out that the location of the mental hospital, the dogs' home, etc., in that locality militates against the use of the land for residential purposes, but those places could be moved elsewhere and in due course I believe that other sites

will have to be found for them. This should be a warning to us not to perpetrate another mistake of the same sort. Let us try to visualise what that part will be in another 25 or 50 years. We do not want the people of that time to be confronted with a recurrence of our present trouble. Yet the people of the future will experience something of our present anxiety if we consent to the Claremont site for a gaol.

There are plenty of other sites quite suitable for a gaol. We have been told that somebody from the Eastern States chose the Claremont site for a gaol, stating that it was ideal. I repeat that this is not the only suitable site available. There are dozens of others. Some that I have in mind are within easy access of the city being only 10 or 14 miles distant and are served by such conveniences as electric current and water.

The Minister for Justice: Would a gaol site be popular anywhere?

Mr. READ: No, but that does not justify our putting a new gaol in our midst and preventing the development that otherwise would take place. Consider the matter of transport! Would it not be easier to transport a few hundred or even a few thousand prisoners backwards and forwards to a gaol than to transport 30,000 people morning and night to and from their work over the longer distance at which they would have to live from the city for all time? I know of experts who have great knowledge of areas suitable for the purpose, and they would be able to make available their information on the subject. If a committee were appointed, no harm could possibly be done and valuable information might be made available to the Government, leading it to locating the gaol not within the metropolitan area but at least 12 miles distant from the centre of the city.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [8.50]: I regret that my knowledge of this subject is somewhat superficial, nor have I any inside information. As I view the matter, it is not a question of whether the proposed site is suitable for a gaol. We have not to decide that point. The question of deciding upon a suitable site would be almost impossible.

The Minister for Lands: Would you like it at Bunbury?

Mr. WITHERS: Perth might expand as far as Bunbury some day and then the gaol would still be in the way. It is a question

of whether the site is suitable to the community. As the Minister for Justice has just interjected, would a gaol site be popular anywhere? We talk about a gaol site close to the City of Perth and some say it ought to be removed to a remote place. However, in 20 or 25 years that remote place might become a popular resort and the gaol would then interfere with its popularity. Suppose the gaol site some years ago had been fixed at Yanchep, which was then far removed from the city, what prospect would we have had of developing Yanchep as a favourite resort, such as it is now? People would have said, "The gaol should never have been built on this site; it should have been put elsewhere. How are we to develop Yanchep for the benefit of the State?"

Mr. North: What about an island?

Mr. WITHERS: We had an island site at one time. Rottnest Island was the place where long-term prisoners were sent.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: And aborigines.

Mr. WITHERS: I remember the man who was in charge at Rottnest; he had a son who was in Parliament since I have been a member. Afterwards the Rottnest Island gaol was removed to Fremantle. I remember going to Brisbane with the Minister for Lands. We saw a large prison on St. Helena Island, at the mouth of the Brisbane River. The prison has since been removed and the island turned into a summer resort like Rottnest. I had an experience last year. This is outside information, too, not inside. I was in Melbourne this time 12 months ago and visited relatives who asked me to have a look at the park where they lived. On the Sunday afternoon we walked past Pentridge gaol, and the people seemed proud of it. Talk about buildings! Shops and dwelling-houses are being constructed by the hundred near that gaol. The park is only separated by a road from the prison. At one time the park was a dirty old watercourse, but the authorities beautified it over a period of years, and now thousands of people drive to it on a Sunday afternoon. There is a band and the men sail and race their toy yachts in the cemented pool.

Mr. Abbott: The gaol is to be removed.

Mr. W. Hegney: Where is it?

Mr. WITHERS: Coburg. The Commonwealth is building hundreds of houses under the Commonwealth Housing Scheme within kicking distance of the gaol. Members spoke

about progress being retarded. The member for Victoria Park rather contradicted himself about the suitability of the proposed site for building purposes. At present it consists of endowment lands, and who is to say that the University is going to discourage the subdividing of the land into building blocks? On the other hand, it may still be University endowment land for the next 20 or 30 years. It is my opinion that this proposed committee will not be able to secure any more valuable information than that which has already been obtained by the experts for the Government.

Mr. Leslie: But vested interests would have their say.

Mr. WITHERS: The proposed committee might recommend the site at Barton's Mill or some other place, but still there would be objections taken to either site. When the committee has considered the pros and cons of the matter and made its recommendations, it will still remain for Parliament to accept them. I do not think the committee will do any good. In my opinion, the question of a site is not one for a committee to determine. What we require is a gaol similar to the Pentridge gaol, which is practically self-supporting; the prisoners grow their own crops and have their own cows. They have the amenities about which the member for Victoria Park spoke. I do not know the area of the land which is devoted to growing crops and vegetables at Pentridge; but I point out that the site at Claremont may not be as fertile as the site at Coburg. The Government's opinion is that the Claremont site should be used for the purpose of a gaol. That is the crux of the whole matter. The proposed committee might recommend an alternative site, but the question is whether the Government will act on the recommendation or not.

Mr. North: Do you favour a Royal Commission instead?

Mr. WITHERS: I do not want any commission. I accept the sound judgment of the Government itself.

[Mr. J. Hegney took the Chair.]

Mr. Abbott: It has not been sound so far.

Mr. WITHERS: The fact that some people say that it is not sound does not make it unsound. We disagree even on that point. No matter what site we may select, in 25 years' time our children might

say, "Those old boneheads! Fancy their selecting this beautiful site for a gaol. Look what we could have done with it!"

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: The hon. member must not reflect upon boneheads.

Mr. WITHERS: I am not reflecting, Sir. I was merely saying what our children might remark in years to come. I did not by any means intend to reflect upon members of Parliament, but we cannot be held responsible for what the young people will say when we have passed on. Then there is the question that was raised by the Leader of the Opposition. Surely, Pardelup is far enough removed from the centre of Perth, but when the prisoners escape, what happens? If the gaol were nearer the city, a posse of police could quickly recapture them and return them to prison. The prisoners seem to come to the city, where they try to dodge the police, but they are captured again in due course. Therefore, it would not be so advantageous to remove the gaol far from the city.

Mr. Rodoreda: At present they do get out.

Mr. WITHERS: That is so. It may be that someone perhaps leaves the gate open and they walk out. I do not know how prisoners escape from Pardelup as easily as they do. I heard a person say that there is one place he would like to go to if he wanted a holiday and that was Barton's Mill, but he said the only way he could get there would be to break a window and be convicted. He also said he would spend an enjoyable time at Barton's Mill, as he would have a wireless and the surroundings would be pleasant. I do not think we want a gaol of that description, which entices people to break the law for the purpose of having a holiday and a peaceful time, playing cards and listening to the wireless. I do not feel I can support the resolution for the reasons I have stated.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [9.0]: I wish to indicate my support of the resolution, and in this connection I differ from the view expressed by the member for Perth. He pointed out that in his opinion it was entirely the Government's responsibility to determine the site. I have heard from this side of the House, and from members of the Opposition, views to the effect that in matters affecting public institutions

and public policy private members on both sides should be consulted. This is a concrete instance where the Government seeking the opinion from representatives of both sides of the House. The suggestion in paragraph (b)—whether the site selected by the Government, known as the Claremont site, should be used for this purpose—is one of major importance. I am inclined to think there is no necessity for paragraph (a), but as the Government has the idea that the requirements of a modern gaol should be referred to a Joint Committee, as well as the actual site that has been recommended by the expert committee, it puts the onus on the proposed committee to determine an alternative site.

Since the Government has seen fit to submit these terms to a Joint Committee, I propose to support the motion. Although I do that I, as a private member, want to indicate my view as to the present site. Whatever recommendation the committee brings in will need to be backed by strong reasons if it is going to suggest that the present site be retained. I hold a view different from that of the member for Burbury, who said a few moments ago that the gaol at Pentridge did not interfere with the development there. I had an opportunity, as did the hon. member, of looking around the environs of Coburg Gaol last year. I also interviewed many of the residents of the 300 new homes built in the vicinity by the Victorian Housing Commission. It is true that some of those homes overlook the gaol. I was given to understand by every resident with whom I talked that it was proposed to shift the gaol. What is more, they said that the only reason they stayed there was because of the shortage of housing accommodation. They took those houses on the understanding that the gaol would be shifted. They said they were economically obliged to occupy the houses.

Mr. Fox: They were renting those houses.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is so; they were occupying them. I have taken the opportunity to look over the proposed site. I know practically every inch of the country involved and I believe, taking the long view, that the district between Wembley Park and the ocean is too valuable to be further spoilt by the erection of a gaol. Anyone who has vision, as far as the ex-

pansion of the metropolitan area is concerned, must realise that the city will progress westward and, to some extent, northward. I am of opinion that, rather than put any further buildings between the City of Perth and the ocean, we should shift the buildings to which I have referred, and the other conveniences, elsewhere. The Government has a serious responsibility to determine in connection with the gaol site. This is not a political question. Whatever Government was in power would be faced with this responsibility. I think that the Government, and members of all parties, want to do the right thing. In view of modern developments in transport, a distance of 12 or 14 miles from the city means nothing. I do not profess to be sufficiently expert in the branch of penology dealing with the requirements of a modern gaol to offer an authoritative opinion, but I do say that it is necessary to segregate different types of prisoners.

I was amazed to hear the speech of the Leader of the Opposition. If what he says, or even half of it, is correct, then it is not that the methods of trying to reform prisoners at Pardelup is wrong; it is the type of prisoner sent there. I am glad that matter has been added to the resolution. The committee, if appointed, will inquire into that aspect of our present system. I believe that this is the right method of approach. If the Government decides to take the experts' advice and ignore that of the local authorities, and private members, it would be doing a disservice. On the contrary, it has seen fit to throw the matter open, so to speak, to representatives of all parties. They will have an opportunity to submit some recommendations. If in due course a report is submitted, it will be a well-considered one. All the circumstances will be taken into account and I think we will get a better decision than if the Government were peremptorily to put the expert committee's report into operation.

**HON. N. KEENAN** (Nedlands) [9.7]:

This is a resolution to appoint three members to sit with three members appointed by another place to consider three definite steps set out in paragraphs (a), (b) and (c), to which paragraph (d) has been added by the Leader of the Opposition. I agree with the view taken by the member

for Mount Hawthorn and, to a large extent, by the member for Bunbury and others, that certain paragraphs defining the scope of the inquiry are not only superfluous but, to some extent, dangerous. For instance, let us take the first: "The requirements for a modern gaol." That covers the whole field of penology and includes the class of building that will give effect to the views finally adopted as a result of that inquiry. It would mean, if carried to its full extent, months and months of inquiry, and then we would get the expression of opinion of a committee that, without being at all derogatory, one would have to describe as being composed of persons far from being experts.

Mr. Read: You might be one.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I am not going to be one. This paragraph might well be eliminated. I intend to deal with paragraph (b) later. Paragraph (c) charges the committee to report on and recommend any alternative site if it comes to a certain conclusion regarding the proposed site. There again, the field of inquiry will be colossal and might occupy many months. In this case it would be the opinion merely of members.

*[The Speaker resumed the Chair.]*

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Not representing that district.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Certainly not representing that district, and not qualified to express a very valid opinion. Their finding would be of very little use. Although the reasons given by the Leader of the Opposition for the inclusion of paragraph (d) were exhaustive and proper, I doubt whether any conclusion at which the committee might arrive on that paragraph would be of great use for the purpose that is desired to be achieved. The one paragraph that does commend itself is that which asks the committee to say whether the site selected should be used for gaol purposes, apart altogether from expressing any opinion as to whether a particular kind of gaol should be erected on that site or as to a particular kind of penology being carried out in that gaol, or whether the gaol would be able to see the site and hear evidence as to the use to which the site could be put to do with the greatest of ease, both from Pardelup and Barton's Mill.

On that one paragraph this committee could well be appointed. Its members would be able to see the site and hear evidence as to the use to which the site could be put if not used for the erection of a gaol. They could also take into account the possible future of Perth. Perth, as far as its site is concerned, is a peculiar city. As was said by one member tonight, the expansion of Perth must be westwards, because if one goes eastwards one soon reaches the Ranges. Going westward, unfortunately, one soon reaches the sea. There is, in truth, but a small area of land around Perth either to east, west, south or north available for settlement. We all hope that Perth is only in its early days, as a city—almost in its childhood days—and that in the course of another century it will expand to a size commensurate with the great cities of the Eastern States, perhaps almost as large as Melbourne or Sydney today. No-one has the right to say that those hopes are not justified and, if they are justified, there is not an acre of land here that will not be wanted either for factories or for the residences of workers employed in the factories, and for schools and other institutions required in such a state of development.

We must have regard to the future, at least as far ahead as 100 years, which is nothing in the life of a nation. If we do that, there are many reasons that can be urged against the site at present proposed being used for a gaol. I do not propose to traverse those reasons here. That would be the scope of the inquiry by the committee. I would like to see paragraphs (a), (c), and (d) left out. I do not intend to move for their omission, because it is obvious that if the House as a whole agreed to such a motion it might mean the loss of the whole motion. If the Government, having considered the matter, would agree to the omission of those wide and almost impossible paragraphs, it would very much strengthen the value of this proposal. That is all I desire to say.

On motion by the Minister for Justice, debate adjourned.

#### ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.

##### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 31st October; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

*Vote—Medical, £46,548* (partly considered):

**HON. N. KEENAN** (Nedlands) [9.15]: I desire first to deal with the Old Men's Home, which is administered by this department. That home is at present situated on an admirable site—it would be impossible to select a better one. It is common knowledge that it is proposed to abolish it from that site, and that a large sum of money is to be made available by the Lotteries Commission for the construction of a home at another place, to which it is proposed to remove the inhabitants of the present home. It is common knowledge that it is the intention of those interested in the welfare of returned soldiers to construct a home for them and to take over from the present home at Dalkeith. I do not think that meets with the approval of the inhabitants of the Old Men's Home, and I do not believe we should commit ourselves to a programme to which they would be legitimately opposed. If some money was spent on improvements on the present home, to provide amenities as they are commonly called, and to make the place more presentable, it would be quite a happy place, but that is not what is happening there.

The Minister referred to that department and to the fact that Mr. Huelin was retiring. I think Mr. Huelin has been the scapegoat of that department for years. Every economy carried out was alleged to be either the suggestion of or something approved by Mr. Huelin. The place most criticised as being starved in consequence of his views—I have no doubt that if he held any views of that kind they were entirely necessary from the point of view of the money that he was allowed to spend—and one of the places most hardly hit by that economy was the Old Men's Home at Dalkeith. There has always been a violent desire to make that home self-supporting, and at present, if one takes the figures, the amount taken from each pensioner is more than ample to pay for what he receives. As a matter of fact, the pensioner is not getting anything. He is giving and is paying anything up to 27s. 6d. a week.

The Minister for Lands: Very few of them pay that much, and they do it at their own request.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I know that a number are paying 27s. 6d. and that many are paying 21s. or 22s.

The Minister for Lands: Very many are paying nothing.

Hon. N. KEENAN: They are sent there by the Government and old men enjoying a pension are asked to keep them. That is the position that presents itself to the present inmates. A sufficient sum is deducted from the pensions of inmates to enable the Government to keep in the home a number that contribute nothing, and who are Government charges. That is one reason why the home is not a happy place. There is a general belief, on the part of the pensioners, that they are being used for the purpose of maintaining those who should be maintained out of public funds, as in the case of a Chinaman, for instance, who has no pension and who has to be carried by the home when his working days are past. There is another way in which the home could be improved, and that is by spending the money that is to be spent there in a more careful manner.

One of the main complaints concerns food and yet undoubtedly—I made inquiries into the matter and I am satisfied that such is the case—proper food is bought, but it is not adequately cooked or presented for the use of the old men and in many instances is not suited to their requirements. Many of the old men have no false teeth and have to depend upon their gums for chewing purposes. They are not in a position to eat what might be quite suitable food for people with teeth. There are other instances where the food is constantly complained about with respect to the bad cooking. I went to the late Hon. S. W. Munsie, who was then Minister for Health, at a time when the complaints were very numerous and asked him to investigate generally the matter of food supplies to the old men. Unfortunately it was known when he would visit the Old Men's Home and the bill of fare put before the inmates that day would have done credit to the Adelphi Hotel. The inspection was a farce. I suggest that if a surprise visit were made it would be found that the complaints were not illfounded. I am prepared to admit that in such an institution where there are a lot of old men, there will always be a number who will be prepared to growl.

The Minister for Lands: That is their privilege.

Hon. N. KEENAN: On the other hand, I know that the inmates include many reasonable men who will tell any inquirer that there is a large measure of truth in what, if I may use the term, the growlers complain about. I have already said that the Old Men's Home could be improved in a manner that would make the institution highly attractive by the expenditure of no greater sum than we have mentioned is contemplated in connection with the provision of the new home. I am supported in that view not by the inmates of the institution but by the staff who will tell anyone who goes there that the home could be improved by the expenditure of £10,000 or £15,000, which would make it a perfectly acceptable place within certain limits. As it is, we know that the Old Men's Home is regarded by some as a place where they go to die. There can be no sadder experience gained by any person who visits the institution than the appreciation that some go there and stop only to die. In those circumstances such people hardly care what class of treatment they receive. That is the position regarding a few. The great majority of the inmates could be happy old men if a sum of money approximately equivalent to that which we have heard is to be expended on the erection of another place, were spent on the home. I hope the new Minister for Health will bring all the freshness of his young days to bear on the consideration of what can be done to make the Old Men's Home a happier and better place for its inmates.

There is also another matter somewhat connected with the residents of Dalkeith and of the Nedlands district generally; I refer to the infant health centres. These institutions have been supported throughout the whole district of Nedlands, not merely by the residents of Dalkeith or those living east of Stirling Highway, and that support has been on a very generous scale. For years we have carried, without any help from the Government, three centres. One is situated near the end of Onslow-road, another is near Hollywood and the third is in Nedlands proper. The position is that while in these districts there was enough money obtainable from public subscriptions to carry out the programme well, to put up very fine buildings

and to equip them in the finest possible manner and engage the very best staff procurable, a staff that was happy and worthy, it has to be admitted that in other districts such a result was not possible. In the circumstances, the Government took over the system and now it has the entire responsibility for the work, and all that the local supporters do is to help in the provision of accoutrements and supplies that the official regulations do not contemplate. However, the assistance in that direction is only limited and I hope no effort will be spared in that connection.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is provided for in another vote.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The matters I am discussing come under the heading of health and, although I am being reproved by the member for Guildford-Midland, I think I am correct in dealing with them now.

The Minister for Lands: You are always right until the Chairman stops you!

Hon. N. KEENAN: I hope nothing will be done to put an end to this very valuable connection between the public and the infant health centres. I am sure that the public will remain interested if given anything to do. That is the important point—give them something to do! Let them have an opportunity to achieve their objective, provided that objective is approved by the department. Do not ignore the public.

The Minister for Health: We do not ignore them. We consult them on everything conducive to the improvement of health centres.

Hon. N. KEENAN: So long as the Minister does that, he will find the public will respond. I do not desire to discuss the Vote generally at length, but the two matters I have mentioned are such that I know a good deal about them and I desire to bring them before the notice of the Minister. I particularly desire that there should be some express policy regarding the Old Men's Home at Dalkeith. They should not be left in doubt as they are today. They do not know what is to happen. I am perfectly convinced those people are being exploited today. When we consider that a number of the old men who are old age pensioners, are being used by taking from them such part of their pensions as is necessary in order to provide amenities for others who have nothing,

it is an impossible proposition. Yet that is happening today. It can only happen because of the inaction of those to whom it applies.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [9.30]: I make no apology for intervening in this debate which affects the department of the Minister for Health, but in view of the fact that most of the criticism has been levelled against happenings while I was the Minister, I feel that I am entitled to have something to say.

Mr. Mann: An extraordinary thing to do.

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** If the member for Beverley does not approve, I do not mind transferring from Minister for Lands to the member for Leederville. As regards the Old Men's Home, or "Sunset" as it is now called, the member for Nedland and the inmates in the home can rest assured that I do not think any of them will be here by the time a home is built at Como. The chairman of the Lotteries Commission is ambitious to build first of all a home for the women, which is very badly needed. He is ambitious to build homes for elderly married couples, instead of separating them as has to be done at present. Then he might think of building a home for the old men. Knowing as I do the difficulties of getting building material and manpower, I believe that the inmates of "Sunset" will have passed beyond long before the time comes to remove the institution elsewhere.

I do not agree with the member for Nedlands when he says that a lot of the men are charged 27s. 6d. a week for their keep. The men who are charged 27s. 6d., if it goes so high, are men of means who desire to go to the home and who request privileges that are not available to others.

Mr. Mann: Does the Commonwealth Government take anything from that?

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** If a man is in receipt of the old age pension before he enters the home, the Commonwealth takes nothing. If he enters before receiving the pension, he is unable to draw the pension because he is provided for.

Mr. Mann: Did not the Commonwealth take so much from them?

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Not once the pension has been granted to them; they then pay what is expected of them. A large number of the men pay nothing at all.

Hon. N. Keenan: How much is taken from the increase originally granted to old age pensioners?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The hon. member will appreciate that when the increase from 27s. 6d. to 32s. 6d. was given, it was made a condition that in no circumstances was anything at all to be taken.

Hon. N. Keenan: What happens up to the 27s. 6d?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Some of the men ask for special privileges and are prepared to pay for them. Some are men with private means who prefer to go to the home for the sake of the company. It is of no use the hon. member telling a story of that sort. However, I will leave it to the Minister for Health to speak further on the matter. I now wish to deal briefly with the member for Beverley. As usual the hon. member worked himself into almost a passionate state when speaking about health and the nurses. I have told the hon. member and the world through the Press that the present position of the nurses, hospital employees and domestic staff in the matter of wages and conditions is due to the pegging of wages under the Commonwealth National Security Regulations. The hon. member knows that.

Mr. Mann: Of course we know it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Then why should the hon. member get up in the Chamber year after year and lead people to believe it is due to some other cause?

Mr. Mann: How did the railway officials get their increases?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: In some way or other through the Commonwealth Arbitration Court, not through the State court or the State Government. It is of no use the hon. member putting that over. Once the National Security Regulations are lifted by the Commonwealth and the nurses can get into court, they will have an opportunity to prove their case, the same as any other industrial organisation, registered under the Act, as are the nurses.

The Minister for Health: We will endeavour to get them in.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Government has done everything possible to enable them to get to the court. The member for Beverley went further and, shaking his fist, stated that there would be no nurses

within two years. He also said that there was not an applicant at the moment for Wooroloo.

The Minister for Works: Who said that?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Who would say it?

The Minister for Education: The member for Beverley.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Wooroloo is the starting point of the Government scheme for the training of nurses. The hon. member is usually fairly accurate.

Mr. Mann: Tell me—

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I will tell the hon. member all about it. Presently he will be taking off his coat. After hearing the hon. member's passionate appeal, I got into touch with the department, and was informed that 21 trainees have actually entered the training school at Wooroloo since May of this year. Four are ready for the next school on the 17th December, and 39 sat for the education examination in August, of whom 17 have passed, and they will be ready for the school on the 17th December. Twelve to 15 prospective trainees will be ready to enter in the next three months. The school runs for two months.

The hon. member must know, if he reads the newspapers, that the shortage of nursing and domestic staffs for hospitals is an Australia-wide worry. It is by no means confined to Western Australia. We cannot take thousands of women out of industry and put them into the Services and expect the same number of women to be available for the work that was being done before. Girls who would have become trainees in public or private hospitals were absorbed to a large extent in the Services, and many of them are certain to return under the rehabilitation scheme and take up nursing. Some are already in the Perth Hospital. I have no hesitation in saying that, as the Services release a large number of these women, so we shall have more trainees coming forward.

Mr. Mann: Have you any idea of the number of trainees for the Perth Hospital and the Children's Hospital?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Perth and Fremantle never had any trouble. If there has been any trouble, it has been on account of the four-year scheme as against the three-year scheme for the others. A large number of nurses leaving the Services

have been married during the war and, as their husbands return, they are making their homes. Consequently, there is a shortage of nurses on that account. The shortage is not confined to hospitals. Everywhere there is a shortage of women workers, and this will continue until conditions settle down. Yet the hon. member argued that the fault was all with the Government and the Government scheme.

Mr. Mann: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That was the impression conveyed by the hon. member, who was very critical.

Mr. Mann: I have two daughters and know all about it.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have heard about them so often from the hon. member that I think they must be multiplying. The hon. member twitted my colleague about the acceptance of the 6s. per day scheme. The 6s. per day scheme has been going on for about two years and has not yet been finalised. This matter will be brought before the House in the form of a Bill in order to give Parliament an opportunity to decide the issue.

Mr. Mann: I think you are mistaken there. I did not mention the 6s. per day.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That shows the hon. member's state of mind. I wonder whether he has read the report of his speech in "Hansard." The member for Beverley deliberately said that he wanted to know from my colleague whether it was compulsory. That is the word he used. My colleague said, "We accepted it." He said, "Why did you accept it?" He followed that up.

Mr. Mann: I would rather hear your colleague than hear you.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I know the hon. member would. Most people like to listen to my colleague, because he is quiet and gentlemanly, whereas I am a big bully.

Mr. Watts: After all, he went to the conference.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I went to three conferences.

Mr. Watts: The last is the one we are interested in.

Mr. Thorn: You are not a big bully.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I wanted to frighten the hon. member. So far as the matter of 6s. per day is concerned, that will

come before Parliament in due course. The question of whether we will accept it or not is quite another matter. The Leader of the Opposition asked, by way of interjection—and this is rather informative, if the member for Beverley will keep quiet for two minutes—what the average loss was for the two years prior to the introduction of uniform taxation; in other words, what we lost out of the hospital fund for the two years prior to the advent of uniform taxation. The average for the two years was £285,053. The amount fixed was £275,750, or £9,303 loss per year.

Mr. Watts: That makes no allowance for any possible increase.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is so. As a matter of fact, the figure went up the first year after uniform taxation was introduced and remained static for two years. It has come down gradually since. The member for Murray-Wellington wanted to know when the committee, which I was very largely responsible for forming on instructions from the Government and which is known as the Hospital Committee, was going to make its report as to where the regional hospitals were to be built. He went on to say that there was no occasion to wait, because one could pick out the sites for one's self. I think he is right. My information is that the committee is ready to report on the sites, but let me inform the member for Murray-Wellington that that is the least part of the matter. Compare that with making provision for building the hospitals, that part is infinitesimal. The Government has not been sitting down on the job. It appreciated the fact that, competent as is our Principal Architect, he is not greatly experienced in building hospitals and these regional hospitals will be of all sizes and classes.

Mr. McLarty: That does not apply throughout the Commonwealth.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: There are many designs. One can go through Melbourne and inspect hospital after hospital and find very few of the same design. The nearest approach one could get to the same design would be the Freemasons' Hospital, the design of which is similar to that of the Mercy Hospital, except that a few improvements have been made to the former which are lacking in the latter.

The Premier: They are like most twins, only one alike.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Hospitals are of all designs, the reason being that as a new hospital is being built, defects in other hospitals are avoided. The architect improves on the older design. The Government, being seized of the necessity to get all information it possibly could on the subject, took the opportunity to get Dr. L. Le Souef, who was a prisoner of war for a fair period and was being released—the Government got the Army to agree to this—to go to Sweden and from thence to Canada and America on his way home and make the fullest inquiries possible. We considered that he would be as competent a person as any other to obtain the information. The committee can rest assured that when men and materials are available, these hospitals will be built on the sites that have been chosen. I say to the member for Beverley that I hope—

The Premier: He looks chastened.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: —he will give due consideration to this matter. If he has any plans or can assist the Government in any way, I am sure the Minister for Health will be only too pleased to meet him, because the Minister is just as keen to do what he can for the nurses as I was and as the member for Beverley ever was.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [9.46]: The ex-Minister for Health was very precise regarding the attention that was being given to various districts from the medical point of view, but many country members are of a different opinion altogether. Granted, the war has interfered considerably with the number of nurses now available for civil duties; but at outback centres, particularly on the goldfields—apart from Kalgoorlie—we find only one hospital in a district. If the nursing staff of that hospital is reduced by 50 per cent., then definitely the nursing service deteriorates. In a big centre such as Kalgoorlie, Perth or Fremantle, there are several hospitals; and if a person cannot get accommodation at one he has only to go across the street and find another that can accommodate him. Adequate nursing facilities on the goldfields are essential. Even if we cannot do it now, we should try to get nurses released from the city as soon as possible and sent to the back country. At the present time, the hospital at Leonora

has only three nurses, while the hospital at Mt. Magnet has only two. Both hospitals are essential to the people of the district. A matron and sister cannot do all the work; they have attempted to secure domestics, but have been unsuccessful in their efforts.

My mission tonight, however, is to deal with the Hospital Planning Committee. For some time past the people in the Leonora district have endeavoured to build a hospital of substantial dimensions, at a cost of about £15,000. The idea is not to erect the whole building at once, but to spread the building over a period of three or four years. The people have raised sufficient capital to proceed with the work; but before they can do so, they must obtain the permission of the Hospital Planning Committee. They have been waiting for eight months to get that permission; but exception was taken to the first set of plans submitted to the committee on account of the verandah space. That was a matter which could easily have been overcome while the hospital was being built. A start was proposed to be made on the domestic portion, the kitchen, the servery and the nurses' quarters. However, the committee held up the plans, or perhaps it was the Under Secretary for Health who did so. Which it was I do not know, but on every occasion when we made a request we were refused permission to build. Eventually I got the Minister to agree to the members of the committee visiting the district by plane on the 10th of this month in order to make an examination to ascertain what work could be put in hand immediately. This matter has been held up for months. For the life of me, I cannot understand why it should be necessary to have three specialists on the committee such as Dr. Muecke, who is in charge of the Perth Hospital, Dr. Henzel, who is in charge of the Wooroloo Sanatorium and Dr. Clarke, a specialist. Dr. Muecke cannot be away from the hospital for more than 24 hours, and that remark applies also to Dr. Henzel.

The Minister for Lands: Those are only three members out of seven.

Mr. TRIAT: They are the three important members.

The Minister for Lands: I would not say that.

Mr. TRIAT: They are the only men who have been mentioned when I have approached the health authorities. They would say, "Dr. Clarke cannot get away. Dr. Muecke can-

not get away and Dr. Henzel cannot get away." I have not heard the names of the other four gentlemen. Surely we can get one or two men on the hospital committee who can stay away for two or three days if required. I would like to know the names of the other four. If they are available, they should go away instead of holding up the back country jobs for as long, as in this instance, nine months. That is the most important grievance I have. I hope the new Minister will help the people in the back country. On the 10th of this month the hospital committee will be leaving by 'plane for Leonora. It will be able to do the job there in one day. If it does not get back in the afternoon it will return the following morning. We must have more hospital attention in the back country. I believe that regional hospitals are essential. Much as we can do with a small hospital, we have only one doctor there and when a complicated case, or a major operation, comes along, the patient must be flown to Perth. A regional hospital would have several doctors and a full nursing staff that could deal with any class of operation or sickness.

Some time ago when the American Army called up most of the doctors of that country, and certainly most of the physically fit men and women, Kaiser established his big plant to build Liberty ships. He was confronted with what we are faced with, that is, people who are ill, medical rejects from the Army and people suffering from all sorts of complaints. They were the only ones he could get to do the laborious work of building ships. He found it necessary to give medical service to these people and he established a hospital. At one place he had 90,000 people working, and for seven cents a day he was able to give them treatment as good as that of any hospital in America. The hospital he built cost much money and was air-conditioned. He had specialists there in every department of surgery, medicine, bone-setting, etc. According to the book I read, the cost of the treatment in some cases ran into 6,000 dollars, yet it was all given for seven cents a day.

With proper organisation, the same could be done with regional hospitals here. With large numbers it is possible to do that, but it is not feasible with only 300 or 400 people. The regional hospital, therefore, is essential for our outback areas. People in the city are all right. They have good doctors, hos-

pitals and accommodation. In the back country, if a person becomes seriously ill, he has to charter an aeroplane. The result is that in 99 cases out of 100 the patient suffers because of bad accommodation or inadequate expert treatment. I hope it will not be long before consideration is given to the building and equipping of regional hospitals.

**MR. J. HEGNEY** (Middle Swan) [9.55]  
This Vote gives me the opportunity of again raising the question of the ice supplies for the metropolitan area. This will be an urgent matter within a very few days. I have mentioned this subject for many years now so as to bring about some improvement in the supplies of ice. I have urged that the Government should try to increase the manufacture of ice in some of the departments under its control, and that it should extend its help to private ice companies here in the way of getting machinery and space for the storage of ice. I understand that we are up against the same difficulty this year as last year because storage space is not available. Deliveries of ice are made in some portions of my electorate, but not all. This matter is vital to the health of the community. It is essential to have ice for the preservation of foodstuffs. Today many mothers try to keep milk under proper conditions in the summer. The time has long gone by to tackle this problem. If sufficient supplies do not come forward the onus is on the Government to increase the amount of ice it produces. Last year we had a long, dry summer.

This year we have had a long winter and it is still with us. But we are now entering on our summer, and I know of many people who find conditions difficult because they cannot get supplies of ice for the preservation of food and delicacies for invalids, old people and mothers who are nursing babies and who need to have adequate supplies of whole milk. I hope the Minister will look at this matter from the point of view of the health of the metropolitan community. I realise the difficulty of helping country people. Except in country towns that are closely populated, the country folk should be helped by being provided with refrigerators. I raise the matter again in the hope that the Government will give some attention. I will persist in my efforts until some relief is given to the people represented. In conjunction with the members

for Fremantle, I have been to the Department of War Organisation of Industry to try to effect some improvement and, although something has been achieved, much remains to be done. I hope there will be an improvement in the supply of ice for the people of the metropolitan area in the forthcoming summer.

I wish to touch on the matter of infant health clinics. I am pleased that the Government is making provision for payment of the nurses' salaries. Previously they were met from the subsidy made available by the Government, plus the contributions of the local authorities. Because of the way that the salary is made up, the nurse's time is divided between possibly three centres. I have in mind Bayswater, Maylands and Inglewood. Those centres are close to me, and the people of my electorate attend those clinics. The nurse's time is spread over the three centres whereas a nurse would have full-time employment at any one of them. More adequate provision should be made for these nurses to travel in order to contact the mothers. Some portions of the metropolitan area have no service at all. The member for Nedlands said that in the district he represents there has been some excellent activity on the part of the local people. The same applies in other centres, but not all. The result is that infant health in some places does not receive proper attention or the expert advice that could be received from a clinic. I am not satisfied with the administration of these infant health clinics. They should be under one control; that is, under the jurisdiction of the Infant Health Association.

The Children's Protection Society operates a number of centres in the metropolitan area. They are governed from the local centres, and in most instances the local committees do nothing. A number of women meet at the local centre and there is a contribution of £100 from the Government, plus £50 from the local authority, and the salary is made up accordingly. The nurses do not get an amount sufficient to enable them to use their cars for the travelling that is necessary. The administration of infant health centres should be better organised than has been the case in the past. I think a greater responsibility is imposed on the Health Department, not only in relation to the metropolitan area, but also in country towns where advice and assistance can be

given to mothers who are rearing babies that will grow up to be future men and women of this State.

I come now to travelling dental clinics and to hygiene and dental assistance in schools. I understand there are two dentists associated with the Health Department, who render assistance in the schools, but they are only tinkering with the question, and it is impossible for their services to be extended for all the children attending the primary schools. All the primary schools in this State should be entitled to be visited by dentists attached to the department, and that would mean increasing the number of dentists. Not only should the children attending State schools have this service, but the children at all primary schools. That would be in the best interests of the health of the community in days to come, as it is essential that the children should grow up with sound teeth. Too many of our young men and women have teeth that are in bad condition, with the consequent effects on their health. Money spent in that direction would prove of great benefit in the future lives of the people of whom I am speaking. I hope the Minister will take these matters into consideration, and that he will give particular attention to seeing whether a much better ice supply for the metropolitan area can be assured.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie) [10.5]: I am pleased to see that the Health Department is recognising its responsibility for infant health centres to a greater extent than has previously been the case. I have always believed that infant health centres should be as much the responsibility of the Health Department as is the running of hospitals and other matters recognised for a number of years as the sole responsibility of the Health Department. Infant health centres exist for the prevention of disease and to make available remedial action in the case of any defects that the babies may have. Quite apart from the purely mercenary point of view the Government is recouped, through the better health of the community, for the attention that it provides for children. The majority of mothers taking their children to these centres are people of moderate means, and many of them are in poor circumstances. If the defects of children are not remedied in babyhood the charge will fall more heavily on the State later on. I am glad that the

Government is providing a greater amount of monetary assistance to infant health centres than has been the case in the past. I think most people appreciate the service being rendered by the dental and health inspection of schools, but of course that service is not adequate, and it has been difficult to provide adequate attention during the war period, owing to the shortage of medical men and dentists. When things are back on a normal basis we should extend our operations considerably in that direction.

The Minister for Lands: Provision has been made for extra dentists, and we are waiting to get them out of the Army.

Mr. STYANTS: I am glad to hear that. I believe extra dental attention will pay dividends, apart altogether from the general health and well-being of the children concerned. I wish now to refer to the unsatisfactory progress made, at the Kalgoorlie Hospital, in air-conditioning and the furnishing of the fine block of buildings that has been erected as sleeping quarters for the night nurses. Though that hospital serves the whole of the Eastern Goldfields area it is within the boundary of my electorate. A few years ago the then Minister for Health realised the great disadvantage under which night nurses worked, particularly in the summer months, owing to the difficulty of getting rest. He understood the position particularly well, because he had been a miner and had worked afternoon and night shifts in the hot goldfields climate, and he was always sympathetic to the requests of nurses that the old iron building, that had for so long served as their sleeping quarters, should be replaced by a modern building, one that would be air-conditioned during the summer months so that they could rest properly during the day.

Because of the exacting nature of their work it is essential that night nurses be properly rested when going on duty. The result was that the splendid block of buildings has been constructed but because, so it is said, a small electric motor is not procurable in Australia, the air-conditioning has not been provided. In addition to that, the block is not being used at all because it is said that furniture cannot be obtained. It is difficult for me to believe that the small  $2\frac{1}{2}$  or 3 h.p. motor cannot be procured in Australia but it is even more difficult for me to believe that the authorities cannot

obtain sufficient furniture to equip the building.

I am particularly pleased with what the Government has done with regard to the Kalgoorlie Public Hospital. Some few years ago it was just a conglomeration of dirty old, ramshackle iron buildings that were a disgrace to the community. Now we have a new hospital which the matron is proud to show to medical men who may be travelling through Kalgoorlie from the Eastern States. While the authorities are to be commended on the fine hospital and service provided, I am disappointed that the air-conditioning has not been carried out for the benefit of the nurses.

The Minister for Lands: So am I.

Mr. STYANTS: The contract expired last January and yet the block is locked up. If it were furnished it would be possible to relieve the position regarding the nurses, who would not have to continue using their old quarters. I hope that further representations will be made with a view to securing the necessary furniture for the block, that the requisite motor will soon be procured and that the nurses will have the advantage of the new block during this summer. I understood the Minister to say that there would probably be a profit of about £5,000 per annum in respect of the guarantee of 6s. per day by the Commonwealth Government under the National Service Scheme. I am very much afraid that it will not work out that way at all.

The Minister for Health: The money will be paid into a trust fund for building purposes.

Mr. STYANTS: That is so, but it appears to me that as one of the provisions imposed by the Commonwealth Government is that the means test shall be abolished, the effort made by the Government or by semi-government controlled hospitals are unlikely to result in any profit at all. We know the wonderful service rendered by medical practitioners in an honorary capacity at the Perth Hospital in the interests of patients in the metropolitan area.

The Minister for Lands: Hear, hear!

Mr. STYANTS: It has been possible for people almost verging on a state of pauperism to enter the Perth Hospital where the best specialists in the State operate upon and attend to them during their illness. As a matter of fact, people in very

poor circumstances often have the benefit of attention by specialists that is not available to those in receipt of middle class salaries, people who would not be able to afford the services of those specialists. In the circumstances the medical men I refer to are to be highly commended upon their action. I fear that, with the abolition of the means test, anyone will be able to enter Perth Hospital for treatment. In those circumstances it is not likely that the medical practitioners will continue their honorary work at the institution. If that is so, then it follows logically that the Government will have to engage a full staff of medical practitioners which will probably necessitate the expenditure of upwards of £50,000 a year. Under those conditions I am afraid the scheme will not work out as well as some people contemplate. I was pleased to hear the former Minister for Health say that Parliament will be given an opportunity to consider whether the proposition will be accepted. In my opinion we will enjoy no benefit as the result of the Commonwealth Government's guarantee of 6s. per day.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [10.15]: I do not propose to ask the Minister to spend any money but to indulge in propaganda in regard to D.D.T., about which we have read so much in the Press, particularly with regard to its use in combating the fly menace. There is a lot of misapprehension as to what D.D.T. will do. We have seen advertisements inserted by wholesale purveyors of the article and also other advertisements regarding a liquid spray for dealing with flies. I think the Government at this stage could well move in the matter. In the past the Health Department has done a wonderful work in educating people regarding various matters. If we could eliminate flies from the metropolitan area we would score a great accomplishment. Recently we read in the Press of an aeroplane flying two or three times over a beach near New York, using a spray of D.D.T. It was said that as a result the beach was clear of flies and mosquitoes for three months. Of course, that may be merely an American story or a tall Press yarn!

The Premier: At any rate there was a report about it in the October issue of "The National Geographic Magazine."

**Mr. NORTH:** In yesterday's Press there appeared a report to the effect that it is dangerous for people to rub their dogs and cats with this powder. It was suggested that the animals might be killed by such a practice. Some people think that by spraying their walls with the powder or mixing it with an oil distemper and applying it to the walls, flies will be eliminated for the summer. There is quite a conflict of opinion on the subject. The Minister for Health appreciates what a wonderful thing it would be if we could eradicate flies from the city, and in the circumstances the Government should place before the public what information it has on the subject at the earliest possible moment. In the past the Health Department has made available to the public information regarding diet and other matters and has displayed notices in certain public places with regard to specified diseases. Many years ago when I first entered politics the cry was, "Swat that fly!" Now it is, "Spray with D.D.T."

**MR. LESLIE** (Mt. Marshall) [10.18]: I desire to draw attention to one or two matters. In my electorate there is one hospital in particular that is carrying on under great difficulty. The Minister knows the circumstances in connection with the Kununoppin and District Hospital which for some time past has been operating with one single-certificated nurse. I have the assurance of the Minister and the officers of his department that every possible effort has been made to relieve the situation there. The hospital serves an area extending as far as 80 miles to the north, and the fact that the medical facilities available there have been so reduced has caused considerable concern to the people of the district. I think it is generally known that the majority of patients treated in the country hospitals are maternity cases that require doubly certificated nurses. I understand that the Minister as well as the Premier has endeavoured to obtain the release of nurses from the Army.

The Minister for Lands: The Army is now sending a whole batch to Japan.

**Mr. LESLIE:** I offer this suggestion that the Government should point out to the Commonwealth that doubly certificated nurses are of little use in the Army, but are a matter of great importance in the life of the community. They are the nurses we

particularly want, and their continuance in the Army means a double loss to the State. Not only are we losing their services as nurses, but we are also losing their special skill, which is of such immense value in the country districts.

The Minister for Lands: The Premier got one out who is triply certificated.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, but she is not available to everybody and she does not solve our difficulties in the country districts. I believe that if the matter were put up to the Commonwealth that we cannot afford to allow these doubly certificated nurses to remain away, it should make some impression and that the Commonwealth, if reasonable, would see that there is sound cause for our contention. The loss of these nurses to the country hospitals is very severe indeed.

I now wish to offer a few comments on the infant welfare centres. The fact that the Government has taken over, at least in part, the financial responsibilities of the infant welfare centres—

Mr. Doney: Not all of them.

Mr. LESLIE: I said part of the financial responsibilities. I am afraid that is not sufficient.

The Minister for Lands: I thought you would get to that stage.

Mr. LESLIE: I cannot get anywhere else. I am of opinion that the responsibility the Government has taken over is the least part of the burden.

The Minister for Lands: Do not be too rough.

Mr. LESLIE: I am not aware of the figures, but I know there is considerable dissatisfaction among infant health nurses because they are not getting fair treatment in the matter of travelling allowances.

The Minister for Health: They are getting travelling allowances in accordance with the award.

Mr. LESLIE: I do not know whether the award lays down the particular rate per mile.

The Minister for Health: It does.

Mr. LESLIE: Then it is a darned poor award. I have gone into the figures, and I would not like to travel the distances they have to cover and suffer the inconveniences for the miserable recompense they receive. Some provision should be made to pay them more adequately. The award does not limit the amount that may be paid.

The Minister for Lands: There is nothing to prevent a district from doing a bit, either.

Mr. LESLIE: Some of the districts do a fair bit; they have the biggest part of the burden to carry. It was those districts largely that were actually responsible for the Government's awakening to the importance of infant welfare work, and it is the duty of the Government to carry the major portion of the burden.

The Minister for Lands: Mrs. Doney told me the importance of it years ago.

Mr. LESLIE: Then it is taking a long time to sink in.

The Minister for Lands: It did sink in.

Mr. LESLIE: Possibly through our hammering away at it.

The Minister for Lands: We did that before you came into the House.

Mr. LESLIE: The Minister for Lands went only a little way. I am trying to get his successor to take a big step forward. I would have preferred to see a larger vote for infant welfare work. I believe that the Government will have to embark on a propaganda campaign to secure an increase of the population of the State. I think we shall have to undertake a motherhood campaign, not only in this State, but throughout the Commonwealth. I would not expect the Minister to undertake it personally, but ways and means will have to be provided. According to statistics, at the rate we are going and taking the past 80 years as a guide, by 1960 the population of Australia will reach the approximate figure of 8,000,000 and from then on will decline. This is indicated by vital statistics over a period of 80 years, taking into account wars, depressions and everything else.

All the questionnaire sent out with a view to finding out why married couples do not have children are beside the point. The main factor is that we have forgotten to pay to motherhood the tribute due to the mother. Today we find people in the street referring in derogatory terms to parents of large families, whereas they should be regarding the mother as a heroine doing a fine job for the country. We should endeavour to change that attitude and this can only be achieved by propaganda to inspire a difference in outlook. Otherwise we shall continue in the wrong way. Money will be needed, and the Government will certainly

have to increase its expenditure on infant welfare work. There are many centres where, unfortunately, no infant health nurse is available. There are many districts where mothers and even women expecting their first child find themselves having to seek advice about their health from neighbours and having to listen to all the old women's tales, with the result that after the child is born, they are not game to have another.

It has been reported to me that the condition of the clothing of some of the patients of the Claremont Hospital for the Insane is not all that it should be. I have not investigated this matter personally, but the reports came from authentic sources. I regret that the former Minister for Health was in such a hurry to reply to the criticism that had been levelled against the department during his term of office, because, had he waited longer, he could possibly have given some information on this little bit of criticism. However, I submit it for investigation and action by the present Minister for Health. I understand there are many patients in the institution who are not clothed by any means as satisfactorily as they should be. They are dependent on the Government for their clothing, and it is not a credit to the Government or the institution; nor is it comfortable for the patients. I mention this as something coming from an authentic source that I firmly believe requires investigation.

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH** (Hon. E. Nulsen—Kanowna—in reply) [10.29]: I have listened attentively to all that has been said during the debate. My predecessor in office has replied to quite a number of the criticisms, and I do not wish to traverse the same ground. I desire, however, to refer to the 6s. per day that is to be paid to patients. I do not want any misunderstanding about it. What I said was that when we were at the conference, all the representatives of the States accepted the proposal subject to its being approved by their respective Governments on their return, because there was no alternative. I can definitely say that Victoria, New South Wales, Queensland, Tasmania and South Australia are accepting it because it will be of benefit to them. I point out that it was never intended to be a hospital benefit, but a patient benefit. The hospitals must all have a public ward; but may have an intermediate ward

and a private ward, for which a patient must pay the difference between the 6s. and the charge for the intermediate or the private ward.

Mr. Leslie: It sounds a bit of a slander to me.

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** There is nothing like that. I am surprised that members do not think honestly in this Chamber, because the least we expect is honesty. As far as the people in the Eastern States are concerned, the proposition was put forward in an honest manner and there was no exploitation. Certain people in the community do not wish to go into a public ward. They are prepared to pay the difference and go into an intermediate or a private ward, and that is the reason why that provision was made. Of course, if people go to a private hospital they pay the difference between the 6s. and the charge made by that hospital.

Mr. Leslie: Does that mean you would have intermediate wards at the Perth Hospital?

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** Yes.

Mr. Watts: Will you be able to retain your honorary staff at the Perth Hospital?

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** Mr. Chifley promised that if the honorary staff decided not to carry on if the means test were not applied, the Commonwealth Government would make up the difference. The work would be carried on as it is now carried on in Queensland, where there are no honorary staffs. In Queensland the staffs are paid so much per hour for the work they do. We estimate that if we have to pay our staff here it will cost the Commonwealth Government at least £20,000 per annum. My predecessor informs me it will cost more than £20,000 per annum. However, that is something which can be considered.

Mr. Watts: Is that condition going to be part of the agreement?

**THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH:** I cannot say until I see the agreement, but that was the promise made by Mr. Chifley himself. The Leader of the Opposition may obtain confirmation by ringing up Mr. Huelin tomorrow morning. The member for Murray-Wellington said that nothing had been done to alleviate the position of hospital staffs and that some hospitals were closing down. I assure the hon. member that the Premier has done everything possible in that connec-

tion. As he interjected the other day, he had done everything from pleading to abusing, as the position was so serious. Nearly 100 of our nurses enlisted in the Forces and not one has been released that I know of to work in our hospitals. If we could secure the release of a fair number of those nurses, our position would not be so bad. The member for Murray-Wellington also said he thought it would be well to train some of our young people. That is being done at the Perth Hospital. We have a dietitian there who gives instruction and encourages the young people to take up this work. Matrons of hospitals with more than 20 beds are invited annually to attend at the Perth Hospital to obtain instruction in cooking and diet.

Mr. Doney: Has the presence of the dietitian resulted in better meals being supplied at the hospital?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. We give credit to the dietitian, who is very enthusiastic and interested in her work.

Mr. McLarty: Should not nurses be trained to take charge of hospitals as matrons?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They are being so trained. I have had much experience of hospitals myself. I was secretary of the Lake Way hospital when I was a boy and I have since been a member of committees and also chairman. I attended closely to the work, in which I was greatly interested. Our methods today are far superior to what they were 20 or 30 years ago. Today every effort is being made to train young people and also to induce our nurses to study in order to become qualified as matrons. The member for Nedlands spoke about the Old Men's Home. The Minister for Lands partly replied to the points he raised. The home is built on a beautiful site. The men who pay £1 1s. a week have 11s. 6d. per week to spend and seem to be well satisfied with their conditions. As was pointed out, the men who are paying 27s. 6d. per week enjoy amenities which are not extended to those who pay only £1 1s. a week. A number of the old men are not paying anything at all.

Mr. Doney: Is the 11s. 6d. in addition to tobacco?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, it is to buy tobacco and matches. Apparently some members want the Government to give

away everything and then, at the end of the financial year, want to know why the Government does not balance the Budget. In regard to food, I do not know exactly what the position is; but I have visited the home and had a chat with two or three of the old fellows whom I highly respect, because I value the good work they did in developing the State. They seem to be perfectly satisfied; but I have promised to pay another visit with the member for Nedlands later. It will be a surprise visit and we shall then ascertain exactly what the position is. I am rather anxious to think that the good food which is supplied to the Home may be spoilt in the cooking. There is no doubt that the food supplied to the institution is good so it should merely be a matter of its being cooked properly. It was also said that a number of the men were sent to the home to die. That is a wrong construction. I feel that even the name "Sunset" should be changed.

The Minister for Lands: The men chose that name themselves. I organised the competition and the men won.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I did not know that. I feel that the name "Sunset" suggests that for the men the sun is setting. The staff seem to be reasonably satisfied and are doing a reasonably good job. I may state that the staff knew I was visiting the home; whether or not that made any difference I do not know. However, I had a good look through the home and, with the exception of a few lockers and some amenities, the position is reasonable. The member for Mt. Magnet complained of the shortage of nurses. The department and the Minister are anxious in that direction, especially as regards the country. Because we cannot get a matron and staff the Esperance hospital will have to be closed, and there are two or three others in the same position. I do not think the salary or allowances have made any difference, although I believe that the nurses are entitled to better conditions. We have endeavoured to get to the Arbitration Court to have those matters adjusted. But that would not make any difference to the position. The whole trouble is due to the war. We have not been able to get the nurses back to fill the vacancies. There are many metropolitan nurses who have been acting in the various hospitals

but they left to go back to their homes when their husbands returned.

What the hon. member said about the Leonora hospital is quite true. The people there have collected a certain amount of money, and plans and specifications were sent to the department, which considered that the number of beds required was too extravagant and wanted to get the Hospital Planning Committee up there to look into the position. It has been difficult to get busy doctors away, but eventually we decided to go by 'plane. We recognise that unless the nurses get accommodation they cannot be expected to remain in the country. We have no control over nurses. The National Security Regulations have been lifted so that they can go where they please. They need not do any nursing at all. Generally speaking, however, the nurses are very good and agreeable. They will go where the conditions are reasonable.

The question of regional hospitals has been given a lot of consideration. I cannot enlarge on what my predecessor has said. These hospitals will be staffed with the necessary specialists and equipment. They will be important institutions in the back country. It would be impossible to have a regional hospital in the North-West on account of the scanty population. We will be able to have only a central hospital there. The member for Middle Swan complained about the ice supplies. I did not know that the Health Department had much to do with ice. However, I understand the position, especially the case of those who have small ice chests. I can assure the hon. member that the Government will do everything possible to see that ice is distributed. It is difficult to get ice into the country. We cannot send ice to Laver-ton because it melts before arriving. The same thing applies to other parts of the State. People living in the city and other large centres have many amenities that are not available in the country. My predecessor indicated that he was willing to take over the infant health centres under certain conditions. That has already been done. Generally speaking they are well satisfied. There are a few anomalies to be cleaned up. The question of travelling expenses is one.

Mr. Doney: You are in the process of doing that now.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We are giving that consideration. The nurses are getting travelling allowances in accordance with the award. The member for Mt. Marshall said we should let the awards go. If we did that the railway workers and others would come along and say, "You can do the same for us."

Mr. Leslie: The Arbitration Court fixes the minimum.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It fixes the minimum and the maximum.

Mr. Leslie: Unfortunately it becomes the minimum.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I admit that is the reason why they have not got more, but that is the award. The member for Middle Swan said the department has only two dentists. We have four, but only three are operating because it has been impossible to get a fourth one. When the dentists return and we have our full quota, we should be able to meet the requirements of the State. We cannot go too far. Members will be wanting us to provide two dozen dentists.

Mr. Watts: Are you not calling applications for one now?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It would be of no use doing that because they are not available.

Mr. Watts: Is there not an application in the "Government Gazette"?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: We have applied. We have four, but we are one short because we have not been able to get one to fill a vacancy.

Mr. Doney: That is what the Leader of the Opposition is saying.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is the position. The member for Kalgoorlie complained of the nurses' quarters not being furnished. There is something wrong there. Up to date he is quite right in what he said. They have not received the furniture nor have they been able to obtain a motor for the air conditioning of the nurses' quarters. That matter will be looked into, and when we can do something in that direction it will be accomplished. Something has been done with D.D.T. at Claremont. I believe it has been an effective means of dealing with bugs and flies. The Agricultural Department has been dealing with D.D.T., and all restrictions have now been lifted. It will be avail-

able to those who require it, according to the quantities that can be supplied in the future. A regulation was brought down restricting its distribution under the Pharmaceutical Act.

Mr. North: Give us information on how to use it.

The Premier: The trouble is that they do not know what it might do.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I will see what can be done in that direction and have it made public.

The Premier: The entomologists of the Department of Agriculture are constantly working on it.

Hon. N. Keenan: It has wonderful effects.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Its effects can be detrimental too. It can kill bees and other things that help the community generally.

The Premier: You use it to kill red mite and you also kill the bees.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The Kununoppin Hospital was mentioned, and I know something about that because I have a brother-in-law in the bank there. His wife was a nurse. There has been a serious shortage there. We have done everything possible to supply nurses, and as soon as we have three nurses or less available we shall send them along. We have no control over doubly certificated nurses. We cannot stop them from going to Japan if they wish to do so. It would be difficult for the Commonwealth Government to knock them back because they have the extra qualification. At the same time they are very important to the back country of this State.

Mr. Watts: Apparently the Government would sooner spend £50,000,000 on encouraging migration than prevent a few nurses going abroad.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: As regards the clothing for nurses, up till recently we were using the military residues, as it were, and they were badly clad, but the conditions are now much improved and they are pleased with the clothing that is coming along.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Public Health £56,536; Mental Hospitals and Inebriates £147,468—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.

## Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 7th November, 1945.

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

### MOTION—URGENCY.

*Geraldton Hospital and Infectious Diseases*

The PRESIDENT: I have received the following letter from Hon. E. H. H. Hall:—

Perth, 7th November, 1945. Sir, I desire to inform you that at the commencement of the sitting of the Council today it is my intention to move, under Standing Order No. 59, the adjournment of the House to discuss a matter of urgency, namely, the urgent necessity for the Government to take immediate action to provide for the proper treatment of infectious diseases at the Victoria District Hospital, Geraldton, and thereby endeavour to allay the alarm stated to be felt by those responsible for the conduct of the institution.

It will be necessary for four members to rise in their places to support the proposal.

Four members having risen in their places

HON. E. H. H. HALL (Central) [4.33]

I move:

That the House at its rising adjourn till Friday, the 9th November, at 2.30 p.m.

I want to read a report that appears in "The West Australian" of the 5th of this month. It includes some statements made by Dr. Watson of Geraldton. The report is headed in black type, "Geraldton Hospital" and is as follows:—

"The position at the Geraldton hospital in regard to the treatment of infectious cases had caused and was still causing the gravest concern to all responsible for the conduct of the institution," said Dr. A. T. Watson at a meeting of the Geraldton Regional Hospital Committee.