MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin—in reply) [9.12]: When I moved for the appointment of a select committee on this Bill, it was to protect the situation until we were able to investigate the possibility of preparing suitable amendments to the measure in order to make it workable. This has been done and it appears that with the co-operation of members, it will be possible for something desirable to emerge from the Bill before us. In view of the fact that the amendments are on the notice paper, I would ask leave, Mr. Speaker, to withdraw my motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

In Committee.

Mr. Norton in the Chair; Mr. Johnson in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Interpretation:

Mr. COURT: I understood that the Committee stage was not to be taken until next week, and with that in mind, I have not got all the detailed references that I wanted to present to the Committee. I would suggest that progress be reported.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9.15 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 12th September, 1957.

CONTENTS.

The PRESIDENT took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

LIBERAL PARTY MEMBERS.

Absence from House.

Hon. E. M. DAVIES (without notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

Is there any reason why the Liberal Party members of this House are absent, without notice, this afternoon?

The MINISTER replied:

I know of no reason other than that those members have been having a meeting and probably time has got ahead of them.

TRAMWAY DEPARTMENT BUSES.

High Entrance Steps.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Does the Tramway Department propose to take action to minimise the risk of serious accident and inconvenience to the elderly and infirm arising from the extremely high entrance steps on the new Government buses recently brought into service?

(2) If so, and pending necessary action, will he take steps to ensure, wherever possible, that the use of these buses will be reduced to a minimum on days when pension payments of various types are made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) This type of bus with under-floor engine, necessitates the provision of steps slightly higher than those on other buses, but it is considered that the steps as designed do not constitute a danger hazard. The identical type of bus with similar step design has been in use by a private bus operator for approximately two years, during which time no serious accident has occurred.

(2) It would not be economical or practicable to restrict the use of these buses as suggested.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Hon. E. M. Davies, leave of absence for 12 consecutive sittings granted to Hon. G. Fraser (West) on the ground of ill-health.

BILL—HONEY POOL ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Assembly without amendment.

BILL—STIPENDIARY MAGISTRATES.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [2.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

HON. H. K. WATSON (Metropolitan) [2.36]): A few moments ago, Mr. President, Mr. Davies asked a question which to my mind was quite out of place. I would like now to ask the Minister, through you, why the member in charge of this Bill is not in the House to see it through its proper stages.

The Minister for Railways: The hon. member in charge of the Bill has been called away to the telephone.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and *passed*.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION.

Hon. L. A. Logan and Remarks on Bank Holidays Act Amendment Bill.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [2.37]: Mr. President, on reading the Hansard report of my speech on the banking measure last night I realised the import of interjections by Mr. MacKinnon and Mrs. Hutchison when they said, respectively, "You had better qualify that" and "You are not very complimentary". When I realised that I had said, "I fail to see where the quality of the staff could possibly be any lower than it was in previous years", I had to agree that that could be taken as a reflection on bank staffs although I had no intention whatever of that. On consulting my notes for that speech I find that I had written the following:—

> In view of the better standard of education which applies today I am sure there has been no lowering in the standard or quality of bank staffs.

I hope that will qualify the statement I made last night, which could easily be misconstrued. I had no intention of casting a reflection on anybody.

BILL—ASSOCIATIONS INCORPORATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—NEWSPAPER LIBEL AND REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the previous day. Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; Hon Sir Charles Latham in charge of the Bill.

Title (partly considered):

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: I move an amendment—

> That all words after the word "amend" in line 1, down to and including the word "of" in line 3 be struck out.

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

Bill reported with amendments and an amendment to the title.

BILL—BREAD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 4th September.

HON. G. E. JEFFERY (Suburban) [2.43]: I support the second reading of the Bill, which proposes to make it mandatory for pastrycooks to start work at 5 a.m. Under their award, as it stands at present, the spread of hours in the industry are: on week days, from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m.; and on Saturdays, from 5 a.m. to 1 p.m. This amendment has been brought about by the activities of certain individuals who are starting work much earlier in the morning; in fact, they have their goods in the shops in some instances before the legitimate pastrycooks have started business.

I believe that this proposition has the blessing of all the large employers of labour in this industry. The position has got so bad that in order to compete, the big fellows have to start work sometimes at 1 o'clock or 2 o'clock in the mornings. Things have reached such a stage that the Pastrycooks Advisory Committee is receiving reports from the technical instructors that apprentices are starting work at such an hour that they go to school too tired to show any interest in their training. The industry also feels that if this Bill is not agreed to, it will make employment in the industry unattractive; and it will thus be most difficult to secure the right type of lad to take up pastrycook work as a trade.

While we have no great objection to people earning their living in any particular manner, we feel they should have some respect for the general rules of industry. It is true that by starting earlier than 5 a.m. the employees can claim penalty rates; but if that became general practice, the public would ultimately have to pay for the penalty rates in the new price of the products of this industry.

On a point of consistency I would mention that the Bread Act has a similar provision governing the starting-time of bakers and I think members will generally agree that that Act has worked very well. The industrial relationship existing between bakers and employees is one of the best in the State. I know of no instance where there has been litigation

between the Bakers' Union and the master bakers. That was legislation passed in this State some time ago; and I think that in this instance we could safely agree to this Bill and return sanity to the industry. I support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. R. C. Mattiske, debate adjourned.

BILL—LEGAL PRACTITIONERS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 14th August.

HON. E. M. HEENAN (North-East) [2.51]: This is a short Bill which has for its purpose the repeal of Section 13 of the Legal Practitioners Act, with a view to substituting other provisions. Section 13 is the one which provides that articled clerks shall not, during the term of their articles, engage in any outside employment except with the written consent of the Barristers' Board. It reads as follows:—

> No articled clerk shall, without the written consent of the Board, during his term of service under articles, hold any office or engage in any employment other than as bona fide articled clerk to the practitioner to whom he is for the time being articled, or his partner; and every articled clerk shall, before being admitted as a practitioner, prove to the satisfaction of the Board, by affidavit or otherwise, that this section has been duly complied with.

When introducing the Bill, Mr. Teahan explained there are two avenues whereby any man or woman can gain admission to the Bar in Western Australia. The first and oldest method, which existed before the establishment of a Chair of Law at the University of Western Australia in about the year 1927, and which still exists, is known as the Barristers' Board course.

In order to enrol in this course, it is necessary to have a matriculation certificate and become articled to a legal practitioner for a term of five years. During this period an articled clerk gains knowledge and experience from the solicitor to whom he is articled; and, from time to time, takes examinations which are set by the Barristers' Board. At the end of five years, provided he has passed the necessary examinations and fulfils certain other requirements as to character, etc., he formally applies to the Full Court for admission; and, if it is granted, he is free to practice.

I will now deal with the second avenue, which is known as the university course. With the establishment of a Chair of Law at the university—I think about 1927—it became possible, for the first time in this State, for our students to enrol in the Faculty of Law; and, after completing a course of study occupying four years, to gain the degree of LL.B., which means Bachelor of Laws. On the attainment of this degree, a student then has to serve a period of two years' articles with a solicitor in order to gain practical knowledge and experience. At the end of this period, he applies to the Full Court; and, if everything is in order, he is admitted to the Bar.

Before proceeding further, I should perhaps comment that nowadays—with the better facilities offering for higher education, and the establishment of a free university with a Chair of Law, the university course is the most common way of seeking admission to the legal profession. It has been accepted that this is the course which appeals most to young men and women and offers the highest form of education and training for the making of the complete lawyer. It carries with it the great advantage of a university education, plus a period spent in articles, whereby the practical side of the work can be learned.

On this aspect of the combination of a university education, followed by a period of articles, I would like to read an extract from an address given by Professor K. O. Shatwell, Professor of Law, University of Sydney, at a law convention, held in Melbourne in 1948. Discussing the subject, the professor said—

> The answer surely is that both are complementary phases of legal education, and that neither should be given at the expense of the other. The law school is the place for the one; the law office or chambers the place for the other; and a law school which seeks to turn itself into a law office would be but a very poor imitation of the real thing. Every organism has diseases peculiarly incidental to it, and it is important that law school students should realise that the principles they study are intended for practical application. This to some extent is ensured by the excellent Australian practice by virtue of which men of standing in both branches of the profession carry, as part-time lecturers, a substantial portion of the teaching burden; by well organised moots, and by properly planned visits to the courts. But the law school must, as far as the training of the future practitioner is concerned, primarily concern itself with instruction in what Frank terms "library law" and "upper court" decisions. An engineer with no practical experience, say, of bridge building, is an incomplete engineer,—

Hon. H. K. Watson: Even an engineer at the Narrows bridge.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I suppose it would apply. To continue—

> —but on the other hand when he gets his practical experience he is not expected thereby to equip himself with the necessary theoretical knowledge. Mechanics may be trained that way, but not professional men.
>
> As you will have gathered, I am arguing simply that the function of the law school is to give systematic theoretical instruction, and that some sort of apprenticeship system must be used to give the necessary training in what I have called "fact handling". I am far from underestimating the importance of this—on the contrary it is an integral and necessary part of student training.

It will be appreciated, therefore, that the Barristers' Board course involves a period of five years' articles; and in the case of the university student who has gained his LL.B. degree, it is still necessary for him to serve two years' articles.

Great importance, is attached, therefore, to the serving of articles, and rightly so, because this period, as the professor points out, is a complementary part of a student's education, the ultimate aim of which is to turn out a well qualified lawyer who is properly equipped to serve the best interests of the community.

On this phase of the subject I would like to read an extract from an address by E. L. Stevens, LL.B. a barrister and solicitor of the Supreme Court of South Australia, given at the recent Legal Convention held in Melbourne in July of this year. Mr. Stevens said—

> I have already referred to the necessity of efficiency and expedition. It may be that in what I have been saying I had in mind the very ideal solicitor. The activities covered by the profession generally are very wide and while we can make a general division into say litigation, advising and the mechanical part that is the preparation of documents and the like, our work takes us into a variety of matters. Whether we specialise or carry on a general practice, efficiency and expedition will not exist unless we are properly equipped both as to educational training as well as practical training. In the main our universities deal with the pure educational side from the point of learning, while with regard to solicitors there has always been some period of apprenticeship by means of Articles. In almost every State there exists from time to time a conflict between the desire for a practical education against a desire for an academic education. But while the foundations may be laid in the period when the student gets his degree or otherwise qualifies, the real period of training follows afterwards. It is very important that the foundation is truly laid, but it is just as important that that training continues.

A little later he says—

> It is however, very essential if the solicitor is to live up to anything like the ideal I have set, that his training should be of the best, both from the educational point of view as well as from the practical. I do not propose to enter into the details of this matter. It might very well form the matter of separate discussion but I think that the practising solicitor as well as the practising barrister should take a real interest in the training of those who intend to become members of the legal profession; to see that the course is properly balanced and will truly lay the foundations for a competent practitioner. As we grow older in the profession, it should be our earnest desire to see that those who are coming on after us are properly trained. This of course is impossible if we are not properly trained ourselves, and one is rather appalled as the years go by to realise how little we really know. Notwithstanding this I say, and I say emphatically, we must at all times keep before us the need to be thorough, the need to understand our subject, the need to take a pride in our work; as with us so with those who follow in our footsteps.

I have mentioned these matters because I feel it is my duty to point out that in the legal profession—as, I feel confident, in all others—there is an earnest desire to maintain high standards of qualifications in order only that the members of the profession may properly fulfil the duty which they owe to the rest of the community. So dealing with the question of articles and outside employment, I would ask members to believe that the Barristers' Board has not had any motive in view other than to do the right thing by the articled clerk and also by the community which he is aspiring to serve.

It is easy enough to raise prejudice against the legal profession by claiming that sons born of parents in humble circumstances are greatly handicapped under the existing position. There is, possibly, an element of truth in this contention. If a boy wants to pursue any vocation—go on the land, or enter a trade or business, or a profession—his path will no doubt be made easier if his parents are in a financial position to help him through. But times are changing in this respect—for the better, thank goodness—and the doors to professions are now open to almost anyone who has the ambition and determination to accomplish the goal.

Just confining my remarks to the Goldfields and to the legal profession, and speaking of recent years, I can mention an eminent Q.C. in the Eastern States who was the son of a butcher in fairly humble circumstances in Kalgoorlie. I can also quote the case of a well-known Perth lawyer whose father was a miner at Gwalia; another whose father was a taxi driver in Kalgoorlie; and another whose father was a prospector. They are just a few instances that come readily to mind and are typical of numerous others. Each one is well known to Mr. Teahan, the mover of the Bill.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: After they commenced practice were their qualifications unquestionable?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Absolutely! One of them is now one of the most brilliant Queen's Counsel in Melbourne.

Hon. G. Bennetts: There is one, a Mr. Lane, whose father was a baker in Boulder.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes. Another issue which has been raised, and regarding which there is apparently a good deal of misunderstanding is the question of the payment received by articled clerks. Because of the apparent misunderstanding, I point out that in the legal profession there are a number of men who qualify largely by experience as law clerks. They are trained law clerks and as a rule they have been in solicitors' offices for many years, but have not passed exams or qualified as lawyers. They are, however, very much in demand, and a good law clerk can command a high salary. Many offices in Perth are looking for them all the time. A good law clerk can command a salary of £20, £25 or £30 a week without any trouble. They are well paid because theirs is a skilled calling.

In regard to the articled clerk, the position is different altogether. It has to be remembered that when a young man takes articles, as has been pointed out in the extracts I have read, the whole object of the period of his articles is for him to learn his profession and be taught by the solicitor to whom he is articled; and also so that he may get experience in a practical way which will equip him to practise later.

But the position would be somewhat the same as if I went to a chemist and asked him to apprentice me. I would not know the first thing about it. If he took me on and said, "I will teach you to be a chemist and will help you to pass your examinations," I, instead of being in a postion to demand a salary from him, would be more or less a financial burden to him.

So it is with these articled clerks; and that is why it seems unfair to hear Mr. Watson say that they are "paid" £2, £3 and £4 a week. There was a time when they were not paid anything, but had to pay a premium to become articled. But now they are paid something, but not only £2 to £4 a week as Mr. Watson said.

I am sorry that when I pointed out that that used to be the case, I said that Mr. Watson's information was false. I did not wish to convey that impression, because I would be the first to say he does not falsify his facts. But his statement was erroneous. I have made inquiries; and articled clerks are now paid £5, £6, and various other amounts. They normally commence at £5 or £6 a week.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Is that for the five years' articles?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: No; I am talking mainly about university students. The point I am trying to make is that when a parent wants to put a son into the legal profession, the first thing he does is to select a reputable competent lawyer. He might want the young man to become a barrister. In that case he picks out a prominent barrister who has a reputation for ability and integrity; and he goes to him and says, "Can I article my son to you?"

Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What about his daughter?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Or his daughter. The father might want the son to go into another branch of the profession such as conveyancing, and he would then select a reputable and well-established firm which for years has been carrying on that type of business—i.e. acting for banks and other big institutions—and request it to take his son in articles. When the young man comes in under these circumstances, he does not know very much. He is fresh from a university, and probably has an LL.B. degree. But he has no practical experience; and his value, from the point of view of the payment of wages, is very little.

I mention these things only because I want to keep any element of prejudice out of this debate. When a young man is at the university, the university does not pay him; and when he goes into the legal office to do his articles, he is only carrying on his education from the university, but in a different department. He really does not receive "wages;" and the money he receives should not be termed wages, because it cannot be placed in that category.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It is really only pocket money.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes. I did not want to quote my own case, but I think it might help members to realise what happens. I was in the Education Department in my early years, and then I resigned and took my articles with a solicitor in Perth. I was not known at the time; and my parents had no influence, because we lived in Esperance. I had to go to a kind-hearted generous man who was recommended to me. He did not have a very

good practice, but he took me in and welcomed me. He was not able to pay me any wages; but he did more than that—he spent a lot of time tutoring me, helping me, and introducing me to his friends. He took me to the courts and to the Titles Office; and what he did for me was worth more than if he had paid me money.

In those days there were night classes, and the Education Department was generous enough to enrol me as a teacher for three nights a week. I used to teach at the night school, and it did not do me any harm. I was not able to buy a new suit of clothes very often, but I managed to get along. My parents, within their limited ability, helped me, and I got through. That sort of thing does not do anyone any harm.

When I put the matter to the Barristers' Board, and said I wanted to teach at night school, the members of the board did not stop me; they welcomed it and readily gave their permission. So in my opinion Section 13 of the Act has never operated unfairly against anyone. I would be the first to complain if any unfairness resulted, or if any injustice were done to anybody.

An articled clerk I had in Kalgoorlie wanted to take up other employment at the week-end, and he worked in the tote office at the races. The Barristers' Board was asked for and unhesitatingly gave its permission. However, Section 13 provides that if an articled clerk wants to take outside employment, he cannot do so without the written permission of the Barristers' Board. I think that might be modified by allowing an articled clerk to take outside employment if he has the written permission of the practitioner to whom he is articled.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Wouldn't that be the present practice?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: More or less. I do not want to oppose the Bill; I want to assist Mr. Teahan in getting his amendments through in some way. But I have an amendment which is a modification of the proposal in the Bill, and it is one to which I think he will agree. When a young man is articled to a lawyer, chemist or dentist, surely his job is to spend his whole time, or the normal hours every day, with the lawyer, the chemist or the dentist, as the case may be.

Hon. W. R. Hall: He will be compelled to do that, won't he?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes.

Hon. W. R. Hall: Well?

Hon. L. C. Diver: How about the university student? He is not bound after he leaves the university. He can get employment as he likes.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: No he cannot; he has to take articles. I thought I made that clear.

Hon. L. C. Diver: For two years only.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes, but the university student has done a minimum course of four years.

Hon. L. C. Diver: Three years.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: No, four years.

Hon. L. C. Diver: My advice is that it is three years.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Then I am afraid the hon. member's advice is wrong. My wife and also a nephew did the university course, and they tell me it is four years. They did four-year courses at the university and then two years' articles. When these people leave the university they have a lot to learn, just as a doctor has. After completing his course at the university he has a lot to learn; and it would not be right for him to be let loose on the public straight away. He has to go into a hospital and get further experience.

So it is with university students who study law. They have to become articled for two years; and during that period it is only right and proper that they should spend the whole of the time in the office of the lawyer to whom they are articled; otherwise the purpose of articles is not achieved.

The main object of the Bill is contained in the provision relating to members of Parliament. I have heard no complaints about the operations of Section 13.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Why not leave it as it is?

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I have an amendment which I think will be quite suitable. It will transfer the responsibility of giving the written consent from the Barristers' Board to the responsible solicitor. I think that is a justifiable amendment. The responsible solicitor, if the amendment is agreed to, will be able to give or withhold his written consent; and I think that should suit the purpose. If any modification is needed, I think that is—

Hon. H. K. Watson: The limit.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: Yes; because anyone at present who is a genuine case, whether it be a boy or a girl, would be able to obtain consent to do outside work. My nephew, who was at the university, did his two years' articles with me; and in order to earn some extra money, he applied to the Barristers' Board for leave to call at square dances. He had some ability as a caller for square dances, which were all the rage at the time; and the Barristers' Board gave its consent.

The board has never vexatiously withheld its consent; and I do not think this aspect is the reason for the introduction of the Bill. The board has never operated unfairly to my knowledge; and if any articled clerk wants to take other employment, I can assure members that the Barristers' Board will give its permission, in

deserving circumstances. However, I suppose there are some limits which should retained.

If a boy were doing articles, it would not be right for instance if he engaged in some occupation that kept him out too late at night. He would not be able to study or do his job the next day. However, as I said before, I think the real purpose of this measure is contained in the provision relating to members of Parliament.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: That is not very right.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I am not going to oppose the proposal because I see that Mr. Diver has an amendment on the notice paper. As regards articled clerks, there is no age limit; I think I was articled at about 26 years of age. But the fact that a person is an articled clerk should not preclude him altogether from standing for Parliament. Suppose a young man in Kalgoorlie is articled, and he is induced to stand for Parliament and is elected. In my opinion some modification of the present state of affairs is justified.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Would you extend that to the other professions and trades?

Hon. E. M. Heenan: I would deal with each one on its merits. I cannot envisage what other profession or trade the hon. member has in mind. If a member of Parliament desires to take on articles, it is to be appreciated that for a part of the year he will be engaged in parliamentary work, and he cannot at the same time be sitting in a solicitor's office carrying out his articles. To me it seems that such a position might be capable of some solution and the amendment on the notice paper in the name of Mr. Diver might be the answer.

Anyone—be he a member of Parliament, a miner or a millionaire's son—desiring to enter any profession or calling will be assisted to any extent within my limits. If any member of Parliament desires to take on articles so as to qualify for the legal profession, I shall do all I can to help him. At the same time we must realise that we owe an obligation to the community. By doing some individual a good turn, it will not help the community if in the net result we are to turn out professional men with insufficient training and qualifications.

One phase of Mr. Teahan's arguments was contained in a circular suggesting that the number of solicitors practising in Western Australia is below the average for the other States. That was the purpose of the circular. The contention was that this state of affairs came about through the pernicious operation of Section 13 of the Act. This is a fallacy. There is a shortage of nurses, of doctors, and of dentists. Such shortages occur from time to time. When all is said and done, the main reason is that the legal profession does not attract great numbers.

I hope I did not make a mis-statement when I assured Mr. Diver, on his interjection, that the university course lasted for four years. As stated previously my wife, and my nephew went through the university law course, and they both told me that it was a four-year course. So young men or women taking a university course of four years are involved in much hard work and study. They have to pass examinations, and many of them fall by the wayside.

Furthermore, they cannot earn much of a living for those four years. On top of that, they have to take on articles for two years after passing the course; and, again, they cannot earn very much during that period. After having been admitted to the Bar they have to go into the world; they have to start an office or seek employment with some legal firm and build up a clientele. In that respect there are possibilities of failure.

When it comes to the hard business of practising, it will be seen that many who were very successful as students do not suceed when they get into the hurly-burly of private practice, which covers so many facets of law. Even in the case of the successful lawyers, the financial prizes are not highly attractive.

For instance, the Chief Justice of this State draws a salary which would be frowned on by top business executives, large station-owners or farmers. Most of the lawyers practising in Perth maintain offices for which they pay high rentals. Furthermore, they have to engage staff, and provide stationery and telephones. There is not very much left after deducting these expenses. One often reads Press reports of the estates left by deceased persons. One does not often see deceased lawyers leaving much.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Their legal knowledge would enable them to fix up their worldy affairs before-hand.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: That is not the reason. If anyone has an ambition to make money, he should not choose the legal profession as the medium. I do not want to cry "Poor mouth" because a successful lawyer does earn quite a satisfactory salary, and above the average for the community. But I would point out that the financial return of the Chief Justice, the Commonwealth Crown Solicitors, and others at the top of the legal profession is not commensurate with the return from other avocations. I say this in answer to the contention of Mr. Teahan that Section 13 is the reason why there are insufficient lawyers.

As another argument he mentioned a lawyer in Kalgoorlie who complained of being overworked. That incident is rather amusing, because I happen to know every lawyer in Kalgoorlie, and this one in particular. When he complained of overwork, he had just come back from a legal convention in Melbourne.

Hon. H. L. Roche: If he was overworked he needed the holiday.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: He was complaining of being overworked after he came back from the holiday.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: He was not overworked; he was over there.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: I support this measure. Irrespective of any criticism I might have levelled against this measure, I think that Mr. Teahan did his best in introducing it, but there have been some arguments used which only tend to create prejudice. Through the centuries—even in the time of Charles Dickens—the legal profession has been the object of prejudice.

Hon. W. R. Hall: They are very jealous of their profession.

Hon. E. M. HEENAN: It seems to be the trend with the rest of the community to belittle lawyers. After all, there are good and bad as in many other professions or spheres. I support the second reading.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [3.40]: I appreciate a great deal of what Mr. Heenan has said; but I do not think that I have ever seen him endeavouring, under such difficulties, to speak in favour of a Bill. I can see nothing in its favour; and, frankly, the opening of easy doors to professional status is most unwise. All that we have attempted in the profession to which I belong is to tighten the doors and make them narrower.

The Minister for Railways: Is that not restricting the individual?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: No; it makes for a better class of medical practitioner. To make it easy for people to qualify for professions can lower the standard. The legal profession, as much as the medical profession, has been very jealous of its status, particularly since the law school commenced.

I do not want to enter into long arguments over the advantages of the articled-clerk method of obtaining legal status, as against the university course plus a short period of articleship. There is no doubt that university study, plus a period as an articled clerk, produces a degree which is recognised in many parts of the world.

All that this Bill seeks to do is to alter Section 13, which has always worked perfectly well; because the Barristers' Board, the authority concerned, consists of a group of intelligent individuals who will not prevent any person from trying to succeed in law. I cannot see any benefit being derived from Mr. Heenan's amendment.

In the years that I have been here I have found that the wise men, who have since gone from this earth, have advised that the greater the number of words used in framing an amendment, the more restrictive it becomes. This amendment could make the position very restrictive. The more open it is under the authority of the Barristers' Board the better.

Under this amendment it will be possible for an articled clerk to do other work only after his normal hours of 9 to 5. Suppose there were a very brilliant university student who wanted to lecture or demonstrate in the university; this amendment might preclude him from doing so. The amendment will make the position worse and not better.

We find men going through the medical profession who, whilst in their internship, can still be engaged as lecturers or demonstrators outside the hospital. That should be allowed to continue, because we need the brilliant students to bring the rest up to the field. No one can convince me that one of our most brilliant students —Michael McCall—should be debarred from doing anything like that in the field of medicine and confined only to the hospital work in the year before he received his degree. That is is nonsense. We can use the ability of such brilliant students very well in other directions to further increase their knowledge.

I do not think that the board has objected at any time to an individual working after he had completed his day's work. Surely his life is his own; and there are many of us who have done just that. Shortly after I qualified I was lecturing to other students and earning my way further up the ladder. Therefore I suggest that although the amendment looks quite harmless, it is more restrictive than the clause in the Bill.

When it comes to the second provision, I do not like it a bit, because this House has always objected to legislation introduced not in a general sense but to help one or two particular people. That sort of thing was done with regard to a Bill dealing with dentists. I forget its Title, but it was designed to allow one person who was a member in another place to be registered as a dentist. A great deal of opprobrium fell upon Parliament for doing that sort of thing.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: It must have passed both Houses.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: It did.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Were you here then?

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: No. It was one of the reasons I came here.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: I am glad we have been given that reason.

The PRESIDENT: Order please!

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I do not think we should continue to perpetuate that sort of thing in other professions. This is not a question of an individual being able to study while travelling over to Canberra

and back again. The articled-clerk arrangement is to enable an individual to put into practice the knowledge he has already gained, by active work in a solicitor's office. That cannot be done in an aeroplane.

While the terms of Mr. Diver's amendment may increase the time, the amount of time necessary to be spent by a man as an articled clerk will still be cut down simply because he has been elected as a member of the State or Federal Parliament. Surely members of Parliament should not be granted privileges of that sort. I cannot see that it is justified.

I could quite agree to an amendment providing that time spent in Parliament could be used to extend by that same amount of time the period a man has to work as an articled clerk, but not to one limiting the amount of time to one-half as this amendment does. The proposal is to allow a man to obtain legal status who has put in less time as an articled clerk than is required of a student who is not a member of Parliament. This is surely not the place to learn the practice of the law. I would say that we are simply opening a back-door method of allowing people to qualify in less time than is normally required, simply because they are elected to a Parliament.

Hon. E. M. Davies: Judging by the criticism of the drafting of Bills that come before us here, I thought we had quite a lot of lawyers in this place.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: No; we might even need more. As I see it, there is no virtue in this Bill. The section which already exists covers the position. If the Barristers' Board thinks an individual can still gain his experience while engaging in another occupation that he may wish to undertake, it will agree to allow the time so spent to act as portion of the period of training. Why should this House take over that privilege? We provided for a board to do that.

This House always objects when anybody tries to persuade us to take over the powers of the Arbitration Court. Why should we therefore take over the powers of a board for the appointment of which we provided; for the members of which we have the greatest respect; and to which we have given the duty of maintaining the standard of legal training in this State? I cannot believe for one moment that we are justified in agreeing to a Bill of this kind, and I ask the House to defeat it.

HON. L. C. DIVER (Central) [3.50]: I was surprised by the attitude adopted by the hon. member. I am told that this state of affairs has existed since 1893, when it was provided that a man had to get the approval of the board before he could do any work during certain hours. Mr. Heenan said that a student at the university had to do a four-year course. I was advised that it was a course of three years. I will not quarrel with the hon. member about that, because this is his profession and I would be the last one in the world to challenge his knowledge to that extent.

However, I was advised that a man would do his course at the university and then become an articled clerk for two years; and I was told that during the period that student was so being trained he was able to do what he liked in order to obtain pocket money outside of the hours during which he was not studying. I have been told that some students even do gardening work.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: The board does not stop that.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: Why should such people have to apply to the board? If they are not university students, why should there have to be an application to the board? We have heard a lot of talk about progress, but I think that in this case there is retrogression. However, although Mr. Heenan and I do not see eye to eye entirely in this matter, he is prepared to let this Bill be read a second time and then to seek to amend it. He has an amendment on the notice paper dealing with Section 13 and I have one covering the provision concerning members of Parliament.

The question we have to determine when we are considering the position of members of Parliament is whether they gain any legal experience during the time they are here. Some members may claim that no experience of that sort is obtained. But it does seem strange to me that members of Parliament make the laws of this State, which the legal fraternity spend many days—

Hon. W. R. Hall: Trying to sort out.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: —in tearing apart, incidentally rendering fantastic accounts while they are about the task. It seems strange to me that in spite of that fact, it is insinuated that members of Parliamen gain no legal experience while they are here.

Hon. G. E. Jeffery: Precious little.

Hon. L. C. DIVER: I think that might depend on the extent to which a member of Parliament applies himself to his job. There is ample opportunity to gain considerable legal knowledge while one is a member of Parliament. If my amendment is agreed to, all the consideration that a certain person would be entitled to in another place would be half of the time that would expire from the time when this amendment became law, which could only be a few months. That is all that any individual we know of in Parliament today would gain; but we would have placed on the statute book something that would be of benefit to others who come after.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What would be the position if a man stayed in Parliament 10 years?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: There was on one occasion a member of Parliament who, while he was here, was admitted to the Barristers' Board. That being so, if the person mentioned were to apply himself in the same manner as the gentleman to whom I have referred, I cannot see why the same thing should not occur again, the precedent having been created.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Was he admitted to the Bar or made Attorney General?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: He was Attorney General.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: He was a qualified man.

Hon. A. R. Jones: What would be the position if a man were in Parliament for 10 years?

Hon. L. C. DIVER: The hon. member's suggestion is that the 10-year period would cover the full training course; and if he could not pass the examination, he would not be admitted by the board. I propose to support the second reading; but I trust that the amendment will be passed, and will prove of benefit to those who may enter Parliament in future.

On motion by Hon. Sir Charles Latham, debate adjourned.

Sitting suspended from 3.58 to 4.20 p.m.

MOTION—SALE OF IRON ORE TO JAPAN.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

Debate resumed from the 30th July, on the following motion by Hon. N. E. Baxter:—

> That a select committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon the proposed sale of Koolyanobbing iron ore to Japan, with particular reference as to whether the profit likely to be derived from such sale is likely to be sufficient to finance any other venture.

HON. L. A. LOGAN (Midland) [4.21]: Since Mr. Baxter introduced this motion circumstances have somewhat altered. The approach made to the Commonwealth Government by the State Government for a licence to export Koolyanobbing iron ore to Japan has been refused; though another approach has now been made by the State Government for a licence to export iron ore from Tallering. I would have criticised the approach made by the State Government to the Federal Government for the very reasons mentioned by the Commonwealth in refusing the application.

Had the State Government gone about this in a better manner in the first place, and approached the Commonwealth for a permit to export ore from one of the minor or lesser-known deposits—where that export would not have interfered with any major works at a later date—it probably would have had greater success. It could work both ways—the very fact that the application has been refused, has brought to light the number of known deposits throughout Western Australia, and it has meant that we now know a little more about the matter than we did previously.

The second approach has been made on a somewhat different basis; and I do hope and trust that the request will be successful, provided of course that the money obtained from the export of this ore is used in the right manner. The initial approach was made on the profits being used for the building of another charcoal-iron foundry in the southern part of the State; and that aspect should not have accompanied the application—at least not in my opinion. What the State Government does with the profits it receives from the sale of iron ore is no concern of the Commonwealth Government. Had we said that the profits from the export of this ore would be used to supplement our building programme as it relates to schools and hospitals, I am sure the request would have received greater consideration.

But when the State Government puts up a plea that it wants to use the profit for establishing a charcoal-iron industry in the southern part of the State, it is natural that it would be viewed unfavourably; particularly since we have a pilot plant which has not been altogether successful financially. The manner of the approach was detrimental to the application.

Hon. J. J. Garrigan: It is only a pilot plant.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: I admit that. The figures given in regard to the profit likely to be made seem to me to be a little optimistic, although I may not be in a position to judge. The motion moved by Mr. Baxter had as its initial purpose an inquiry as to whether the profit derived from such an undertaking would be sufficient to finance any other venture.

The idea behind it was to get information throughout the State as to whether the profits from this venture could best be used for the establishment of a charcoal-iron industry, or for other purposes. Irrespective of where the iron comes from I still think that an inquiry into where the profits should go should be made.

As a representative of the State in this Parliament, I hope and trust that the Commonwealth Government will see fit to grant this export licence; because I appreciate that the iron ore deposit at Tallering, while being a very good one, is only

very small; and the export of 3,000,000 tons would not in any way affect the development of any future iron and steel industry.

The figures given by the Commonwealth Government in reply to this State to show that the known deposits of iron ore in Western Australia could easily be depleted in 25 to 30 years are most far-fetched, and I hope the State Government will immediately refute this. The figures given to me in reply to a question in this House show that there are very large deposits in this State; and the amount of iron ore exported from Western Australia at the moment—that is, the amount going to the Eastern States—is very small.

As far as I know, the only iron ore going out of Western Australia is that from Cockatoo Island and Yampi Sound. The amount of ore that Broken Hill is taking is only 200,000 tons a year. The deposits at Cockatoo Island total 28,000,000 tons. So members will have an idea of the extent of the ore available. Accordingly I hope the Federal Government will be put on the right track in this regard.

We all know that we have been waiting two years for the result of a deputation that went from this State to the Commonwealth Government in regard to our far North. I think it would have been opportune to send another deputation to see if we could not have got some reply to the previous one; and at the same time this iron ore proposition could have been put forward.

Even now I do not think it is too late to take this step; and I feel that a delegation should be sent to try to obtain finality on the matters that have been raised with the Commonwealth. I am certain that with the substitution of the word "Tallering" for "Koolyanobbing" the motion could still be made workable, and I trust that it will have the support of the House.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North) [4.28]: It is perhaps necessary to trace the origin of the reasons for the request for an export permit for the Wundowie charcoal iron works. The object of the Wundowie works initially was to apply for an export licence for 50,000 tons of iron ore, which was the overburden at Koolyanobbing where they were working. The object was to secure the capital to extend out of their own industry, as it were, instead of being required to use further loan funds to expand.

That application for a mere 50,000 tons, was of course refused: and it was refused on the ground of some old, long-standing, embargo dating back as far as 1938, introduced to prevent the export of iron ore. We know why that embargo was placed on iron ore, scrap metals and everything else at that period. The application was refused; but as a result of the discussions, negotiations and publicity that occurred, the Japanese sent a delegate to Australia and to Western Australia with a proposal that Japan would buy 5,000,000 tons; and would buy it on a basis that would show a net profit—which would, in fact, be a royalty of £1 per ton.

Had the Government been able to supply that 5,000,000 tons, it would have received a royalty of £1 per ton. However, it was out of the question. The obvious place to obtain it, of course, would have been Yampi, some arrangement being made with B.H.P. to release 5,000,000 tons of the 110,000,000 tons it has above the water-line in Cockatoo and Koolan Islands. That would have amounted to B.H.P. paying 1s. 6d. per ton as it does now, and the Japanese contributing another 18s. 6d. What B.H.P. would charge, we do not know. However, that was not acceptable and did not eventuate.

It was then decided that in order to expand the charcoal iron ore industry, an amount of something in the vicinity of between £750,000 and £1,000,000 would be required to set up an additional industry somewhere in the South-West. Therefore, the proposal was followed up to export 1,000,000 tons over a period of 1½, 2, or perhaps 2½ years, and the Japanese were prepared to pay on a cost-plus basis, showing a net return of £1 per ton.

Obviously Koolyanobbing was an ideal place, because the machinery is set up there; the ground is broken; and there is a rail to the port. Therefore, a request was made to the Commonwealth Government setting out the proposal in full detail, and the implications it would have on the further development of Western Australia. It was turned down—it was refused by the Commonwealth Government.

That Government searched very deeply for excuses, a principal one being that it queried very much whether the anticipated profit would be made by the State. It asked why, if such profit could be made, some private individual or private company had not entered into the field.

Hon. A. R. Jones: That was logical.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Why haven't they? Nobody has, despite the fact that the matter has had plenty of publicity. It has been well and truly publicised for months, but no private firm has entered the field. As I mentioned before, B.H.P. could easily export 5,000,000 tons and it would not be a bite out of the resources it holds.

However, that firm is not interested. It is only interested in exporting the finished article. We all are. But has Western Australia to wait forever for B.H.P. to expand the industry in this State; or is Western Australia going to be given an opportunity of expanding at nobody's expense other than that of the overseas buyer? That is the position.

However, it is well known that the Federal Government has taken that view; and the Leader of the Senate—I think it was Senator Spooner—announced that the second application could quite easily meet with the same fate as the first one, or words to that effect. That is the attitude which the Federal Government takes in connection with the development of Western Australia or the development of a steel industry in Western Australia.

It is not an integrated steel industry, but merely one to produce pig iron; and it would be a great boon to the State. Apart from something in the vicinity of £6,000,000 coming into the State for the export of 1,000,000 tons or iron ore, there would be set up in the South-West an industry which would use all sorts of timbers, and would employ permanently at least 500 directly and another estimated 500 men indirectly.

It is very hard to understand the attitude of the Commonwealth Government in this respect. It is also very hard indeed to understand its attitude generally towards Western Australia in regard to any developmental request. As Mr. Logan mentioned, this Parliament sent a delegation to Canberra with developmental requests, and no answer has been received on the developmental side. Something was provided for Wittenoom; but only after the State made provision out of its own resources, and requested the Commonwealth Government to do likewise. Originally the request remained in the pigeon-hole—in fact it was turned down, and allowed to remain turned down.

Hon. L. A. Logan: That was only part of it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It was a request to help and investigate the blue asbestos industry. Here we have the same thing in connection with an attempt to develop an industry in the South-West of this State, which would mean such a lot. However, the Koolyanobbing proposal was rejected, which meant that the application to export 1,000,000 tons annually was rejected.

The Premier has since replied to the Prime Minister expressing his disappointment—and, I would say, Western Australia's disappointment; and the disappointment of most people in Western Australia anyway, although some appear to be satisfied with the decision and hope to jog along in the same old way.

Another factor which induced the Federal Government to reject the application for export from Koolyanobbing was the fact that the Koolyanobbing deposit was a big one and would be required in years to come, and export of the ore would have the effect of seriously reducing Australia's iron ore resources.

In reply to questions in this House earlier in the session, information was given that there was something like a total of 108,000 tons of iron ore known, measured and assessed. If we exported 1,000,000 tons, which is less than one per cent. of the tonnage that could be seen above the ground, it would not affect the position very much.

Nobody knows what quantities might be under the ground; and nobody knows what new deposits exist or are still to be discovered; because while there have been gold rushes and an intensive search for other minerals and metal ores, iron ore has been neglected because of the immense quantities available. I have no doubt that many great deposits of iron ore will be located even if only as a result of the search for oil which takes metallurgists throughout the State.

Therefore I do not think there are any substantial grounds for the Federal Government refusing an application for an export permit for 1,000,000 tons of iron ore when the deposits in Western Australia alone would keep Australia going for many years.

Hon. L. A. Logan: You might be out of date in 50 years' time.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I think the Federal Government knows that the known deposits of manganese are only sufficient to keep Australian industry supplied for some 20-odd years, but it allows the export of that ore. Its attitude is hard indeed to follow.

Hon. C. H. Simpson: Which ore?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Manganese. There are some new deposits of manganese and I understand something like one-fifth of the quantity is allowed to be exported. I am not disagreeing with the Commonwealth Government with respect to manganese; but it is certainly not consistent when it will allow the export of manganese from deposits, the end of which is pretty well in sight; whereas it refuses a licence to export iron ore from deposits which are so great that it is difficult to estimate when they will be exhausted. In any case, 1,000,000 tons would not shorten the life of Australia's steel industry by very much.

Hon. L. A. Logan: Not much.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: It would be little indeed. The value of the proposed extension of the charcoal iron industry to the South-West of the State is something of great importance to the South-West. It will enable an industry to be established that will employ, directly and indirectly, something like 1,000 persons. Also it will mean that roads will be built in the forests, and they will serve as firebreaks as well as access roads to take out waste timber.

It will be a very economical project, because millions of tons of waste timber are destroyed by fires—and not accidental fires, but fires which are purposely lit to burn up timber and get the dry stuff out of the forest as much as possible; and apart from that, large quantities of timber are destroyed by fire when land-clearing takes place.

It has been said that Wundowie is a financial drain on the State's resources. There is no disputing the fact that it has cost money to establish the industry, the same as it does to establish any other industry. At the moment Wundowie has reached the stage where it no longer loses money.

Hon. A. F. Griffith: You should say, any other State industry.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No matter what industry is established in the State—

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: By the Government.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: —by the Government or by private enterprise, it will cost the taxpayer something. People commencing new industries want all sorts of concessions. Cockburn Sound is one. Kwinana has cost the State something like £3,000,000, but petrol is not a farthing cheaper.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: And Parliament encourages it.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I am not disputing it. I am pointing out that whether an industry is State or private enterprise, it costs the taxpayer something, but its establishment is in the interests of the development of the State. If no private enterprise is willing to establish a charcoal iron industry, why should not the State do so?

Hon. A. R. Jones: Has the Government made a definite approach to anybody?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: No; but the Government would not turn down any reasonable offer. On the other hand, as I have just explained, if the Government approached someone, of course the concessions would need to be much larger. However, the Premier has stated publicly that if any private concerns are interested in the establishment of a charcoal iron industry, he is prepared to talk with them and discuss their proposition; and no doubt some mutual arrangement would be arrived at.

The motion for a select committee to inquire into the Koolyanobbing proposal and the economics of the Wundowie proposal has, as Mr. Logan has said, become redundant; because there is no possibility of the Federal Government changing its attitude in respect of Koolyanobbing. There is not the slighest doubt about that. Therefore it is my intention later to move an amendment with the object of securing from the House an expression of opinion that the iron ore should be exported from a much smaller deposit at Tallering.

In his speech, Mr. Simpson told us that the deposits at Tallering were accessible; that they would, if exploited, provide a valuable export through the port of Geraldton and be the means of increasing trade and commerce in that district. I have had the figures in connection with Tallering supplied to me; and I find that the deposit is in the vicinity of 3,500,000 tons of iron ore which is of 1 per cent. better quality than that at Koolyanobbing. In other words, it is a better quality ore. I think that at Tallering Peak the ore is 64.9 per cent. It is a fact, as Mr. Simpson has said, that the costs are estimated to be in the vicinity of 15s. to 17s. per ton less on the transport of the ore to be shipped through Geraldton.

The establishment of an export trade through Geraldton will be of great benefit to the district. Not only would Geraldton benefit; but no matter where the charcoal iron industry was established in the South-West, the export port would logically be Bunbury which in turn would gain a direct benefit.

I do not know, but it is possible and probable—as the Mayor of Bunbury has pointed out in a letter to the Prime Minister—that, if the deposit at Tallering was opened and the Wundowie project extended to somewhere in the vicinity of Bunbury or Collie, after the 1,000,000 tons of iron ore had been shipped overseas the balance of the deposit would be shipped by sea from Geraldton to Bunbury for use in the project established in that area. It could probably be shipped to Bunbury cheaper than iron ore could be transported by road and rail from Koolyanobbing. We do not know; but these things would be looked at. It is possible that many other small deposits in the Murchison area—too small for B. H. P. anyway—would be used up, provided the opportunity was given to establish an industry which could use them.

Hon. L. A. Logan: There are three or four deposits there.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes; and some of them are close in. I think the proposal of the board of management at Wundowie to expand is justified. Even on its own business it shows a profit instead of a loss. For last year it will show a profit of something like £12,000 after meeting interest and depreciation amounting to £60,000. So it will have a gross profit of more than £70,000.

An unlimited demand exists for the charcoal iron produced at Wundowie. It is considered to be of a quality for use in certain purposes that is unprocurable elsewhere in the world today. A full investigation has been made along these lines. In other words, the future sale of pig iron from Wundowie is assured.

The benefit of establishing that industry in the South-West, coupled with the benefit it will bring to the Geraldton area or the Murchison district—where the iron ore deposits are known to exist within reasonable distance with respect to transport—means, of course, that there can be no argument against the establishment of such an industry.

There were one or two remarks made earlier in Mr. Baxter's speech that I intended to deal with; but as Koolyanobbing is out of the question, I will now not endeavour to take up time in answering them, because it would simply be redundant to do so.

I think that, broadly, I have covered most of what the hon. member had to say by pointing out that the Wundowie industry is a financial success; it has an assured future export market; and it is an industry which can be taken to any part of our forests; and it could perhaps be the only industry that could be established there and bring further development to those areas. I am speaking now of a heavy industry and not of agricultural industries.

I do not think there is any warrant for the select committee to go into the pros and cons of whether Tallering should be exploited or whether the economics of Wundowie should be investigated or otherwise. I am perfectly sure that any select committee inquiring into those aspects must agree with the proposal as being one of great benefit to the State, and could do nothing else but support any proposal which would extend the industry without there being a drain on the resources of the State.

By the sale of 1,000,000 tons of iron ore, I want to stress that we would establish an industry which would not interfere with the provision of schools, hospitals, jetties or other public works. Separate money, coming from revenue funds, would be used to develop the industry and set up something in Western Australia which would be unique in the southern hemisphere—a charcoal iron industry of some magnitude exporting almost all of its product. I move an amendment—

> That all the words after the word "That" in line 1 of the motion down to and including the word "venture" in line 6 be struck out and the following inserted in lieu:—
>
> > This House supports the proposal to establish a large scale charcoal-iron works in the South West and also the associated proposal to export overseas 1,000,000 tons of iron ore, the proceeds of which to be used in financing the project, but believes the ore to be exported should be taken from Tallering Peak and not from Koolyanobbing.

HON. A. F. GRIFFITH (Suburban—on amendment) [5.0]: I think at this stage, after listening to the Minister on this particular subject, and hearing him put forward the Government's point of view regarding the establishment of an iron and steel industry in the South-West, and as he has moved this amendment, it would be the proper thing for me, in order to give members an opportunity to consider the matter, to read a letter which bears the date of the 5th August, 1957, and which was written by the Acting Prime Minister, Sir Arthur Fadden, and addressed to Mr. Hawke. It reads—

> The Government has given close and sympathetic consideration to the representations you have made in letters addressed to the Prime Minister, and to Mr. Hasluck and Senator Paltridge about your proposal for expanding production of charcoal pig iron at Wundowie and for establishing an even larger plant for the production of charcoal iron at Bunbury. The Commonwealth Government would certainly regard with pleasure and satisfaction any soundly based expansion or development in your State which would provide additional employment opportunities.
>
> Your proposal, as you have described it in the correspondence I have mentioned, contemplates capital expenditure of £840,000 to increase the annual capacity of the Wundowie plant from about 14,000 tons of charcoal iron to about 40,000 tons and the establishment of a new plant at Bunbury at a cost of £2,000,000 with an annual capacity of about 75,000 tons.
>
> The total capital expenditure would thus amount to £2,840,000 and you have planned that this would be completed by about December, 1959. You have told me that it is expected that on completion of the expansion programme the annual trading profits would be £360,000 from Wundowie and £720,000 from Bunbury.
>
> You have further informed me that while the expansion will be financed temporarily as necessary from loan accounts, the actual source of funds before the end of 1960 will be—

	£
Profit on Wundowie trading	980,000
Profit on Bunbury trading	720,000
Profit on the special export of Koolyanobbing iron ore	1,450,000
	£3,150,000

You expect that these funds would be found each year as follows:—

Year.	Wundowie Profit.	Bunbury Profit.	Koolyanobbing Iron Ore Profit.	Total.
1957	40,000	....	....	40,000
1958	220,000	....	475,000	695,000
1959	360,000	....	600,000	960,000
1960	360,000	720,000	375,000	1,455,000
	980,000	720,000	1,450,000	3,150,000

Your proposal would involve the Commonwealth in amending the Customs (Prohibited Exports) Regulations so as to lift the absolute prohibition on the export of iron ore from Australia, which has stood for almost 20 years. This embargo was imposed in the national interest to conserve our resources of iron ore. As indicated below, the need for such conservation is even greater today than when it was first imposed.

As to the matter of lifting the embargo, I draw your attention to the fact that it was only last December that the Government considered at length your request to export 50,000 tons of iron ore from Koolyanobbing. The Government came to the conclusion that it could not agree to this request and the Prime Minister wrote telling you of this and the reasons therefor in his letter of the 21st December, 1956. However, despite the prolonged consideration which we gave to the matter on that occasion, we have reviewed it again in the light of your current request for permission to export 1,000,000 tons of iron ore from Koolyanobbing.

Australia's known resources of high grade iron ore are relatively small, both in relation to reserves of other countries of similar size and to prospective long term requirements. Virtually all the reserves of commercial value are contained in three deposits —Middleback Range in South Australia and Yampi Sound and Koolyanobbing in your State.

There are numerous other deposits, but they are all small and of no real importance to peacetime development of the steel industry. However, as experience in two world wars has shown, they have been found most useful in emergency periods when cost was a minor consideration.

It is estimated that if reserved for use by the Australian steel industry and not supplemented by ore from other sources, the life of the three commercially useful iron ore reserves will not be more than 40 years. This estimate is based on conservative assumptions as to the growth in demand for steel products in Australia; it does not allow for Australia attaining complete self sufficiency in steel products or for growth in export of steel products which are now commencing to assume considerable importance. The value of steel imports in the year ending 30th June, 1957, is estimated to have been £30,000,000.

It would be safer to assume therefore that high grade reserves if not supplemented from other sources, will be approaching exhaustion in 30 to 35 years. Thirty years from now Australia will be consuming iron ore at the rate of not less than 10,000,000 tons per annum—a rate which will exhaust the Koolyanobbing deposit in about seven years.

A large outcropping iron ore deposit would be conspicuous, and it is not likely that similar deposits of the same order of size as those mentioned above will be discovered in the future. It is a significant fact that not only have no noteworthy additions been made to reserves of highgrade ore since the embargo was placed on the export of ore in 1938, but testing of many known deposits has shown the reserves to be well below earlier estimates.

The two large deposits in the Middleback Range and Yampi Sound which are currently providing nearly all the supplies to the Australian steel works are conveniently located for sea transport. It is this fact and the high grade of the deposits which are primarily responsible for the Australian steel industry being one of the lowest cost producers of steel in the world. From this has flowed incalculable benefits to all parts of the Commonwealth.

The only other large deposit—at Koolyanobbing—is 40 miles from a railway and thence 220 miles by rail from a port. Transport costs for Koolyanobbing ore will therefore be notably greater than for Yampi Sound and Middleback Range. Koolyanobbing, however, is of vital importance to the Australian iron and steel industry, constituting as it does the only potential source of high grade ore in the country in addition to those now being worked.

There are of course large reserves of low grade ore in Australia. Experiments are currently being made of methods of upgrading these ores. Eventually the steel industry will have to depend on such ores and imported ores. Indeed, the steel industry will begin to use low grade ores before the limited high grades ores are exhausted and is already using ore imported from New Caledonia.

But the imported ores are, and the upgraded ores would be, more costly and/or refractory than our high grade ores. Their use will add to the cost of producing steel in Australia. Obviously, therefore, the use of low grade and imported ores on an extensive scale must be postponed as long as possible.

Cheap steel is one of the essential elements in our economy. It benefits manufacturers and consumers in Western Australia no less than in other States. There are for example, manufacturers in Western Australia whose ability to obtain markets at home and abroad and to retain those markets, fundamentally depends upon the low price of Australian steel; you will appreciate the importance of this to employment in secondary industry in Western Australia.

You mention that the Koolyanabbing deposits could meet all Western Australia's forseeable needs for 350 years. This estimate seems to contemplate a remarkably low usage in your State for a very long period. It appears to assume that a steel industry will not be developed in Western Australia; whereas our thought is that this is a real possibility and that you might consider whether Koolyanobbing should not be reserved for such an eventuality. The scattered small deposits you mention in your letter to Senator Paltridge, even if testing substantiated the estimates given, have no practical value from this point of view.

The Koolyanobbing deposit can therefore be regarded as the potential basis of an industry providing widely diversified employment opportunities for the people of Western Australia.

You claim that your proposal that we should permit the export of iron ore from Koolyanobbing so as to raise funds to finance the Bunbury and Wundowie projects is unique in that no other State could duplicate the circumstances surrounding your present proposition. In fact, at least three other States could virtually duplicate your proposal, two of them to the extent, if they so desired, of using charcoal for making pig iron.

If we were once to establish the principle that our resources of iron ore could be exported so as to finance the expansion of particular development projects, as we would if we agreed to your proposal to export Koolyanobbing ore, we should be faced with other proposals of a similar nature, not only by State Governments but by private enterprise. Clearly, the national interest would be jeopardised.

In fact your proposal, if adopted, could have even more serious consequences. It would be an open invitation to Japanese steel industry to sponsor or finance the setting up of plants in Australia to make pig iron for export to Japan, a process which would rapidly defeat the purpose for which the embargo on export of ore exists, and which with the utmost goodwill to Japan we could not contemplate.

With these facts before you I think you must agree that it is our national duty to conserve the high grade ore which largely makes possible the manufacture of cheap steel in Australia, a factor which is such an important element in our economy and in providing a favourable basis for our drive for export markets in steel products.

Against this background the Government feels that it must refuse your request.

I feel I should comment on the statement that the Commonwealth's policy of embargo on the export of iron ore is inconsistent with its policy on export of steel scrap. As I have been at pains to explain, reserves of iron ore are a fixed quantity; nothing we can do can add to what exists. Fresh scrap on the other hand becomes available every day, and as we use more steel the quantity of scrap available increases. Furthermore, our policy is designed to ensure that our steel industry gets all the scrap it can consume. We allow export only of scrap unwanted by, or surplus to, the requirements of the domestic steel industry. In addition, our policy ensures the gathering up and sale of scrap which would otherwise be lost.

As you have sent me detailed estimates of the revenue and expenditure and profitability of the Wundowie and Bunbury projects, I consider that a short comment should be made on the estimates.

First of all I should like to say that the financial record of Wundowie up to date inspires no confidence in its future ability to earn profits over a long period. I understand that up to the end of June, 1956, Wundowie has recorded losses each year since production began. I am advised that for the year ended, 30th June, 1956, a working profit of £7,629 was made before charging interest. The net loss for that year was £46,783, and accumulated losses up to the end of June, 1956, amounted to £590,636.

The level of profits which you expect depends entirely upon Japan being willing to pay an f.o.b. price averaging £35 a ton for the charcoal

pig iron to be produced from Wundowie and Bunbury. An agreement that you have entered into provides evidence that a Japanese buyer would be willing to enter into a contract to pay a price of this order subject to change depending upon variation in the price in the New York market and subject to that buyer being supplied with 1,000,000 tons of Koolyanobbing iron ore. The price is exceptional; I understand that the f.o.b. prices at which you have been selling to the United States of America, Sweden, and Belgium have ranged from about £24 10s. to £28 a ton. These prices are very close to your estimated costs, and it would seem unwise to plan the venture on the expectation that Japan will indefinitely pay a price for charcoal iron so much higher than the world market. If this be so, then it would seem to be imprudent to plan the proposed investment on the expectation of profits of the order you have specified.

It is clear from the text of the agreement to which I have referred that the supply of 1,000,000 tons of iron ore is a principal reason why the contract at the high price is interesting to Japan. It is a fair presumption that continued export of iron ore might be necessary to ensure further sales of pig iron at the high price.

You will see, therefore, that the Commonwealth has justifiable doubts about the long term profitability of both proposed ventures.

There are other grounds too, why we feel that the financial estimates that you have prepared for the venture have not been prudently drawn. Thus you advise that it is expected that the capital expenditure on the extensions at Wundowie will be completed about June, 1958: Your estimates indicate that you expect the plant to operate at maximum profitability from the date on which the actual construction of the plant is complete. There is exactly the same expectation in respect of the Bunbury plant, the construction of which will be completed, according to your advice in December, 1959; your profit expectations are predicted on this plant commencing operation in January, 1960 and immediately operating at maximum profitability. We doubt if such results would be achieved.

In your letter to Mr. Hasluck and to Senator Paltridge you state that the industry at Wundowie cannot be expanded sufficiently to meet anywhere near the total of orders available "as the quantity of timber available around Wundowie is strictly limited, whereas it is almost unlimited in the south-west areas." In these circumstances it would seem to have been perhaps unwise to have selected Wundowie in the first instance as the location for a charcoal iron industry; and it is especially difficult to understand why Wundowie is being expanded at the present time in the circumstances.

You claim that the total secondary industry structure in Australia is "shockingly ill-balanced as between eastern Australia and Western Australia." The truth is that steady and soundly based development is being undertaken by private enterprise in many parts of Western Australia, and particularly in the metropolitan area. For example, the B.H.P. Co. Ltd. has now established a steel mill at Kwinana. This may be regarded as the beginning of the development of the steel industry in your State. Then of course there is the great petroleum refinery at Kwinana which is already being expanded. Manufacturing industry is providing a wide range of new employment opportunities in your State, and I confidently expect that this trend will continue.

However, I am equally certain that further development in your State on a sound continuing basis will occur only if common care and prudence is exercised in planning new ventures or the extension of old ones. I feel sure that you would share this view with me, and that you would agree that to the extent that enthusiasm displaces careful analysis in planning new capital investment, the result may well be a net disadvantage to your State. The result in such circumstances will certainly not be the permanent provision of new employment opportunities.

Yours sincerely,
A. W. Fadden,
Acting Prime Minister.

In view of the statements that were made by the Minister and his assertions when speaking to this motion, it would be a good idea to have on record what was said to the Premier in connection with the proposal for the export of Koolyanobbing iron ore.

Point of Order.

Hon. J. G. Hislop: On a point of order, I would ask whether the amendment is in order. I would refer to Standing Order No. 125 which says—

> Every amendment shall be relevant to the question to which it is proposed to be made.

I regard the amendment as a complete negation of the motion for the appointment of a select committee, because the mover of the amendment said there was no need whatever for the motion. In my

opinion the amendment would be better placed in a separate motion. I would ask for your ruling, Mr. President.

The President: I shall leave the Chair till the ringing of the bells.

Sitting suspended from 5.21 to 5.30 p.m.

The President: I sustain the objection raised by Hon. J. G. Hislop on the ground that the amendment is not strictly relevant to the motion, because the objective of the motion is to appoint a select committee to make inquiries into the proposed sale of iron ore; whereas the objective of the amendment is for the support of the House into the proposal to establish a large-scale charcoal-iron works in the South-West.

Debate Resumed.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [5.41]: Having regard to what has just happened, I desire to read a letter which the Premier wrote to Mr. Menzies on the 23rd August in reply to the letter from Sir Arthur Fadden to which reference was made by Mr. Griffith. The letter concerns "Western Australia's application for a licence to export 1,000,000 tons of ore to Japan" and the reference is 56/408. The letter reads as follows:—

23rd August, 1957.

Dear Mr. Menzies,

Western Australia's Application for a Licence to Export 1,000,000 Tons of Iron Ore to Japan—Your Reference 56/408.

I acknowledge receipt of the letter sent to me in this matter by the then Acting Prime Minister (Sir Arthur Fadden) on 5th August, and now convey to you the very deep regret of my colleagues and myself, and of very many people in Western Australia, at the refusal of your Government to grant the export licence for which we applied.

A strong protest is made regarding the action of some Commonwealth Minister, or of some person to whom a copy of the letter was made available, in handing to the newspapers those portions of Sir Arthur's letter which should have been regarded as strictly confidential as between the two Governments. Full copies of the letter were circulated in Perth to some strong political supporters of your Government.

I now propose to deal in some detail with the contents of the letter.

Paragraphs 7, 8, 9, and 10 deal with the quality and quantities of Australia's iron ore deposits, paragraph 10 claiming that existing known deposits of high grade ore would be approaching exhaustion in from 30 to 35 years from now, with consumption of iron ore in Australia 30 years from now reaching a rate of at least 10,000,000 tons per annum.

If those estimates are even within miles of being correct, then the export of 1,000,000 tons of ore from Koolyanobbing would reduce only by the insignificant period of five weeks the 30 to 35 years' period. In other words, if the period were to be 35 years, then it would be reduced to 34 years 10 months and three weeks.

Clearly then, this would give your Government no real justification for refusing our application to export 1,000,000 tons of iron ore from Koolyanobbing.

Can you yourself visualise Australia's position when the nation is down to its very last 1,000,000 tons of high grade iron ore?

And would the final exhaustion of those ore deposits five weeks earlier cause the nation more loss than would be counterbalanced by the great direct advantages to Western Australia and the indirect advantages to Australia as a whole by establishing now in Western Australia a large scale charcoal iron industry, with its subsequent 30 to 35 years' continuous operation?

Or is it that Western Australia's industrial development and general progress are still not considered as of any real consequence in relation to the total industrial progress of Australia as a whole?

The letter states that two of the only three known high grade deposits of iron ore in Australia are located in Western Australia, namely at Yampi Sound and Koolyanobbing.

As you know, the huge deposits at Yampi Sound are now permanently and almost completely, in relation to quantity, outside of Western Australia's control.

Nearly all of that ore is destined to be transported to Eastern Australia, there to be processed into steel products. Western Australia receives 1s. 6d. per ton for each ton of ore exported. Eastern Australia receives practically the whole of the great employment and other benefits which arise continuously from the operation of the processing industries.

Yet, when Western Australia has a supremely good opportunity to obtain between £6 and £7 a ton for a strictly limited quantity of 1,000,000 tons of iron ore from another local deposit, your Government rejects our claim and thereby strikes a savage blow against an opportunity for large scale industrial development in this State.

I emphasise that Western Australia is very seriously handicapped in developing secondary industries by the strong competition which comes from strongly established manufacturing industries located in Eastern Australia and also because we have only a small local market.

Sir Arthur's letter seems strongly to suggest that, in addition to more than 100,000,000 tons of iron ore at Yampi Sound being used to support steel manufacturing industries in Eastern Australia, iron ore from Koolyanobbing might also be required for that purpose later on. If the letter was meant to convey that suggestion, then it is one which indicates a shocking disregard by its authors of Western Australia's place in the Commonwealth of Australia and of our State's present and future developmental needs.

The letter claims that Western Australia obtains considerable benefits from the manufacture of steel in Eastern Australia because of the lower price at which Australian-made steel is sold when compared with imported steel.

That is very true, and so do all the other States, and furthermore the claim overlooks completely the fact that Western Australia receives only 1s. 6d. a ton for Yampi Sound iron ore, which is nearly £7 a ton less than could be obtained for the ore on the open market.

In any event, 1,000,000 tons of iron ore is only a small percentage of the total deposit at Koolyanobbing and an insignificant percentage of the combined total of at least 200,000,000 tons which exist at Yampi and Koolyanobbing.

The assertion in the letter of three other Australian States being able to duplicate our charcoal iron industry proposals is little better than a bad guess. The Board of Management of the Charcoal Iron Industry at Wundowie (which is in Western Australia) categorically denies that any other State has the combination of high grade ore and wide timber resources (of quantity, quality and accessibility) necessary to duplicate in an economical manner Western Australia's proposals.

However, even if three other States can and do duplicate our proposals, the total export of iron ore involved would only be 4,000,000 tons, and your Government could quite easily lay it down that the iron ore should be taken from small and not large scale deposits in the States concerned.

It seems strange that your Government regards the export of even as little as 50,000 tons of iron ore as a danger to the national interest, and yet allows other valuable minerals and metals, including manganese, coking coal, scrap iron and scrap steel to be exported to overseas countries.

The letter claims fresh scrap iron and scrap steel become available every day. They do indeed, but they contain iron ore and the scrap is in a form which is very much easier to process into steel products than is iron ore.

In typically superior Canberra manner, paragraph 27 deprecates the efforts made by those concerned in pioneering a new industry for Australia, namely the charcoal iron industry at Wundowie, and their subsequent efforts in trying to put the industry on a payable basis.

Therefore, allow me very humbly to state that the Wundowie industry was established during difficult war and early post-war years and was established as a large pilot or semi-commercial plant.

The original idea was that the economics of this new industry would be tested out thoroughly at Wundowie. In the event of success being achieved, then a large scale commercial charcoal iron industry was to be established at Collie or Bunbury in the forest country of our South-West.

The Wundowie industry has had to meet all of the financial and other difficulties which have been developed from heavy post-war inflation.

Despite those facts, your Government's letter looks upon this courageous and far-sighted experiment with no confidence as to final profit, thereby completely and rather callously overlooking the experimental and pioneering angles of the industry.

Almost equally superior, and with as little justification, is the suggestion that Wundowie might have been an unwise site for the experimental industry because of the limited quantity of timber which can be obtained in the area.

Surely it is understood in Canberra that the Wundowie industry has been developed keeping in mind all the time the limited supply of local timber.

In fact, one of my letters explained that this industry was now being substantially expanded but on a basis which had a clear-cut relationship to timber supplies in the Wundowie district. Those supplies are scientifically catered for and protected by forestry experts and their employees, and there is no guess work about the capacity of the areas to meet in full the future demands of the now expanding industry at Wundowie.

Maybe someone at Canberra believes that only dead timber is used for charcoal manufacture, or that only the best timber is so used, whereas in fact both dry and green waste timbers are suitable for such manufacture, and are so used.

Another important reason why the industry was established at Wundowie is to be found in the fact that some iron ore desposits existed in the district at the time. In addition, Wundowie is only 40 miles from Perth and 50 miles from Fremantle.

A profit of £12,000 was realised at Wundowie for the year ended June 30th, 1957, after allowing for interest and adequate depreciation. Taking into account the forward orders which have already been accepted by the industry, a profit of approximately £60,000 is expected to be realised during the current year.

Although we expect no praise from Canberra for this achievement, at least we would hope the industry would not continue to be subjected to ill informed criticism and even condemnation from that source.

In connection with paragraph 27 of the letter, I would advise that the price offered under the contract was £35 per ton and a profit of only £10 per ton was allowed for although the profit is expected to be considerably higher. The smaller profit was set down to provide for the possibility of a reduced selling price or possibly a higher production cost than anticipated. Actual estimated production cost is approximately £20 per ton. It is understood that selling price levels in America and Europe are now between £27 and £30 per ton.

It is probably true the Japanese interests concerned are offering higher than world parity prices for charcoal iron because of the attraction which exists for them in their proposal to import 1,000,000 tons of iron ore from Western Australia. However, on the termination of the contract to sell them charcoal iron from Western Australia, both the expanded Wundowie plant and the proposed new plant in the South-West would have recovered their full value. Subsquent sales could then be made at prices which would compete with ordinary irons and steel, leaving a reasonable margin of profit.

In reply to paragraph 30 of the letter, it is surely reasonable to assume that the proposed new plant in the South-West and the expanded plant at Wundowie will both operate from the commencement at maximum efficiency in view of the valuable practical experience which has been obtained in the operation of the present small scale industry at Wundowie.

Although the steel rolling plant at Kwinana is valuable to Western Australia, as claimed in paragraph 33 of the letter, it employs only approximately 100 men and therefore is only 10 per cent. as valuable as would be the proposed new charcoal iron industry. In fact, it is far less valuable by comparison than that, because nearly all the materials used at Kwinana plant are imported in processed form from the Eastern States, whereas all raw materials used in the charcoal iron industry are produced in Western Australia.

There is a strong suggestion in the last paragraph of the letter that enthusiasm has displaced careful analysis of the proposals on the part of those who have been responsible for advising the Government in this State in connection with the proposals submitted to your Government. This suggestion is very strongly resented by the Board of Management of the Charcoal Iron Industry at Wundowie and by the technical officers employed by the Board.

The Board is a well balanced body of men who are expert in their respective spheres and who have devoted more than ten years of practical study to the charcoal iron industry.

The General Manager has travelled through Europe and America where he studied technical and marketing aspects of the industry.

It is thought these men would hold their own with charcoal iron experts in any part of the world.

Is it because they are Western Australians that they are so poorly regarded at Canberra?

It would appear from the attitude adopted towards our proposal that the authorities at Canberra are quite content for the people in Western Australia to be, in the main, hewers of wood and drawers of water; or, in relation to charcoal iron and steel, to be hewers of iron ore for use in Eastern Australia to maintain and expand there great industrial activity, employment and prosperity.

Even though we in Western Australia still strongly believe our case in support of the application for a licence to export 1,000,000 tons of iron ore from Koolyanobbing is unanswerable in point of merit, we will probably decide in the near future to apply to your Government for a licence to export to Japan 1,000,000 tons of iron ore from the very small and rather remote deposit at Tallering Peak, via Mullewa, in Western Australia. I will write you again on that subject in the very near future.

The honeyed words in paragraph 33 of the letter make nice reading, but, when looked at in a practical way and measured against the increasing unemployment which is developing in Western Australia, they become empty and bitter.

Finally, I would emphasise very greatly to you the vital and urgent importance of the proposals which the State Government has submitted to your Government, and now appeal to you and your colleagues for a re-consideration of the proposals and for a favourable decision either in relation to export from Koolyanobbing or from Tallering Peak.

I thought it as well that the House should hear the Premier's reply, in view of the letter which Mr Griffith read out.

Tabling of Letter.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: In accordance with Standing Order No. 342 I request that the file from which the hon. member has just read be laid upon the Table of the House.

The Minister for Railways: If it is only the letter that is required to be laid on the Table I can agree to that; but as the file contains other confidential matters and material, I do not think the hon. member should request that that be included in the motion.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH: I must ask you to decide this matter, Mr. President. The Standing Order says that the document quoted from by a member, not a Minister of the Crown, may be ordered by the Legislative Council to be laid on the Table, such order being made without notice upon the conclusion of the speech of the member who has quoted therefrom. I have asked that the document be laid on the Table of the House and, I presume, the folios from which the hon. member quoted would also be tabled.

The PRESIDENT: I order that the letter only be laid on the Table of the House.

On motion by Hon. F. J. S. Wise, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 12th September, 1957.

CONTENTS.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

MINE WORKERS' RELIEF FUND.

Amount Paid to Contributors and Assets.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) What amount was paid out to contributors for 1956 by the Mine Workers' Relief Fund, including payments made on behalf of the old voluntary fund?

(2) What is the total value of assets of the fund at the present time?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Relief to all beneficiaries totalled £61,734 0s. 7d.

(2) Total value of the fund's assets is £297,859 8s. 6d.

These figures are taken from the fund's statements and balance sheet for the 12 months ended the 31st January, 1957.

ARTIFICIAL RAIN.

Experiments in Western Australia.

Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) Is his department in close touch with the Commonwealth Scientific Industrial Research Organisation with regard to the project of artificial rain making?