

of Henry Boan?" If they are held in trust, they are held in trust for the family. Two hundred and seventeen pounds is not what they should pay probate on, but at least £250,000—£112,000 for the true value of the ordinary shares plus at least half the money they claim in the 175,000 shares, and probably the lot. It is a terrible thing when we talk about getting money for public purposes by levying contributions—forced loans from typists and office boys—that we should let a man make a return showing his estate at £217, when in reality, it is more like £250,000. I hope there will be a re-assessment, and that the probate office will take the matter up and investigate this deed of trust that the Leader of the Opposition says is in existence.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not say it was. I said it might be.

Mr. HUGHES: It might be! Of course some farmers might have deeds of trust under which they have covered up their debts to somebody else. Why is a deed of trust required? It is only to cover up something. If it is a genuine deed of trust it should have been shown in the probate in full. If, as the Premier suggests, sufficient information has been supplied, and the House will consider an amendment designed to prevent this in future, then there is no need for the inquiry because the object I set out to achieve has been achieved. If an object can be achieved in some other way there is no point in wasting a lot of time.

In my penultimate paragraph I state that if ever a case was made out for the proposition I put up, these extraordinary figures supplied so kindly by Mr. Boan and the Minister for Justice, plus the investigation of the returns of the Companies Office, do so.

Great umbrage was taken by Mr. F. Boan at my criticism. I have no apologies to offer. We are here as custodians of the public affairs and have to do our best to see that people do not get away with this sort of thing. We have to bring that knowledge before the House so that it may be in possession of the facts. He said his father had commitments oversea. I suppose he had commitments oversea, but he had plenty of assets on which to borrow in order to meet them. I understand the commitment oversea was that he bought an Irish peerage. I resent that! I resent the Jews invading

Ireland and buying our peerages. I think they should leave Ireland as a sanctuary for Englishmen.

Question put and negatived.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 2nd October, 1941.

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

URGENCY MOTION DISALLOWED.

MR. SPEAKER [4.33]: I have received a communication from the member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) regarding his intention to move, under Standing Order 48, "That the House do now adjourn." According to "May's Parliamentary Practice," 13th edition, page 248, an urgency motion cannot be accepted if an opportunity to discuss the matter to be brought before the House can be afforded in Committee on the Estimates. I quote from "May":—

The Speaker declines to submit a motion for adjournment of the House if, in his opinion, the subject to be brought forward is not definite, urgent or of public importance. Motions for adjournment regarding matters for the discussion of which the committee of supply or other appointed business would afford an early opportunity . . . have been ruled to be out of order.

In the circumstances, I decline to read the hon. member's letter.

QUESTION—PORT EXPENDITURE.

Mr. HILL asked the Premier: What have been the aggregate amounts since the Collier Government assumed office in 1924, 1, voted by Parliament? and 2, actually expended for the ports, including bulk handling terminals, (a) the whole State; (b) Fremantle; (c) Geraldton; (d) Bunbury; (e) Albany; (f) Esperance?

The PREMIER replied: The answer to this question is in the nature of a return which I shall lay upon the Table of the House.

QUESTION—AGRICULTURAL BANK.*Discharged Soldiers' Securities.*

Mr. DONEY asked the Minister for Lands: 1, In the case of a returned soldier whose new mortgage debt resulting from a writing down by the Commissioners of the Agricultural Bank, has been secured by the customary new mortgage, is it absolutely essential further to secure interest charges arising therefrom by a bill of sale over loose assets, having regard to the existence of an automatic lien over all such assets under the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act? 2, Will not the Commissioners consider this latter lien to be sufficient in these circumstances? 3, If not, why not?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS replied: 1, No. Interest is secured by the mortgage and not by a bill of sale. A bill of sale is taken where necessary as a further security. 2 and 3, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—ROAD CONSTRUCTION.*Bitumen and Cement.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister for Works: 1, To what extent has the war affected bitumen supplies? 2, What are the chief objections to cement concrete roads? 3, Has the Main Roads Board had any road lengths of this material under test?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: 1, It is inadvisable to make this information public. 2, Comparatively high costs. 3, Yes.

QUESTION—EDUCATION, CURRICULUM.

Mr. NORTH asked the Minister representing the Minister for Education: 1, Has he perused the speech of Mr. Huck (Presi-

dent of the Teachers' Union) as reported last month in the "West Australian"? 2, Does he approve the main contentions of the speech? 3, Are any steps being taken with the curriculum—(a) as a result of the speech; or (b) independently?

Mr. SPEAKER: Before calling upon the Minister to reply to the question, I draw attention to the fact that under our Standing Orders it is not permissible for any hon. member to ask a question of a Minister regarding his private opinion. Therefore, No. 2 of the question is not in order.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I ask that the question be postponed.

Question postponed.

QUESTION—DUTCH EAST INDIES.*Press Delegation.*

Mr. ABBOTT asked the Premier: 1, Is he aware that the itinerary of the Press delegation from the Dutch East Indies does not include Western Australia? 2, If so, has the Government made any protest to the Commonwealth Government? 3, If not, does the Government intend to do so?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2 and 3, The State Government was not consulted in the preparation of the itinerary, but apparently the period of the visit is too short to permit a visit to Western Australia.

QUESTION—MINING, ASBESTOS.

Mr. RODORED A asked the Minister for Industrial Development: 1, Is the announcement of the Department of Industries correct as reported in the "West Australian" of the 1st October, wherein it appears that 100 tons of blue asbestos per month are being exported to America? 2, What is the total quantity that has been exported during the last 12 months?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT replied: 1, A company mining blue asbestos in the Hamersley Ranges recently received orders to supply 100 tons of blue asbestos per month to America. Arrangements are now in hand for mining and shipment. 2, For the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1941, 48.7 tons valued at £2,435 10s. 0d. were exported overseas.

BILL—INCOME TAX.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—RIGHTS IN WATER AND IRRIGATION ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn [4.36] in moving the second reading said: The whole problem involved in rights in water and irrigation has become most contentious and the Bill I now place before members for their consideration, though small, embodies necessary amendments to the principal Act. It will be remembered that in 1939 a Bill to amend the Rights in Water and Irrigation Act was passed, under the provisions of which certain water courses could be proclaimed as coming within the scope of Part III. of the Act, which part deals with rights in natural waters and the issue of licenses to landowners desiring to take water from such streams. The main purpose of that amendment was to give the Minister power to control and regulate the use of water in proclaimed streams, particularly in times of shortage, when some form of central control was essential to protect the interests of all farmers concerned.

The preliminaries prescribed in the amending Act of 1939 have been complied with as affecting the Canning River below the Metropolitan Water Supply Department's Canning Weir, and the proclamation of that portion of the stream and its tributaries will be effected in the near future. It will then be necessary for persons desiring to take, or to continue to take, water from the proclaimed streams to apply for licenses which will be dealt with by the Minister on the advice of the Irrigation Commissioners. Regulations governing the issue of those licenses are now in course of preparation and when they are finalised farmers affected will be advised

of the actual position and of the nominal license fees to be levied, namely, 5s. per annum for "special" licenses and 20s. for "ordinary" licenses.

I may explain to the House that "special" licenses will be taken out by persons who were diverting water from the stream at the time of the proclamation, while "ordinary" licenses will relate to persons commencing to take water after the proclamation has been issued. Representations have already been made to the department for the construction of conservation works on portion of the Canning River that it is proposed to proclaim. In the event of such works being constructed after having been proved practicable and within the financial resources of the owners or occupiers of land contiguous to the watercourse, it will be necessary to levy rates and charges to cover interest, sinking fund and operating expenses. The owners and occupiers would have every opportunity of objecting to any proposed works as the procedure prescribed in the Act would be adhered to.

The Act, as it now stands, contemplates rating only in regard to land irrigated by gravitation from main channels constructed by the Minister. In the cases in prospect, practically the whole of the water will be pumped on to the land by the owners or occupiers. That is the reason for our desire to alter the definition of the word "irrigable." It is necessary that the definition as applied to rateable land be amended by deleting the restriction to irrigation by gravitation. Originally it was contemplated that all irrigation schemes would be gravitation schemes, whereas, if irrigation is extended to the Canning River or any other watercourse, it would probably be necessary to pump the water, and pumped water does not comply with the definition of "irrigation" in the parent Act.

Mr. Doney: Are there other parts of the country involved besides the land along the Canning?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; it will apply wherever streams are proclaimed and a license is granted to pump water from such streams. From a number of streams water is pumped at present, but we have not the means to regulate it as we would like to do. Under the amending Act of 1939, plus this amending Bill, it will be possible to regulate the pumping of the water. The term

"irrigation," as now defined, leaves some doubt as to whether it is wide enough to cover irrigation of orchards, vegetables, etc., by sprinklers, and we therefore propose to make the position clear, particularly in connection with the projected pumping proposals.

Another provision in the Bill is for the purpose of exempting minor distributary works from the lengthy and cumbersome procedure prescribed in the Act with regard to works generally. The Act does not discriminate between minor works—many of which are of an emergency character—and major works which would have the effect of materially increasing the capital expenditure of the irrigation undertaking concerned. The Act provides that before any work is commenced, no matter how small it may be, even if it be only the diverting of a channel, the proposal shall be advertised in the "Government Gazette" and in a newspaper, and a period of one month shall be allowed for the submission of objections. To complete this procedure occupies from two to two-and-a-half months. As I have said, this applies even to the smallest undertaking contemplated under the existing Act. This Bill seeks to overcome that difficulty. The method outlined in the Act can be justified in connection with proposals for the constitution of a new district and also for major works within an established district, but it is not workable in relation to minor urgent distributary works.

For many years the department has been constructing these minor emergency works—always for the safety and convenience of the irrigationists—without adequate legal protection, and we now desire that provision be made exempting such minor works from the procedure outlined. A similar provision was embodied in the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act of 1909, and is availed of by the department in regard to minor reticulation extensions. A similar section was inserted in the Water Boards Act by the amending measure of 1937, and has been implemented by the various water boards throughout the State.

Though this is a very small measure, these amendments are positively necessary if we are to act legally respecting our irrigation schemes. Whereas provision has been made for irrigation by gravitation it is now necessary to provide for water pumped from some streams. In fact, on the Canning

River a considerable amount of pumping is already being done. The Kent-street weir has been responsible for quite an amount of irrigation, which was carried on right through the summer months. We think it possible—and our technical advisers agree—that we can make better use of the Canning River by the construction of weirs to conserve during the rainy period water for use in the drier part of the year.

Mr. Sampson: Subject to the Minister's approval?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Many people are in difficulties and desire to have water made available for irrigation from the Canning dam, but the Canning reservoir is merely intended for domestic purposes and cannot possibly be used for an irrigation scheme. However, I believe there are 13 miles of river below the Canning dam; it is a very fine stream that can be put to better use. I believe that much more water can be conserved than is conserved at present, and if this conservation was provided it would be possible to proclaim the stream and issue licenses to landowners to pump water. In the event of weirs being put across the stream and licenses being issued a small rate sufficient to pay interest, sinking fund and working expenses would have to be struck.

Mr. Doney: Have you considered the possibility of using the Canning dam for irrigation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We consider it impossible to make the dam available for that purpose. That is the decision.

Mr. Sampson: Would the permission of the Minister be necessary before weirs were constructed?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: All those matters can be dealt with after we get this Bill through. The necessary works could be authorised, and if the landowners concerned approved, the work could be undertaken. The Act contains provision that if the landowners object to the proposed works they shall not be proceeded with. We do not propose to force anything on the landowners, but where they desire such works this measure will make it possible to undertake them legally, whereas at present we cannot do so. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. McLarty, debate adjourned.

BILL—PUBLIC TRUSTEE.*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 30th September. Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after Clause 32 had been agreed to.

Clause 33—Cessation of powers of public trustee:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That the following be added to stand as paragraph (c):—"upon notice from the Inspector General of the Insane that the person being a patient has been discharged."

The object of the amendment is to clarify the clause. It will help the public trustee to be really certain that the person is duly discharged.

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

Clauses 34, 35, 36—agreed to.

Clause 37—Investment of moneys under control or subject to order of the Supreme Court:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 2 be struck out.

What is the objection to payment of the moneys or damages referred to in the subclause to the next friend, when there is a next friend, or else to the plaintiff's solicitor?

The Minister for Justice: I agree to the amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of Subclause 3 the words "shall, unless the appropriate court otherwise orders, be paid to the Public Trustee and" be struck out, and the words "by or to the Public Trustee" inserted in lieu.

I understand the Minister agrees to this amendment also.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That Subclause 4 be struck out.

The subclause has reference to moneys ordered by a local court magistrate to be invested under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. By that Act the magistrate has certain jurisdiction as to

the investment, for the benefit of those interested, of funds paid to a worker or to his dependants on account of injury or death arising from his employment. I believe it has been the unvarying custom for the magistrate to determine, when necessary, what investment of such funds shall take place. I personally have no quarrel with that method, which seems to me, though I admit my experience in it is limited, to have worked satisfactorily. Now it is proposed that all such moneys shall be paid to the public trustee, so that in fact there will be only one place for their investment. It is reasonable in the workers' interest that the local court magistrate should still—and more particularly in the interest of the workers' dependants—exercise the discretion which he has exercised hitherto, and which I have never heard has proved unsatisfactory.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I cannot accept this amendment. Subclause 4 will not interfere at all with the jurisdiction of the magistrate.

Mr. Watts: With his discretion, though.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Whatever moneys are paid under workers' compensation legislation will be paid to the public trustee for investment. I do not know that anyone better suited for that purpose could be obtained.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The subclause gives the magistrate a monopoly in this respect.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Most magistrates do not want the task. The public trustee is specially experienced in the investment of funds. The subclause will not apply in many cases, because most injured workers will have the compensation paid in full. The total amount to be invested, therefore, will not be great. Again, beneficiaries will have the advantage of the common fund.

Mr. Watts: That may not always be an advantage.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Their capital will always be protected by Consolidated Revenue. There will be no discrimination as to income for any one investment.

Mr. Abbott: The rate of interest will be low.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The interest will be guaranteed, and every investment will receive the same rate. This is the system adopted by large investment companies in the United States and New

Zealand. Again, there is always the risk of the unexpected happening. Members are aware that some years ago a shortage occurred in the accounts of a magistrate.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That occurs in all departments. It is no excuse for the provision.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It may not be.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It happened in the State Government Insurance Office.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is not a magistrate's duty to invest money. We are, therefore, making provision that these moneys shall be invested by the public trustee. I cannot understand the objection to the subclause, nor can I agree to the amendment.

Mr. FOX: The provision is unnecessary. I find it hard to imagine a case where it would be necessary to invest moneys paid under the Workers' Compensation Act. A worker awarded compensation is generally drawing on his capital; in most instances he requires all the compensation money to purchase a home. If a worker is killed, his widow usually requires all the compensation money to provide a home and support herself and her children. We would be creating difficulties if we permitted the investment of such moneys by the public trustee. I have known but few cases of investment of compensation money; perhaps £200 or £300 has been set aside by a magistrate to be paid out at the rate of £2 10s. or £3 a week for the support of a deceased worker's children. In nine cases out of ten, however, the whole sum is paid over. I support the amendment.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: We should have some further explanation of this provision. I understand the Bill is designed to deal with estates in which money is bequeathed to people. I do not know of an instance in which a person bequeathed to another compensation paid under the Workers' Compensation Act. If a person injured in his employment subsequently dies his widow becomes entitled to compensation, and that is the money which would be subject to the direction of a magistrate as to whether it should be paid over in a lump sum or in weekly instalments.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Apparently there is some misunderstanding. Subclause 1 provides that the investments

of moneys under the control or subject to any order of the Supreme Court shall be made by the public trustee.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: That refers to money which has been bequeathed.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Subclause 4 (a) provides that all moneys ordered by a magistrate of a local court to be invested under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act shall be paid to the public trustee, whose receipt shall be a complete discharge to the magistrate and all other persons concerned.

Mr. J. Hegney: In what way does the magistrate order such money to be invested?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It is invested in accordance with his desire. This applies only to orphans and infants.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Only to them?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Would not it apply to a blind man? It has done so in the past.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I say it has.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Not if he is over 21. The provision applies only to those cases where it is directed that the money shall be invested. We do not in any way interfere with the jurisdiction of the magistrate, except as to investment. The public trustee is to be given power to invest compensation money on behalf of a widow, an infant or an orphan. I cannot see that there is any harm in it. There are a number of workers in my electorate and no one has more regard for them than I have. I have given this aspect of the matter very serious consideration, and if I thought their interests were likely to be jeopardised in any way and that they would receive no benefit I would favour leaving the law as it stands. But this is a change for the better. Under this provision we shall allow investments to be made by somebody qualified to make them and will not interfere with the court in any way. Orphans, infants and widows will have more security than is available by permitting a magistrate to undertake this work. It is not a magistrate's job and magistrates do not want to do it.

The Minister for Labour: The public trustee would carry out the decision of the magistrate.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes. If judges are not going to invest money why should magistrates be allowed to do so? I do not know why the hon. member has taken exception to the subclause.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister could have made his case easier to understand if he had interpreted the subclause by inserting the imaginary words "in the event of moneys being ordered by a magistrate to be invested." In certain circumstances a magistrate has the power under the Workers' Compensation Act to order the investment of certain moneys. I understand that this subclause provides for the public trustee to make the investment in the event of a magistrate exercising the right he possesses.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: It is the widow's money and not the dead man's money.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If money were required by the widow the magistrate would not make an order.

Mr. TRIAT: Having also studied the matter closely I am of the same opinion as is the Minister. If the subclause is agreed to a magistrate will still have jurisdiction as to the disposal of the money. To the public trustee will be entrusted the task of giving effect to the decision of a magistrate in the event of his ordering an investment to be made. We know that in almost every instance in which a man dies leaving a widow or dependent children the amount of money left is not sufficient to invest, and it is necessary to provide for the needs of the survivors in the period immediately following the man's decease. The magistrate invariably orders the money to be paid into an account, generally a savings bank account, and instructs that the widow or the children shall be able to draw from the account so much per week or fortnight. They have not the right to withdraw the whole amount but only small portions. Generally, the clerk of courts or the magistrate acts as trustee of that particular fund. The same will apply in this instance but the public trustee will carry out the order issued by the magistrate. This point is further dealt with in Subclause 5. I am prepared to support the provision because I cannot see that any hardship will be imposed. On the other hand, I consider that more protection will be afforded than has hitherto been the case.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: What I want to know is: Where is the money that is to be dealt with under this subclause to come

from? Any money received by a widow under the Workers' Compensation Act is her money and is not bequeathed by anybody. When a man dies or is killed in an accident the widow becomes entitled to the compensation. In the same way money received by an orphan or a child under the Workers' Compensation Act comes to them as a right and is not bequeathed to them. It does not form a part of the estate of the deceased person.

The Minister for Labour: The magistrate decides whether and how it shall be invested.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Yes, under the Workers' Compensation Act, but it has nothing to do with an estate, and I take it that this Bill is for the appointment of a public trustee to deal with estates left by deceased persons. Money paid to orphans and widows has nothing to do with a deceased person's estate. It is given to them as a right and is not subject to any of the laws dealing with estates left by deceased persons. As the member for Middle Swan says, if it formed part of an estate, the widow who became entitled to it would be liable for the debts incurred by the person who had bequeathed it to her. But, as we know, a widow is not liable for any of the debts left by her late husband. When she receives compensation under the Workers' Compensation Act on account of the death of her husband through accident, or as the result of disease contracted in the mining industry, the money comes to her as a right. The subclause is redundant and unnecessary.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: This provision deals with the investment of money and quite a lot of what the hon. member has said is beyond my understanding.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: I cannot help that.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The public trustee will act only under the direction of the magistrate. If he carries out the wishes of the magistrate the effect will be exactly the same as if the magistrate were handling the matter himself. The only difference is that the magistrate hands the investment over to the other man who has the machinery to carry out the work. Nothing in the clause is to be feared. Nothing is taken away from the magistrate. The public trustee is there to do what the magistrate tells him, and what he would do himself if

he were the trustee. I cannot understand the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. A lot of misunderstanding seems to have occurred.

Mr. McDONALD: I am not able to share the objection of the member for Katanning to this clause. I thought, like the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe that when a worker was killed and compensation money was payable to his dependants the widow became entitled to her proportion, and might draw it out whatever the magistrate might think about it.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: She can do that under the Workers' Compensation Act.

Mr. McDONALD: Under the Workers' Compensation Act the magistrate has to determine who are the dependants, and he then apportions the compensation money between the dependants as he thinks fit. He apportions so much to the widow, so much to the children, and it might even be so much to the parents. I admit I have not had occasion to consider this before, but it seems to me the magistrate is given very wide powers under the first schedule. The schedule says that the sum to be paid by way of compensation may be invested, applied, or otherwise dealt with by the magistrate whose duty it is, for the time being, to preside over the court, in such manner as he in his discretion thinks fit for the benefit of the persons entitled thereto under this Act. Apart from that aspect, it is clear that the magistrate has power to direct investment. That power would be exercised on only a very small proportion of the total compensation moneys payable in the course of a year. The magistrate may say, "I order £500 to be invested until the child reaches 21 years of age."

Mr. Fox: When would that be done?

Mr. McDONALD: Very seldom, but no doubt it would occur in some cases.

Mr. Fox: What would be used to maintain the child?

Mr. McDONALD: It is perhaps an extreme case. As an example, an amount of money, say £200, might be set aside to maintain the child for a certain period. The magistrate may say, "I will take half the money," and that would be paid out at the rate of £1 per week, which would keep him going for two years. The other half of the money would be invested. Under this section the magistrate decides—and he

may only do it very rarely—that moneys are to be invested, and he hands the investing over to the public trustee.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: Only if it forms part of an estate.

Mr. McDONALD: No, because the public trustee is not merely an executor or administrator. His duties are not confined to the estates of people who die. He is what I might call an "omnibus" trustee. He represents the State and is prepared to step forward in all kinds of emergencies where property requires to be cared for. He is required to act where property is abandoned and where executors cannot be found. He acts in a hundred and one ways as, for example, where money is paid into court and it is not certain to whom it belongs. The ownership might be contested. He has to take care of property where other people are not available to do so, under all sorts of conditions to prevent its being dissipated and wasted. It would be a convenience for the magistrate to be able to say to the public trustee, "As my agent, on my behalf and subject to my orders from time to time, you will pay this money out or apply it to the use of the beneficiaries." This only applies to money which is to be withheld, frozen or tied up for a period. If the magistrate at Wyndham, Carnarvon or Norseman did not want to be bothered with investments and controlling investments he could hand the money over to the man who is, and has the job of being, the public trustee.

Mr. ABBOTT: I have only one objection to this, and it is probably over-weighed by the advantages of the subclause. Under the existing system the magistrate usually seeks the advice of the solicitor employed. The money is invested, under the magistrate's supervision, in trust investments usually found by the solicitor.

Mr. J. Hegney: It might be any solicitor.

Mr. ABBOTT: That is the usual practice. As a result, a fairly high rate of interest is obtained. The magistrate makes no charge respecting the fund. If it goes to the public trustee he will make the usual charges for the investment of that money. The public trustee will be a civil servant. I am afraid he will be apt to seek the easiest form of investment, and probably the safest, in public securities with a low rate of interest.

The Minister for Justice: The magistrate is a public servant.

Mr. ARBOTT: But he cannot order that. Once he hands it over, he has no say in the investment under this clause.

Mr. WATTS: I do not suggest that the jurisdiction of the magistrate would be less than it now is, but that the clause would limit his discretion. There is a prospect that any chance of a more lucrative investment being made for the benefit, say, of the orphans concerned, may be lost through this provision. I have no guarantee that such a chance will not be lost. The public trustee may achieve all these desirable results, but I do not see how he is likely to do so under this Bill. The present system has worked satisfactorily and should be allowed to continue. Were it desired to alter the system, the proper way in which to do so would be by amending the Workers' Compensation Act. I remember a case where a magistrate apportioned the amount available for the benefit of the widow and orphan, and decided that £200 should be invested for the latter. That money was used as a first mortgage against property that was worth five times the amount of the investment. It was lent at 6 per cent. interest, and the arrangement was a very satisfactory one for the person concerned. I refuse to believe that anything in the Bill guarantees that the public trustee will be able to make such favourable arrangements. I ask the Committee to delete the subclause.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: From the remarks of the member for West Perth, I have come to the conclusion that the public trustee will be empowered to handle funds other than those comprised in the estates of deceased persons. A man may be killed on a mine and leave children without a mother to attend to them. Those children would be entitled to compensation. The magistrate may decide that the money should be invested, but according to the present proposal that money would have to be sent to the public trustee for investment. Such a provision will cause a great deal of inconvenience to people throughout the scattered areas of Western Australia.

The Minister for Justice: Why?

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: At present they can go to a magistrate and have a talk to him in respect to the lump sum payment to which they have become entitled under the

Workers' Compensation Act. In Kalgoorlie a woman tried to get a lump sum in settlement of her claim, but the magistrate only permitted her to do so when at a later date a suitable house that could be purchased with the money was available for her. Under this Bill, it appears that after the magistrate has come to a decision of that kind, he would have to send the money to the public trustee to invest. That would mean people coming to Perth to deal with the public trustee instead of going to the local magistrate. I object to the clause. It appears that widows placed in the position of the one to whom I have referred would be greatly inconvenienced by being obliged to visit Perth instead of being able to settle the matter at issue through the local magistrate.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If in the case cited by the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe, when the magistrate did not wish to hand the money to the widow but subsequently reconsidered his decision and made it available to her, the only thing that would happen if this Bill became law would be that in the interval the public trustee would make some investment of the money and, under Subclause 5, the magistrate would subsequently make an order for its disbursement to the widow. The public trustee must carry out the magistrate's orders.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 after the word "allowed," the words "by any court, whether upon taxation or order. No costs other than those taxed or ordered shall be payable to any solicitor" be struck out, with a view to inserting the words "by the Master as solicitor and client costs. No costs other than those allowed in such taxation shall be payable to any solicitor."

There are two classes of costs, party and party costs, and solicitor and client costs. If the Minister took action against me and was successful, his solicitors would be entitled to call upon me, as the person who had lost the action, to pay the party and party costs. Each solicitor would be entitled to remuneration over and above those party and party costs. The successful solicitor would have a lien over what he had recovered for the Minister. I ask the Minister to allow the present practice to continue. Decidedly it must continue. Surely no one

imagines that he can go to law, be successful and have no costs to pay. Is the Minister prepared to accept the amendment?

The Minister for Justice: No.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I draw the attention of the member for Nedlands to the fact that the Minister is not subject to cross-examination.

Hon. N. KEENAN: To save time, it is allowable to ask the Minister if he will accept the amendment! As he has indicated he is not prepared to do so, I can only put it to the Committee that a solicitor has a lien over the amount he has recovered for his client, always subject to the reservation that the solicitor's costs can be taxed should his client so desire.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If Subclause 4 of Clause 37 had been deleted I could understand the amendment, seeing that we would then have dealt with one court only. As the clause stands now the Supreme Court and the local court are equally affected.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The only point of objection by the Minister is that the amendment relates solely to the Master of the Supreme Court and does not include the clerk of the local court.

The Minister for Justice: That is correct.

Hon. N. KEENAN: If I include the clerk of the local court it will be all right?

The Minister for Justice: Yes.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in lieu of the words struck out, the words "by the Master or clerk of the local court as solicitor and client costs. No costs other than those allowed in such taxation shall be payable to any solicitor" be inserted.

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

Clause 38—Fees and expenses to be prescribed:

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in lines 7 to 9 the words "In time of war reduced fees may be prescribed with respect to the trusts and estates of members of the Forces" be struck out.

In a subsequent clause power is provided for the making of regulations, and among those matters that may be dealt with are the rates to be charged. The regulations may

cover requirements not only in time of war but of distress such as during a depression. The two public trustee companies operating in Perth already charge very reduced fees to soldiers. They administer estates of a value of under £500 without any charge whatever, and on estates valued at upwards of £5,000 half fees only are levied. When the regulations are framed I have no doubt the Minister will see that they will provide terms similar to those at present charged by the trustee companies. He should not seek an advertisement out of war conditions by including such a clause in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I cannot agree to the amendment. There is nothing in the regulations so far—

Hon. N. Keenan: You have not framed them!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: That is so. I desire to make sure that the soldiers will receive the consideration to which they are entitled. We will have to introduce special legislation to extend consideration in connection with probate duty. The Commonwealth Government has made a move in that direction as well. I cannot see why we should not extend consideration to members of the Forces. One of the main purposes of the Bill is to give special rates with respect to the estates of members of the Forces.

Hon. N. Keenan: Have you looked up Clause 64?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Provision has been made in other directions to give consideration to those who have gone oversea in the interests of their country. I feel sure the hon. member could not have had that in mind when he moved the amendment. The words he proposes to delete are—

In time of war reduced fees may be prescribed with respect to the trusts and estates of members of the Forces.

I would rather go further and give greater recognition to those on service oversea.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister could not possibly have misunderstood me in the way he has pretended to do. I am not opposed to granting favourable terms to men on active service. I am pointing out that in a later part of the Bill power is given to fix the scale of fees, commissions and charges from time to time.

The Minister for Justice: But not differential rates.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Of course!

Hon. C. G. Latham: You would not charge the same on £500 as on £10,000.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Governor-in-Council can fix any fee for a particular service. The Minister seems to imagine that he is the only person in the Chamber who has any consideration for our soldiers, and he has poured out his soul at great length on the subject.

The Minister for Justice: All of us have consideration for them.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Each one of us is just as much concerned about giving consideration to the soldiers as is the Minister, if not more so. This is a case of having power in the measure to fix the fees, and the Minister desires to retain other words which are a pure advertisement, calling attention to the Government's generosity with other people's money. Full power is provided to fix from time to time the fees, commissions and charges which shall be paid. This is a disgusting example of advertising generosity.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That the following subclause be added:—“(2) Such fees shall not exceed (in addition to all moneys properly expended in respect of the estate) two and a half per centum of the corpus of any estate and five pounds per centum of income received by the public trustee, in respect of any such estate.”

I understand the Minister has no objection to the amendment. These are the same maximum fees as are prescribed by the two corporations at present in existence.

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

Clause 39—agreed to.

Clause 40—Common fund and its investments:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 7 to 9 of Subclause 1 the words “Investments made from the common fund shall not be made on account of or belong to any particular trust or estate” be struck out.

When moneys are invested by the public trustee in a common fund their identity will be lost. If the investment of any money by a testator during his lifetime was satisfactory, and he appointed the public trustee believing that the expected

income would be available for his dependants or beneficiaries, the benefit of the extra income would be lost to them if those words were retained. The investment would have lost its identity and the common rate of return would be paid by the public trustee out of a common fund.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is so much mumbling and talking going on continually that I can scarcely hear the hon. member addressing the Chair. This must definitely cease. If members do not comply with my request to keep order in this Committee I will take action.

Mr. WATTS: I merely wish to add that the retention of the words would be undesirable.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I cannot agree to the amendment. To use a vulgarism, it would take the guts out of the Bill. The scheme of the common fund would be ruined, as the hon. member must realise. In any event a testator need not invest in the common fund. He may direct his investments as he desires, but if he does so he will not have the guarantee of the common fund, which is guaranteed by Consolidated Revenue, the Government and Parliament. Perhaps in some instances there may be a lucky investment not guaranteed by the common fund. But there is no guarantee in that case. If the investment is made and proves unsuccessful then the person investing will lose the capital. Under the common fund arrangement he would not lose his capital because it would be guaranteed, together with interest or income from it. In relation to the common fund there will be no discrimination regarding either investment or interest or income. This feature is not peculiar to Western Australia. It obtains in Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia. Under the conditions of the common fund no investment can really be unsuccessful. Investment companies in the Old Country operate on the same basis.

Hon. N. Keenan: They guarantee a certain rate of interest.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: And we guarantee a certain rate of interest.

Hon. N. Keenan: What rate?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Minister will kindly address the Chair. All interjections are highly disorderly.

The **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: The advantages of the common fund are indeed great. Nobody is obliged to have his money invested in it; the matter is entirely optional. Any testator may direct that the moneys from his estate shall not be invested in the common fund. If the amendment is carried the Bill will be lost.

Mr. WATTS: I hope the Minister does not misunderstand me. I do not desire the striking-out of the common fund. There is no objection to the public trustee having a common fund. I recognise that the persons whose money is to be invested are allowed to direct the public trustee against investment in the common fund; yet I question whether many of them will realise that they have that power or will take advantage of it. I still maintain it is inadvisable that the identity of investments should be lost.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in lines 4 to 7 of Subclause 2 the words "and also in any class of investment from time to time approved, for the purposes of this Act, by the Governor-in-Council by Order in Council published in the 'Gazette'" be struck out.

The subclause gives wide powers to the Governor-in-Council to authorise the public trustee to invest in any gamble—not in respect of funds classed as trust investments, or funds which have been by the Trustee Act designated as trust investments, but any class—for instance, the Peel Estate or any other place that is a sink for money.

The Minister for Justice: I agree.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of Subclause 4 the words "interest payable" be struck out and the words "income belonging" inserted in lieu.

The interest payable will not be only the interest to be derived from the proposed investments. I understand the Minister will accept this amendment.

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

Clauses 41 to 44—agreed to.

Clause 45—Unclaimed moneys to be paid into Consolidated Revenue:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 5 the word "six" be struck out with a view to inserting the word "twelve."

In short, the clause provides that moneys unclaimed for six years shall be paid to the Treasury for the public service. In simple contract matters six years is the period under the Statute of Limitations; but here a longer period should be fixed, especially as this law will come into force while world conditions are unsettled and people in the next succeeding few years, who may have interests in this State, may be particularly hard to find. As there appears to be no provision in the Bill for an amount so paid into Consolidated Revenue to be afterwards paid to the rightful owner, if he can be found, it seems to me desirable to fix a period longer than six years.

The **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: I cannot understand the reason for the amendment, because six years is the period fixed in the legislation of the other States of Australia and New Zealand. Any person who can establish a lawful claim to money paid into Consolidated Revenue will not be refused payment. Such claims are constantly being made. Under the Unclaimed Moneys Act, moneys that have been held for six years by companies, banks and liquidators must be paid into Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But under that Act a claim may be made to the Treasurer for the money. This Bill does not contain such a provision.

The **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE**: The amendment is unnecessary. A similar provision is contained in the Curator of Intestate Estates Act, which has been in force for many years.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is about time we brought our legislation up to date.

Mr. TRIAT: I realise there is danger in this clause. Recently a family whose father had died applied to me for assistance. The widow was receiving money under a workers' compensation claim. The father had left very little money. By mere chance I happened to be reading a "Government Gazette" and found that the sum of £27 was lying in a bank to the credit of the deceased's estate. The family had no knowledge of the amount. Possibly many people lose money in this way. If the Committee were given a definite assurance that unclaimed money would be paid to those entitled to it after a period of six years, that no doubt would be satisfactory.

The Premier: That is the procedure.

Mr. TRIAT: In that case I have no objection to the clause.

The PREMIER: Perhaps I had better give an assurance in this matter, because some people may have a wrong impression. A person who can establish a legal claim to money paid into Consolidated Revenue, because of the fact that it had remained unclaimed for six years, can recover it. I am constantly dealing with such claims. An amount which has been lying to the credit of a savings bank account that has not been operated on for six years is paid into the Treasury; but if the depositor can establish his claim to it, even after 30 years, he will be paid the money. We have no desire to retain money rightfully belonging to any person because of some provision in a measure such as this. The applications are referred to the Crown Law Department, the officers of which examine the claims. If on the advice of those officers the claim is established the person entitled to the money will get it. I unhesitatingly give that assurance to the Committee. In the circumstances, I see no necessity for the amendment.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. ABBOTT: The Statute of Limitations does not apply to trust funds in the hands of a private trustee. He is always bound to account to the rightful owner. The Minister said it was a pity these moneys should lie idle. I suggest they will not because they will be in this common fund, and the only effect on the Treasury if we alter the period from six to 12 years would be that if a claimant did turn up within the 12 years he would get his money plus interest, and if he appeared after six years, under the existing legislation, he would get his principal plus six years' interest. I do not see why the public trustee should be in so much better a position than a private trustee, or why the Government should have the advantage of trust moneys in the hands of a private trustee in so short a time. Under the Bill the money goes into Consolidated Revenue, but we have the Premier's assurance that the money will be refunded. But it would be refunded without interest after a period of six years. I think we might agree to the amendment. It is of very little disadvantage to the Government to have money after six years be-

cause at the end of the 12 years if no claimant turns up the Government would get the whole of the principal and the whole of the interest, whereas at present if a claimant turns up after, say, 10 years, he will get his capital back and six years' interest only. Why should he not get the other four years' interest? I support the amendment.

Mr. WATTS: The assurance given by the Premier is very acceptable to me, but at the same time I distinguish between the provisions of this Bill and those of the Unclaimed Moneys Act, and that was really why I raised the objection to the clause. I think it will be found that this clause provides that at the end of a period of six years the funds will be paid to the Treasury. I understood that the Unclaimed Moneys Act provided that it should be paid first to a fund called the Unclaimed Moneys Fund and from there administered in accordance with the Act. I find that that is so. It appeared to me that the intention of the clause was that moneys in the hands of the public trustee which have not been paid for a period of six years should become, quite irrespective of the provisions of the Unclaimed Moneys Act, part of Consolidated Revenue for the public service of the State and, because I thought that, I moved the amendment. I am not even now clear in my own mind that that is not what the clause means, but one is in a difficult position when assured by the Premier that no matter what the circumstances are, if a lawful claimant can be found, it has been the custom to go back as far as 30 years. I still think it would have been preferable for the clause to be otherwise drafted.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I appreciate the arguments that have been submitted, but I cannot agree to the amendment. This has been the custom practised throughout Australia in the past.

Mr. Abbott: Not so far as private trustees are concerned.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes; they must pay the money into revenue under the Unclaimed Moneys Act. I do not see why I should agree to the amendment. The money not in the public trustee's account goes into Consolidated Revenue and is used for the advantage of everybody. It is used for the purpose of developing the State, and if we do not obtain interest dir-

ectly we have it indirectly inasmuch as we do not have to pay so much interest on borrowed money.

Hon. N. Keenan: It would help to make up the Railway Department's deficiency.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister need not pay attention to interjections.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: It would be a fine thing if it did! However, I may not discuss that aspect, because the Chairman would call me to order. I have much sympathy with the Railway Department and the people it serves, and I consider that the rest of the community should contribute in some way towards its deficit. I have listened carefully to the arguments advanced in favour of the amendment, but on principle I cannot agree to it.

Amendment put and negatived.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 after the word "whereof" the words "the Public Trustee has caused an advertisement to be published at least twice at intervals of fourteen days in a newspaper circulating in Perth and" be inserted.

The Minister for Justice: I agree.

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

Clauses 46 to 48—agreed to.

Clause 49—General powers of public trustee:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of paragraph (b) of Subclause 1 the word "five" be struck out and the word "three" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of paragraph (e) of Subclause 1 before the word "sell" the words "subject to the provisions of Section 18 of the Administration Act 1903-1939" be inserted.

The object in asking for this amendment is to ensure that the public trustee, when acting as an administrator may be in the same position, so far as an administrator is controlled by the Administration Act, as any other administrator would be.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 to 4 of paragraph (iii) of Subclause 2 the words "except where any sale or borrowing is necessary for the purposes of borrowing" be struck out.

I frankly do not know what these words mean.

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

Clauses 50 to 52—agreed to.

Clause 53—Employment of solicitors, etc.:

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That in lines 1 and 2 the words "subject to the regulations" be struck out and the words "as hereinafter provided" inserted in lieu.

I shall move later for a new subclause to be added.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That the following subclauses be added:—

(2) The Public Trustee shall be guided by the following principles in regard to the employment of solicitors to conduct legal business arising in connection with the performance of his duties including applications for probate or administration—

(a) if there is a named solicitor, the Public Trustee shall employ such solicitor;

(b) if a solicitor's name is indorsed on the document from which the Public Trustee derives his authority to act, the Public Trustee shall, subject to the provision of the next succeeding paragraph, employ such solicitor;

(c) if the Public Trustee is satisfied that the testator, settlor, or other person signing the will, deed of settlement, or other document from which the Public Trustee derives his authority to act had a usual solicitor, the Public Trustee shall employ such solicitor, and, if such will, deed, or other document is indorsed with the name of another solicitor, the Public Trustee may employ such usual solicitor in preference to the solicitor whose name is so indorsed;

(d) when the Public Trustee is administering the affairs of an insane patient or incapable person the Public Trustee shall, as far as practicable, employ the usual solicitor, if any, of such insane patient or incapable person.

In this subsection—

"Named solicitor" means a solicitor as to whom the testator, settlor, or other person signing a will, deed of settlement, or other document from which the Public Trustee derives his authority to act has in such document expressed a desire that such solicitor should be employed to conduct any legal business arising in connection with the estate or subject matter of such document.

"Usual solicitor" means a solicitor as to whom the Public Trustee is satisfied that the testator, settlor, or other person signing a will, deed of settlement, or other document from which the Public Trustee derives his authority to act habitually employed such solicitor to conduct legal business for him.

(3) Notwithstanding anything hereinbefore contained—

- (a) a solicitor entitled to be employed by the Public Trustee may, upon cause shown, be removed by order of the Court upon the application of the Public Trustee or of any person interested in the estate or property; and
- (b) with regard to any particular piece of legal business the Public Trustee, if he considers that it would be unreasonable to employ a solicitor to conduct such piece of business, need not employ a solicitor to conduct such piece of business.

The principle underlying these subclauses and adopted by the trustee companies here and in other parts of the Commonwealth, is that where a particular solicitor is nominated by the trust that solicitor is to be employed.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw the Committee's attention to the fact that the proposed new subclauses are very lengthy. I do not propose to read them.

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

Clauses 54 to 57—agreed to.

Clause 58—Public Trustee may take opinion of the court:

Hon. N. KEENAN: This clause deals with the right of the public trustee where an important matter of law or fact arises to go to a Supreme Court Judge to obtain an order, or judgment in chambers. I move an amendment—

That in line 11 after the word "or" the words "one" be struck out and the words "legal practitioner of the Supreme Court of Western Australia" inserted in lieu.

The clause deals not with ordinary matters, but matters of such importance that the trustee has to go to a Judge of the Supreme Court to get directions. Were he to send down his clerk the Judge would not listen to him. He could send down a legal practitioner who is an employee of the Crown, by being a Crown Law officer, if he chooses. He should not send any whipper-snapper.

The clause is also a piece of grave injustice to the profession. This work is portion of its livelihood, and properly so.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I am sorry that I must again disagree with the hon. member inasmuch as I cannot accept his amendment. Doubtless he desires to look after the interests of his legal friends, and I do not blame him for doing so.

Hon. N. Keenan: I am not doing that; my amendment refers to any legal practitioner authorised by the public trustee.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I see no reason why the deputy public trustee should not be allowed to apply to the court for a direction. On occasions managing clerks of legal firms, and even articulated clerks, have been sent to the court to make such applications. I do not know why we should insist that the public trustee should either make the application personally or engage a solicitor to do so. He will have responsible officers quite capable of undertaking the duty.

Mr. Needham: The member for Nedlands is urging preference to unionists!

Mr. Abbott: You would have to support that!

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the application were of great importance the public trustee would probably engage a solicitor to deal with the business.

Hon. N. Keenan: This is an important matter.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: If the issue is of great importance the public trustee will have power to engage a legal practitioner to do the work, quite apart from availing himself of the services of Crown Law officers.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 59, 60—agreed to.

Clause 61—Registration of titles:

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 and 3 of Subclause 3 the words "Mining Registrar" be struck out and the words "Under Secretary for Mines" inserted in lieu.

The amendment is necessary to effect the alteration in designation indicated.

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

Clauses 62, 63—agreed to.

Clause 64—Regulations:

Mr. WATTS: I move an amendment—

That paragraph (j) be struck out.

The paragraph seeks to enable the Governor-in-Council to make regulations "fixing by scale or otherwise the professional fees and charges payable in respect of professional services rendered to the public trustee and under his instructions." Earlier in the Bill we made provision regarding the taxing of costs, and a system is at present in operation regarding the fixing of all such fees as may be payable by the public trustee. If the paragraph set out that a judge of the Supreme Court could fix the fees, I would not take exception to it. I understand the Minister is in agreement with me on this point.

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

Clause 65, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1941-42.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 25th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. Withers in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £1,710:

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [7.57]: Personally I have not had much experience in addressing myself to the Annual Estimates. I could not, however, help appreciating, after hearing the Treasurer's Financial Statement, the difficulties he had to contend with in attempting to frame Estimates that would be regarded as wholly satisfactory by all interested, particularly in view of circumstances arising out of the war and the extra financial burden, amounting to approximately £500,000, incurred in consequence of increases in the basic wage, pay-roll allowances and so forth. I assume that the Premier has to deal with the State finances in much the same way as do the heads of business concerns in the city, and endeavour to make his financial arrangements, as business people generally do, in an attempt to meet the increased expenditure necessitated by existing conditions.

The Leader of the Opposition advanced certain suggestions for improving the position and in many instances I was able to agree with his remarks. He referred to several means by which efforts could be made to overtake some of the lee-way by securing increased revenue from State activities. He suggested that the Commissioner of Railways could very well make periodical inspections of the railway service, as the result of which that officer could probably secure increased revenue from the carriage of passengers and goods if more adequate services were provided. I can quote the experience of the residents of my electorate with regard to the railway journey from Kalgoorlie to Leonora, a distance of 164 miles. The train takes an excessive time to do the journey and passengers are not provided with satisfactory travelling conditions. Quite possibly, if a more limited time was allowed for stoppages en route the journey could be completed much faster and made more comfortable for the travelling public. To provide fast transport in the form of Diesel cars may be a difficult proposition on account of the war, but in my opinion this is the best method of overcoming the long tedious journeys occasioned by slow moving trains hauling heavy loads.

Mr. North: You mean separate goods and passengers?

Mr. TRIAT: Yes, or perishables and passengers, as I believe that a Diesel is capable of drawing a fair load. I had experience of a trip from Mullewa to Geraldton—a very speedy and comfortable run. Nobody seems to have the slightest objection to travelling on a Diesel, but when people have to travel by ordinary trains, which take two hours to do that trip, the conditions become tedious and trying.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Will you speak up a little? We cannot hear you from this side of the Chamber.

Mr. TRIAT: If we had Diesel cars operating on the lines to which I have referred fast services would be provided, and people would not have to submit to undue hardship in reaching their destinations. In summer time the temperature in those parts frequently exceeds 100 degrees, and women and children coming down for holidays find the conditions very bad indeed, what with the heat, dust and noise. If there was any possibility of increasing the facilities for

travelling on those lines the railways would receive better patronage.

While I was visiting the Eastern States one of the things that struck me most was the noiselessness of the trains. At first I could not determine why the carriages made so little noise, but on making inquiries I found that the method of coupling the coaches was totally different from that employed here. For instance, there was less play between the buffers of the coaches, and when a train pulled out of a station, there was not that continual clank, clank with which we are familiar. The carriages had a system of double buffers, and there was very little play between the coaches. Whether it would be possible to introduce that system on our trains I do not know.

The Premier: We have it on the Kalgoorlie express.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so, but we should like to see it on the Leonora, Mt. Magnet and other trains by which our people have to travel.

Mr. Raphael: And Victoria Park.

Mr. TRIAT: The hon. member's district is blessed with a wonderful system of transport, and I ask that we be given consideration. People living in the outback parts of the State are compelled, owing to the shortage of petrol, to travel by trains. Let us, then, make those trains a little more attractive to passengers. If we could attract increased passenger traffic, the railway revenue would show an increase and the losses would not be so great.

Another thing impressed me during my travels in the Eastern States. This will not apply so much to the Leonora line, but it will to the lines in other parts, especially the Mt. Magnet and Wiluna services, as travelling to those parts entails long distances. In Queensland I noticed on the 3 ft. 6 in. gauge railways, the same gauge as ours, that windows are not released from the bottom and pulled up between wooden guides. They are made to slide down between runners, somewhat like the window of a motor car, with the result that when the train is in motion the windows do not rattle against some hard material, but are recessed in a way to silence any possible noise.

Mr. Seward: You will want to keep the blinds down, too.

Mr. TRIAT: That is something which could be attended to. If greater comfort is provided on our trains there will be addi-

tional inducement for people to patronise them. I do not know what the cost would be to give effect to these suggestions. On that point the Treasurer doubtless has more information than I have. To provide such improvements might be too costly. If it is not, the department, by attending to these matters, would receive greatly increased patronage. When travelling from Wiluna to Perth one has to spend two nights in the train, and a very tedious journey it is.

Most people, travelling as I did before I had a gold pass, second-class, experienced great discomfort, particularly women and children coming down for holidays. When they travel on the second-class sleepers blankets are provided, but no sheets. That is disgraceful! People should refuse to sleep between blankets that have been in contact with other bodies, and have not been washed or fumigated. The only proper way to prevent the body from coming into contact with used blankets is to provide clean sheets, and people who pay 6s. for a bed should certainly be supplied with a pair of clean sheets. This suggestion might cost money, but it is the decent thing for the department to do, even though it is catering for second-class passengers. Before I became a member of Parliament I frequently travelled second-class. Now that I am a member I avail myself of the better facilities of first-class accommodation, which is reasonably good. Still, I maintain that second-class passengers are equally entitled to be supplied with clean pillow slips and clean sheets.

Member: What about providing one class only?

Mr. TRIAT: Some people favour this class distinction, and if they are prepared to pay 15s for sleeper accommodation let them do so. Our sleeper costs are lower than those in the Eastern States. There a passenger pays 21s. for a sleeper, and often finds himself put out at 6 o'clock in the morning in order to change trains.

The Minister for Mines: There are no second-class sleepers over there.

Mr. TRIAT: No, and the charge for first-class is 21s. I should like to see provision made for clean sheets in our second-class sleeper coaches.

When the Budget was delivered and the expenditure of an extra half million or more was mentioned, quite a large proportion of that sum was attributed to the increase in

the basic wage. The basic wage is a subject with which I have been reasonably familiar for many years, because I was at one time a worker on the basic wage, and I had to rear a family of three children mainly on that rate of pay. There came a period in my life when I got away from the basic wage, but most of my life I was on it. Speaking as one who has lived on the basic wage, I say that the conditions are not liberal. A man who has a wife and three children to maintain is supporting one child more than is provided for in the basic wage.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It provides for two children.

Mr. TRIAT: It provides for two children and I had three, so that I had one above the number provided for. Even when a man has only two children, the provision is not nearly sufficient to give those people rump steak in the home. Of the meat consumed, there is more from a sheep's head than there is rump steak. Though some people talk about the terrific increase in the basic wage it is really not of much advantage to the working man.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is only an artificial increase.

Mr. TRIAT: That is so. The basic wage is supposed to provide for a man, his wife and two children, but we find that the basic wage increases are granted only after the increased cost of living has been operating for some three months, with the result that the worker is always three months behind. He has had to pay excessive costs of living for three months before he catches up through an increase of the basic wage. In fact, he is always chasing the cost of living and is never able to catch up. The result is that the basic wage is of no advantage to the worker. It is of no advantage to the employer, either, and definitely of no advantage to the industries of the State. But it must be of advantage to somebody.

Out of the increased money, someone must reap an advantage. It is impossible to increase costs without somebody benefiting from the increase. If it is not the worker who gets the advantage, not the employer, and not the industry or the State, it must go somewhere. I say it goes to the man who retails at prices that are too high—goods that he has bought wholesale.

In fact, the extra money finds its way into the pockets of the retailers and wholesalers. They are really the only people who derive benefit from increases in the basic wage. To ascertain whether that difficulty could be overcome, in 1920 the Commonwealth Government decided to have made a thorough investigation into the basic wage, and appointed for that purpose a Royal Commission under the chairmanship of Mr. Piddington, K.C. The Commonwealth basic wage at that time was rather high, £4 9s. 2d.

The inquiry under the auspices of Mr. Piddington throughout the States arrived at the conclusion that the basic wage then operating ought to be £5 16s. This meant that the basic wage then operating was too low by £1 6s. 2d. Receiving what the basic wage ought to have been, the Australian workers would have had an opportunity to get somewhat better food into their homes and to give their children more adequate nourishment.

Mr. North: Why not appoint an economist to the Arbitration Court bench?

Mr. TRIAT: That is a good idea. But first of all the law of this country should try to do something towards preventing exploitation of the worker. I agree that we can go on increasing the basic wage every week without conferring any benefit on the worker. The trouble lies with the man who sells goods at too high a cost. With the appointment of a Price Fixing Commissioner I thought that official would control prices indefinitely and thus the constant increases in the cost of living would be stopped.

But within a short time of the outbreak of war prices jumped up enormously. One article rose to the extent of 25 per cent. overnight. Such increases are the cause of the basic wage climbing and climbing, thus penalising any attempt on the part of Western Australia to get into secondary industries. False costs are created. The workers are told that they receive big wages whereas in fact they do not. Spending power increases by leaps and bounds until we have to pay 18s. for what a little while previously cost us 15s. It is said that people will not come here to start in business because costs are too high. Let us induce the Price Fixing Commissioner to become active. Let us send

inspectors to the country districts to ascertain the prices of goods there. Tomatoes are priced at 11d. per pound here when they can be obtained for 4d. per pound elsewhere. I have been told that the heels of boots are worn, until there are holes in the middle of them, by the alterations in the prices marked on the heels.

The cost of living increases as the basic wage rises, and so the worker obtains no benefit. The cost of tea has lately risen by another 2d. per pound. Just prior to that increase I saw a statement by a Ceylon planter that Ceylon was unable to sell its tea and that thousands and thousands of pounds of the article had been burnt or buried as manure. Today the price of tea is 1s. 1d. per pound in excess of the pre-war price. Ninety per cent of Western Australian workers drink tea three or four times a day. I myself prefer tea to beer. I drink tea more frequently than I drink beer. Why should our workers be called upon to pay 3s. 5d. per pound for tea? One never sees the price of tea go up except on Monday morning. Why does not the Press tell us on Monday morning that the price of tea will rise by 2d. per pound on the following Monday? The higher price is now paid on large quantities of tea bought at the old wholesale price. Thus the holders of those stocks of tea gain an extra 2d. per pound profit. It is the retailer who gets the benefit.

Mr. Abbott: What about when prices drop?

Mr. Raphael: How often do they drop?

Mr. TRIAT: Under present conditions the worker never has an opportunity to take advantage of a fall in prices. The Price Fixing Commissioner should say to the retailers, "If you have 1,000 lbs. of tea in stock you must not increase your price until the new tea comes in." That is what the Commissioner is there for.

I believe Western Australia has reached the stage when it should become a secondary-industry as well as a primary-industry State, but as long as the basic wage keeps climbing there can be no inducement for business people to establish themselves here. If we could stabilise the cost of living and prevent the basic wage from rising, we should have opportunities for the establishment of secondary industries here even during wartime. Let me quote the figures

of workers engaged in Western Australia in secondary industries during the years 1937-38 to 1939-40. In 1937-38 Western Australian secondary industries employed 23,133 workers; in 1938-39 the number was 23,211; in 1939-40 it was 22,967. Actually, therefore, Western Australia has experienced a reduction in the number of men and women employed in secondary industries. Every other Australian State, including even Tasmania, has experienced increases. The Tasmanian figures are:—1937-38, 13,170; 1938-39, 13,802; 1939-40, 14,607.

So Western Australia has gone back while the other States have advanced in point of secondary industries. The reason for this I do not know. I have heard people state that it is due to the high cost of wages here. I would like to have that idea removed, at all events from the minds of members of Parliament. The report I have already quoted states on page 29—

The drift of skilled labour to the industrial States of Victoria and New South Wales owing to recruiting and munition work at high wages has created some difficulties.

It cannot, then, be higher wages that are keeping people away from Western Australia. There must, however, be some reason for it.

I can visualise Western Australia becoming one of the most important States of the Commonwealth in the matter of food-stuffs and munitions. As I pointed out when speaking on the Address-in-Reply, we are several thousand miles closer to the seat of operations than are any of the Eastern States. In war-time that must be an all-important item. Both speed and cost of transport must be in our favour. This State is ideally situated for the transport of goods from the Commonwealth to Malaya, Singapore, the Middle East and Europe. We have that advantage. My opinion is that Western Australia will after the war be the arsenal of the British Empire. We should be in a position to manufacture in competition with the other States of Australia. I ask the Committee to take note of all this. Let us try to control the cost of living and keep our basic wage within reasonable bounds. By so doing we shall be able to create more employment, our workers will have greater spending power than they have today and we shall be able to absorb our primary products into secondary industries.

Let us also try to improve our own Government undertakings, such as the railways, so that we may obtain more revenue from them. A statement was recently made by an Eastern States gentleman representing big interests. He asked both the people and the Government of Western Australia to can vegetables to be sent oversea to our soldiers. There must be a very good market not only for canned but also dried vegetables. I remember when McGaris was in this State and canned vegetables which were sent to the North where I was living. The canning was successful and the vegetables extremely nutritious.

Mr. North: And he started the industry 3,000 miles nearer the principal market!

Mr. TRIAT: That is so. He used exactly the same argument as I used in my speech on the Address-in-reply. However, the argument is obvious and I do not claim credit for it. We now find prices mounting up and nothing done to prevent the increases. I am not asserting that the Government is all-powerful and can prevent the continual rise in the cost of living; but I hope the Price Fixing Commissioner will be fair and endeavour not to allow the cost of living to become excessive, because otherwise our basic wage cannot be kept within bounds and our workers will have no chance to save money.

Meat of all description is available for the people. I am given to understand that the export of meat to Europe and the Middle East is limited because of lack of refrigerated space; but I point out that the price of meat of all descriptions is today much higher than it has been for years past. Where I live a piece of rump steak costs 1s. 6d., if one has the money to buy it. That in a State which grows its own cattle! The prices of lamb, mutton and other meat have reached a record level, yet I am informed cool storage buildings are packed with meat. The prices of butter, jam, vegetables and other foods are also reaching record levels.

Mr. J. H. Smith: And fruit, too.

Mr. TRIAT: Yes. Apples and pears are very dear. The Price Fixing Commissioner has authority to see that a reasonable price is charged for these commodities and I hope he will make a start very quickly.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Marketing boards have made goods dearer.

Mr. TRIAT: I am afraid we have too many boards. I do not favour them as much as many people do. Today we have a

board for nearly everything and I am afraid they are proving costly. A board usually consists of three members comprising a chairman and two others of whom one probably represents the consumer and the other the producer. The salaries of the members are adding to the cost of commodities. I think politicians should act on such boards.

The Minister for Mines: They would want payment too.

Mr. TRIAT: I do not think so. Much of the time of members of Parliament might be taken up in attending to the work of those boards. Why should we not sit on them?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Absolutely!

Mr. TRIAT: The time is overdue for politicians to take a more active interest in the affairs of the State. As I say, boards are created with the result that costs are rising.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: We could sit on the Milk Board.

Mr. TRIAT: A strong feature of Western Australia's claim to be a secondary producing State is, in my opinion, that we enjoy industrial peace. From my experience of industrial affairs—and I have had many years' experience—industrial peace is the factor which should be considered by men who are prepared to invest capital in secondary industries. Business men would be unlikely to commence undertakings in a country subject to industrial unrest, strikes and stoppages of work. During the whole war period Western Australia has not had one industrial stoppage. Our mining industry, timber industry and public industries have not lost one day through a strike. No other State of the Commonwealth can make such a claim.

Mr. Kelly: What about the shop assistants? They struck last year.

Mr. TRIAT: I believe the hon. member is right. Nevertheless, how would the Eastern States compare with us in that respect?

Mr. Watts: They cannot!

Mr. TRIAT: Of course not. We are proud of our reputation for industrial peace during the war period. That reputation should be the greatest inducement to any employer to set up business here, where there is no industrial unrest and where he can be certain that his business will continue throughout the year, provided the conditions laid down by the Arbitration Court are observed. I notice we are receiving some Commonwealth war contracts. Recently we received a large contract for

sleepers. That pleases me, because Western Australia has been very low in the list of Government contracts.

Member: Cannot sleepers be procured in the other States?

Mr. TRIAT: I think so, although probably they would not be as good as ours. On the 25th September of this year the Commonwealth Government let huge contracts for blankets. I shall quote the allocations to the various States, which are as follows:—

Tasmania	..	..	£93,000
Queensland	..	..	61,000
New South Wales	..	..	85,000
South Australia	..	..	58,000
Western Australia	..	..	3,000

The low allocation to this State may be due to the fact that the Albany Woollen Mills were unable to supply a greater quantity; yet a million blankets were ordered by the Commonwealth in Australia and Western Australia received a contract for only £3,000. As I say, I am pleased we secured the contract for the sleepers. I can assure members that sleepers obtained elsewhere in Australia cannot compare with ours. The Queensland trains run over sleepers consisting of trees split in halves, unsquared, and with the bark remaining on them.

I do not intend to detain the Committee at length on the Estimates, but I do consider it worth while to ask the Government to give consideration to our railway transport and to request the Price Fixing Commissioner to get busy. Inspectors should be appointed under the Price Fixing Commissioner to operate in various parts of the State in order to ensure that the cost of living does not get out of bounds. It is no use appointing a Price Fixing Commissioner unless he has the necessary machinery with which to function. My suggestion may involve additional expense to the Government, but I feel sure it will reduce the cost of living. It will mean that a storekeeper will be unable to sell for 9d. an article that should be sold for 6d. If he does, he will suffer the penalty provided.

An inspector visits hotels not for the purpose of protecting the man who drinks beer or whisky, but for the purpose of protecting the man who supplies it. The latter very quickly gets someone to watch his interests. The inspector makes certain that the whisky and brandy is up to standard and not

watered, and also ensures that the wholesaler gets no more than his pound of flesh. But the wholesalers are not so anxious to have price fixing inspectors to ensure that they do not overcharge for our food-stuffs. If they had the right to engage inspectors to protect their interests they would very soon do so but they are not anxious to have inspectors appointed because they know the interests of consumers and not those of the suppliers would be protected. I hope that the House will give consideration to the points I have raised with a view to seeing if something can be done to assist in devising a better transport system and bringing about the appointment of price fixing inspectors in various parts of this State.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [8.31]: I am always interested in the speeches of the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat). I admire his earnestness and the method by which he places his views before the House, but I am sorry he made the mistake tonight of speaking at the wrong time. I submit to him, and to other members of the House, that we need to realise that there is a time and a place for everything. The hon. member made a very able speech in regard to better facilities for our railways, and to the need for more up-to-date equipment and for more consideration to be shown for the travelling public. Had he made that speech on the railway estimates, the Minister for Railways would immediately have had to reply.

Mr. Seward: You are an optimist!

Mr. Watts: You are too optimistic!

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Let him make the speech again!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister would have to reply.

Mr. Doney: The fact that the Minister ought to reply is no assurance that he would.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Mt. Magnet has made an able contribution to the debate on the Budget, but it is one that should be made when the railway estimates are under consideration.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Can he not make a similar speech again?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course! The hon. member will not, however, enjoy making it on the railway estimates as much as he enjoyed making it to-night. There is another point. When those in authority over our

railways look to "Hansard" for criticism of the railways they turn to the debate on the railway estimates, and therefore the hon. member's speech in that regard will not be in its proper place and may be overlooked.

The CHAIRMAN: Will the member for Guildford-Midland kindly speak to the Budget instead of criticising the speech of the member for Mt. Magnet?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The member for Mt. Magnet has been speaking to the Budget and I am addressing myself to the same question.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is criticising the speech of the member for Mt. Magnet.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is no limit to what can be said when we are discussing the Budget and I cannot, therefore, offend. The hon. member made a very fine contribution in regard to the administration and fixation of the basic wage. He also spoke at length of the need for greater attention being paid to our secondary industries. We have a Minister in charge of that phase of our activities. The Minister for Labour and Industrial Development would be most interested in the hon. member's remarks. Had these remarks been made on the estimates of that department the Minister would have replied and the hon. member would accordingly have secured more practical results from his contribution than is likely to be the case now.

Mr. Raphael: Do you mean that better trains would have been placed in commission or that there would be more up-to-date services, or what?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The consideration of the Budget is one of the two occasions when there is no limit to what members may speak about. It is one of the times when we can all enjoy ourselves without being upset by interruptions from those who are in charge of the rules and regulations. There is no occasion when we can speak freely except during the debate on the Address-in-reply and the consideration of the Budget. The Address-in-reply is a sort of social discourse.

Mr. Raphael: "Discord" is the word!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It gives members an opportunity to review anything and everything. Opportunity is taken by them to survey Governmental activities in their particular electorates. It is a sort of full-

dress social discourse, unlimited in its scope. The Budget provides an opportunity for a business discourse. It is not a social discourse but a business discourse. The time devoted to consideration of the Budget is one during which we should, as it were, take off our coats, roll up our sleeves and try to obtain a true conception of the actual economic position of the State.

Unfortunately, however, we find that this House—and I say this advisedly, from experience—has drifted away from that idea with the result that we have a debate on the Address-in-reply and then the same kind of discussion in connection with the Budget, or we find members doing as the member for Mt. Magnet has done tonight, namely, talking during the Budget debate on matters which should be discussed when the particular department within whose province they come is under consideration. I admit that in the submission to the Chamber of the Annual Estimates there is little scope for a close analysis of State finance. The position is that Parliament is not in charge of the Annual Estimates. It is a case of Cabinet control, and it cannot be otherwise.

Mr. Marshall: Bank control!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Estimates today are simply a Cabinet report, a departmental review. They cannot be otherwise, under existing conditions. They outline what has been done and what is to be done. The State Parliament can only accept what is placed before it. Members cannot do more than listen to the discussion. They cannot do anything to alter the estimates. They cannot change the position to any degree.

There is no channel through which we can frame or assist in framing the Annual Estimates. The whole position is controlled from outside the State. The financial position of the State is under the control and direction of the Loan Council and the gatherings that take place in Eastern Australia. It is because of that condition that we have all this discourse on the Address-in-reply and the Budget. There is no opportunity for anything else to be done. Members must speak in generalities. They cannot discuss the Government of the country from a financial point of view. There is no opportunity to enter, as a Parliament, into the real economic control of Western Australia.

There is only one time when I enjoy making a speech. I am enjoying that time now, and I think I shall continue so long that members will become tired of listening to me. I admire the Leader of the National Party but I say he has misled me because I was waiting for his speech, in order that I might build up mine, having made no notes. But he never delivered it. The reason he did not deliver it is that there is no scope for a real analysis.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: He is a Scotsman, and waits.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is no scope. He therefore thought it would be largely a waste of time. Again, under existing conditions where we are under the direction of the Loan Council, it is a pity that we have not received the Auditor General's report, and more particularly the report of Public Accounts.

The Premier: They were tabled today.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is a bit late.

The Premier: It is difficult to get them.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I know it is always difficult to get them. I can remember when there was more necessity for them, and greater difficulty was experienced then in hurrying them through. Nevertheless, I defy any member to study and understand the economic position of Western Australia without having, particularly the public accounts, and also the assistance of the review of the Auditor General. With all these limitations the fact remains we have had some very interesting speeches. Those speeches were not irrelevant; but they were unavailing. They were irrelevant because they dealt with the finances of Australia, and they were unavailing to this Government.

Seven-tenths of the speeches of members on the Address-in-reply deal with matters outside Western Australia. I made a mental note on this point when I listened to these speeches this session and last session. Some members devote all their speeches to Federal matters; there are few members who do not encroach largely on Federal matters to build up their speeches.

Mr. Berry: Why should they not?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: There is no reason why they should not, except that they are misleading the people of Western Australia. The fact that members make these speeches conveys to the people that they have some authority and some responsibility.

Their views are accepted as those of representatives of electorates of this State. Seven-tenths of the speeches deal with matters outside Western Australia and three-tenths are Western Australian. It is because we are down to three-tenths that I speak in this manner. I propose to probe fairly deeply.

The only reason I raise the point is that I desire to make it clear that the State Parliament is so circumscribed and so limited in its control and responsibility, and so hampered by the encroachment of Federal authority, that it cannot move without criticising those actually in authority. The member for Irwin-Moore (Mr. Berry) realises he has to criticise them because, as a member of this House, he feels their control. It is true we are part of the people of Australia and as individuals are called upon to study the operations of Federal politics and Federal activities, be they connected with this State or elsewhere. When, however, we speak in this House we speak only as members of the Australian public, and not as if we have got any responsibility in the general government of the matters raised.

I would be quite pleased, and rejoice, if members took their speeches to the Esplanade and contacted the general public. It is a waste of effort in this Chamber; the audience is so limited. It is an intelligent audience, but not an effective audience because it is so limited that one speaks to dozens here where one could speak to thousands elsewhere. I do not like to speak of affairs outside of Western Australia, and I do not speak on general debates a great deal, because members are mighty bad listeners and I cannot speak to bad listeners. Another matter, from the economic point of view, has to be remembered, and that is that while all these speeches are being made "Hansard" is reporting them. "Hansard" is costly and if members read "Hansard" and do it thoroughly, they will admit a tremendous proportion deals with matters over which this House has no control.

Let me give an illustration. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) always commands a good hearing. He is a student. He applies himself to his subject and always contributes something worth while. The other night he brought forward the good news, and I rejoiced when I heard it, that Keynes, the great economist, is to be added to the board of the Bank of England. That is

a wonderful development and a revolutionary development from the standpoint of British financial control. It is a most extraordinary thing that Mr. Keynes should be placed in that position, but it shows that the presence of Major Atlee, that great man Mr. Morrison, Mr. Bevin and Mr. Kirkwood, all members of the British Cabinet, are making an impression in the general administration of the affairs of the Old Country. Due to their influence some measure of democratic ideas has been infused into the control of the Bank of England. Mr. Keynes, a Britisher, I am very pleased to know, has been added to it. The whole of the hon. member's speech, however, was of no value to the State, except as an education. We cannot do anything in the nature of financial reform; we can do nothing with banking. We, except as electors, cannot make the Federal Parliament get rid of the kind of man that today it places on the board of the Commonwealth Bank. I suggest to the member for Claremont that, when he gets on to another bit of reform and propaganda, he comes with me to the Esplanade and we will make good use of it. We will not waste the material in this House.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You would go together?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Of course we would! In matters of this description I will join with anyone who will preach practical reform of the banking system. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) will also be a comrade with us in that regard. The speech of the member for Claremont (Mr. North) was interesting, but seven-tenths of his matter dealt with Commonwealth affairs. It represented wonderful subject matter for discussion on the Esplanade, but little of value to this House.

Mr. North: And what of the remaining three-tenths?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I was just coming to that. In the remaining three-tenths of his utterance the hon. member got back to State considerations. True, the main point was that the booms at the Claremont railway crossing should be removed and gates installed instead.

Mr. North: Parish pump matter!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The only mistake the hon. member made was when he said the gates would cost £3,000 and an hon.

member interjected that the cost would be more like £40.

Mr. North: They would be good gates at a cost of £40!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The fact remains that for three-tenths of the time he spoke, the hon. member dealt with State matters and the rest of his speech was devoted to a very fine oration of general educational value to the electors of Australia.

As I indicated a few moments ago, our present position is due to the limited power of control vested in us. The Loan Council is in charge of the State and that control is held in such a way that State Governments, particularly those that are under the supervision of the Commonwealth Disabilities Commission, are required to prepare monthly balances. Today it is not a matter of annual Estimates; there cannot be annual Estimates, but simply monthly balances. All the revenue the State obtains goes into one account and, as far as practicable, Loan Council money and other Commonwealth allocations are paid into it. The account is on the basis of one-twelfth so that each monthly expenditure is on that basis as regards the annual result. True, as the Treasurer will probably point out, that is not the position regarding loan funds. It could not be so in that instance because, if the Commonwealth furnished those funds to be used monthly, it would be paying the interest on the loan funds raised. Therefore, the Commonwealth pays to the State the lump sum involved so that we carry the interest burden. The loan payment is in proportion to the amount raised at the time it was secured, and so it is loaded on to the State which therefore pays the interest accruing. The other advances, such as the contributions from the Disabilities Grant, are paid in on the monthly basis. That is the reason why I say that the Loan Council control over the Estimates is revolutionary.

As regards the presentation of the Annual Estimates to Parliament, the fact remains that they do not any longer represent an annual estimate of the finances of the State. The Estimates are framed on the basis of one-twelfth of the actual results as estimated by the Treasurer and submitted by him to the Loan Council for its consideration. The position arises—that Parliament as an organised body cannot contribute to the control of the economic position of Western Aus-

tralia. If we attempt to exercise any such control we do it as individuals. We have to meet Ministers individually and make our representations to each. If we do not adopt that course we find that the expenditure has taken place or the matter has already been finalised, because of the monthly basis of financing to which I have drawn specific attention. I ask members to check my statement when I assert that, during the three years of this Parliament, we have never been asked to express an opinion upon any single item of expenditure. Before control by the Loan Council we, as members of Parliament, had to accept responsibility.

Mr. North: We had full government then.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We have not full government today; we are not consulted and we cannot be consulted. Cabinet is in control. It is not a question of 50 members of this House exercising control, but of eight or nine members of Cabinet doing so. It cannot be otherwise, regardless of what party may be in power or who may constitute the Government of the day.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: What can we do about it?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will come to that point in my own way. Let me give the Committee an illustration to emphasise my point. The construction of the new Perth Hospital is running into about £750,000, but we as a Parliament have never been asked to vote on that expenditure. We know it is being incurred. We have some idea of the circumstances surrounding the raising of the required funds and we know the source from which the money is derived. But we have secured our information from the Press; and it cannot be otherwise. The reason for that is that Cabinet has to submit a report on such matters to the Loan Council and is required to work on the monthly basis.

The Loan Council restricts or expands State economy at will. I emphasise that the State works purely on the monthly basis as I have outlined. The danger of Cabinet control, or rule as it were, is that Cabinet can use its opportunities to retard the activities of those that are obstructive and placate those that are docile and good followers. That constitutes a very grave danger, but it cannot be avoided. That is the position into which we have drifted through Federal control. We have placed a few men in charge. I do not say that they misuse

their power; the point is that we must be sensible of the fact and realise the dangers confronting us. I want to appeal to members to face that position and realise that it confronts them. To bury our heads in the sand and allow present conditions to continue is so dangerous that I submit it cannot continue indefinitely.

Mr. North: The position must be the same in the other States.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No, it is not so objectionable in some; the difficulty is apparent in the three States that labour under disabilities and depend on Federal grants. Three States are suffering most; the remainder gain the advantage. I submit that we cannot escape from the entanglements of the present situation. We voted ourselves into it; we agreed to it; it was not forced upon us! The issue was submitted to us for an expression of our views as electors of Australia, and we answered in the affirmative. At one period an attempt was made to separate and to secede. Today separation is dead. The movement will never be revived. Secession today is further away from us than ever before and, in truth, it was never very close to us. But the position is that the present control is unification to a certain extent, and this unification is gradually but surely strangling the State's assets. We are becoming weaker because of the growing strength of the Federal encroachments. They are getting closer to us, and we are becoming weaker as a result of the penetration. The assets which we have and which we built up during the time when we had full control in this State, when we were developing unrestricted or unhampered by outside influences, are the best assets, but those assets today are suffering because of the unified and Federal control.

As I say, we cannot leave things where they are; we must face the position. We must work this State into a stable economy. Our economy today is not stable because we cannot frame it and cannot direct it. We must either do this or drift further into poverty. We shall always be a suppliant State. Therefore, in so far as we have to go cap-in-hand to the Commonwealth and send Ministers, Treasury officials and others to the Eastern States to put up a case for us, this Parliament is proportionately weakened. So long as we continue to do that, we must realise that we are going backwards, not forwards.

Mr. Marshall: A policy not of co-operation but of domination. We have to take what the Commonwealth gives us.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: As I have pointed out, the Loan Council controls us and we are disciplined by the disabilities Commission. Here is a most extraordinary thing in connection with the disabilities Commission. It deals in its report with "The measurement of relative financial position." This is a criticism of State Parliaments, and we are told how to do our job. I have no objection to that, provided the people of this State understand it. But I say that Parliament is misleading the people of the State by its attitude to Federal matters, leading them to believe that we have some measure of control and some measure of responsibility when we have little. As a matter of fact, with regard to the little we have, we are told we are not doing it right and not doing it in a sound economic way. But this is the extraordinary position. The Commission's report says—

Our procedure involves the assumption that the budget of a State represents the State's effort.

Not, members should note, the effort of the State Parliament! The Commission realises that as regards the States that come under its purview, examination and direction, it is the effort of the Government that has to be reviewed, not the effort of Parliament, because Parliament can play no part. The section dealing with the measurement of relative financial position contains the following paragraph:—

(c) Adjustments to eliminate the effects of windfalls in revenue—

I will deal with that later—

—of emergency expenditure, and of variations of accounting practice.

Then members of the Commission go into details. They do not come to Parliament to educate us, except that we have the privilege of reading their report. They do not come to Parliament and Parliament does not go to them. Therefore, when we appreciate the details of the examination to which we are subjected, it is time members should begin to realise the position.

Then the Commission proceeds to deal with standards. It is extraordinary how the standards are arrived at. From an Australian point of view, from the Commission's point of view and from a unification point of view—or, as a step towards unification—

it may be sound to do as the members of the Commission do. They take the actual expenditure on given items of New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria, and from an examination of the figures of those three States arrive at what they call a standard. The standard is examined from the point of view of the three more affluent States and then a calculation is made of the disabilities this State suffers by comparison. One part of the report says—

(a) The standard of economy in expenditure, involving (i) the scale of social services.

The Commission reviews the social services and is particularly critical regarding them. I want to know exactly where social services start and where they finish. For instance, do the Lieut.-Governor and Government House constitute a social service? In my opinion it is purely a social service—a social matter. It is not an administrative post. It is a link between the Home Government and the State Government, though even that connection is small and flimsy because mostly everything from the Home Government filters through the Commonwealth Government. Therefore the Lieut.-Governor, with all his qualifications and ability, is nevertheless social in his activities. Another extraordinary reference in the report is—

(b) The standard of effort in raising revenue, involving (i) the severity of taxation including local government taxation.

I cannot quite understand how the Commission can bring in local government taxation. I do not think it has any connection whatever.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It has, where there are local water boards.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Perhaps; but the Commission should qualify that remark in some way, because the reference I have quoted conveys that the Commission does take into consideration the local government taxation of this State as compared with that of the standard States to which I have referred. Still under the heading "The measurement of relative financial position," the Commission deals with the scale of social services—(a) education, (b) health, hospitals and charities. I want to ask the Treasurer whether the Commission takes into consideration the fact that we have special taxation for hospitals and charities. Does it take into consideration the income from lotteries? Does it appreciate that that is taxation?

The Premier: It is not!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is taxation, possibly indirect. It is taxation of a section of the community, those that gamble. The position is that large sums of money are raised for lotteries. Those lotteries are approved by Parliament, are established by statute; and the statute invites and encourages people to invest in the lotteries. Then Parliament says, "From every shilling invested in a lottery the State will receive an advantage of so much." The State definitely taxes that investment.

The Premier: No! That is all nonsense.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It is common sense. It might be nonsense to the Premier, but it is common sense for us to realise that that money is contributed by the people of Western Australia, mainly, and that every pound contributed to the lotteries suffers a reduction through an impost placed on it for revenue purposes by the State Government. Therefore in all seriousness I submit that when the Disabilities Commissioners go into these matters they should take into consideration the special circumstances of Western Australia. Let me ask the Treasurer whether that is one of the windfalls I read about just now, windfalls referred to by the Commissioners. Are the lotteries looked upon as windfalls?

The Premier: We are doing too much by way of social services in Western Australia.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: We are not doing half enough!

The Premier: In comparison with the other States we do far too much.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: So we should, because we are advanced!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I agree with the Treasurer that we are penalised in regard to our social services, but I say that we are raising revenue in an extraordinary manner, and that we should get credit for that extra revenue because no other part of the Commonwealth, at all events no other part known to me, raises revenue in the way we raise it.

The Minister for Mines: Oh, nonsense; New South Wales and Queensland both do.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They may do so, but I submit that their conditions are not similar to those of Western Australia. We have lotteries because lotteries have been approved by Parliament. I oppose them, and will always oppose them, as a degrad-

ing method, as a reflection upon our capacity for government and as a reflection upon the people who elect a Ministry which says that we must make statutory provision encouraging people to invest in lotteries in order that we may appropriate part of those investments to maintain charitable institutions and hospitals. I will never accept that view, and I trust that some day the electors will appreciate how a State is discounted when it descends to such methods for raising revenue.

Be all that as it may, what are starting-price operations? Starting-price operations are illegal, and yet they are growing here in intensity and in extent. They are penetrating everywhere, and they are open to the public everywhere. Everybody knows that when passing one of those establishments. Formerly the business was covered up to a certain extent, but to-day there is no covering up. Starting-price betting is now part and parcel of our public life, of our public entertainments, and of public temptations in Western Australia. Starting-price betting is not encouraged by statute but, by Heaven, it is a great revenue producer!

[*Mr. Seward took the Chair.*]

The Premier: It is discouraged by fines.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will come to the fines. Recently the Commissioner of Police drew attention to the growing evil of starting-price betting and appealed to Parliament to try to readjust matters or do something with the evil. I find from a document, to wit "Hansard," that during the last five years over £130,000 has been paid in fines—an average of £26,000 per annum. The lotteries are demoralising, and out of the lotteries comes starting-price betting. Unquestionably, the two are developments of the same kind. If one moves in a downward direction one gets down to a certain environment, and when one degrades the public environment one obtains a public of the standard of the environment.

The Minister for Works: Did not the Trades Hall have a lottery?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I did not. That is one thing I am proud of.

The Minister for Works: You pleaded with me for permission to run the lottery.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: That is an absolute mis-statement of fact. I did no such thing. The point has been raised, and thank goodness I am not trapped! Let us deal with the Trades Hall question. The Midland Junction Trades Hall was built at a cost of about £2,000. Approximately £700 of that amount had been raised by the women of the A.L.P. over the years, during which I was secretary. And I was also secretary while we were engaged in raising revenue to build a Trades Hall, during the period when we were renting premises.

An appeal was made to me to use the lotteries for the purpose of wiping off the debt. We ultimately built the hall, thanks to a loan of £1,300 from the Government Railways Union. That amount, together with the £700 raised by women members of the A.L.P., enabled us to build the £2,000 hall. To the credit of the Government Railways Union be it said that they gave us the money at 3 per cent. interest, I think; certainly the rate was not more than 4 per cent. That is where the money came from to build the Trades Hall.

The Minister for Works: You ran a sweep.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will deal with the Minister in a moment.

The Minister for Works: I advise you to leave the matter alone.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I will not. The £2,000 came from those sources, and the hall was paid for. The liability to the Government Railways Union we paid off by annual contributions. Then I fell ill. It is known what I went through. While I was in hospital there was a change of policy. The member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) had fallen out with the Labour movement, but for some reason or other he was brought in during my absence to run a sweep. It hurt me in hospital when I found out. I had fought against such a method for years, purely from the moral standard, saying, "We will never touch it." Unfortunately, behind my back influences were brought to bear. The way it was done is no credit to the Labour movement.

The Minister for Works: You came and pleaded with me—

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The Minister is a liar. I did not.

The Minister for Works: You are a liar!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I opposed the scheme. The Minister is telling a thing he knows to be untrue. I was in hospital when it was done. I had no part in it. When I had raised the money I paid for the hall. Therefore it is no good putting it over. I have never been associated with shady business of that kind. That can be ascertained from the police records. True, I am Secretary of the Midland District Council, but I was in hospital when this took place, as the records, if searched, will show.

The Premier: Then why raise this?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It was raised in the accusation. The Minister for Works raised it.

Mr. J. H. Smith: That is the way arguments start!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The position is that we are demoralising the public life of this State by these practices. Consider the recent discussion in Synod, where this matter was reviewed! Anyone taking his public life seriously must have felt depressed by that discussion. The explanation put up there is exactly the same as that made by the Minister for Works.

The Church has its orphanages and must provide accommodation. It must get money, as I did for the Trades Hall, in a legitimate way. But there is this easy money to be had somewhere else; and after years of struggling trying to get money legitimately unfortunately the Church decided to fall into line and get it from other sources.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Lowered its plane!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Unquestionably. The Christian plane has been lowered, there is no doubt about that. Public life is being degraded; that is the environment. Take our bench, consider starting-price betting fines in Perth and compare them with those in Midland Junction and Fremantle. Again one sees it. It is demoralising, it is wrong, but because it is tolerated, because it is growing, people say, "It is a natural part of the public life of Western Australia. We have to live in that environment. Why growl about it? Why not fit in? Why try to make oneself distinctive by constantly protesting against the State being degraded to that extent?" I know that it cannot be reformed in my electorate. I am getting criticised and will probably get opposition because of my attitude and ideals. But I will not be silenced.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: But we can do something.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member cannot do anything in Subiaco, neither can I in Midland Junction and Guildford. We can raise our voice and protest. It is this place, Parliament, and Parliament alone, that has to be put right. By concentration we could possibly make one town clean. Guildford, in my electorate, may be made clean, but not the whole electorate; neither can one make the whole State clean because of the cleansing of one electorate. Therefore it is not an individual effort except from a propaganda point of view. It has to be a State effort and a State policy.

Mrs. Cardell Oliver: We can do it, because it is a State policy.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I raise these matters because I view the position seriously. We are not governing wisely; we are not elevating the public life of this State. We must make a higher appeal if we desire to place it on a higher standard than that on which it rests today. We do not believe that everything is going well. It is not! Go round the public parks and observe how the fences are falling down! Visit our schools and ascertain where expenditure is required but money cannot be provided!

Look at the condition of the State's assets, and one will realise that we are slipping back. While we are slipping back we are becoming deficient. It is that poverty, associated with other activities, which is causing all the concern today. Part-time work is the outcome of that policy. Part-time work has degraded the worker, has reduced his opportunity and his strength and placed him in a lower standard. That is another outcome of the State's poverty due to the encroachment of the Federal Parliament. I do not quote that as against our lotteries and starting-price betting, but from the moral point of view and definitely from the economic point of view. These particulars are already in "Hansard" and I have had them checked; 80 per cent. of the lottery tickets sold are bought by wages and salary employees. The figures given to me were higher. I was assured by one of the most observant and largest of sellers that over 80 per cent. of the buyers were wages and salary employees. That means by State legislation 80 per cent. of those workers are taxed in order to assist in maintaining our

charitable institutions and hospitals. I object to that from the worker's point of view. I contend the wealthy should contribute to the needs of charitable institutions and hospitals. The hospital tax in itself is unjust; it is a flat tax whereas it should be a graded tax. To raise money by means of lotteries and starting-price betting fines is bad because it is a special impost on our workers. Parliament should not encourage it, should not tolerate it.

We are talking in Parliament of post-war reconstruction. I submit that it is reconstruction within the State. How can anyone take seriously that talk about a new order when we are permitting such things to continue? Unless we put our own place in order reconstruction will come to this State Parliament like a thunderclap. We shall be put in our places as incompetent, unable to govern a country soundly and well. Reconstruction will come when we are in a poverty-stricken condition and we shall not be strong enough to resist it. I submit that this state of affairs cannot continue. What is wanted is a special Parliamentary committee to investigate the whole question. No party can do it; it is beyond party. It is a matter that the whole Parliament must go into. If it is right for the Federal Parliament to have a special Disabilities Commission, it is right for this Parliament to have the protection of an organised committee capable of coping with the special circumstances and weaknesses of the times. Today the Disabilities Commission takes evidence from public servants. No organised views of Parliament are submitted to it. We are doing, or are supposed to be doing things, but our activities are explained, if they can be explained, by civil servants who give evidence.

Mr. Withers: According to Sir George Pearce, Mr. Reid put up a wonderfully good case!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Undoubtedly! I am not reflecting on him. But the civil servants of this State are not governing; they are not in control of the State; they are servants of the community. It is the State Government that the Disabilities Commission should interview. The State Parliament ought to protect Western Australia against misunderstandings and wrong ideas entertained by the Disabilities Commission, and even by the

Loan Council. The people of this State should have a parliamentary committee capable of handling this difficult and dangerous policy of today, so as to prevent unification coming in like a thunderclap in such a form that we will be unprepared for it.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: A parliamentary vigilance committee is needed.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not care what it is called so long as there is somebody to review the position and take the matter seriously. In 1901, when I first entered Parliament, we had control of defence. We also controlled the Customs, the Post Office, and loan raising; in fact, we controlled everything. In those days there were 80 members of Parliament and there were six full Ministers and one Honorary Minister.

Mr. North: With half the population, too!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Let us review the responsibilities of which we have been deprived. We have no control over defence or over the Post Office, or over loan raising, but we still have 80 members of Parliament, seven full Ministers and one Honorary Minister.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Eight full Ministers and one Honorary Minister!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: During the regime of the Leake Government there were six full Ministers and two Honorary Ministers. Let us look at what it all means. It means that we cannot go on as we are. The cost of government in this State is 4s. 8d. per head of population.

The Premier: You are a Jeremiah!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We need a Jeremiah to bring these things home to the people of Western Australia!

The Minister for Mines: What was the population in 1901?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not know, but it was very small compared with that of today. Nevertheless the Government had a big responsibility because in those days the State was developing. The gold-fields people were just beginning to demand their rights and other districts, particularly Fremantle, were developing at an enormous pace. Although the population was small the responsibilities were great. The flow from other parts was so great that the Government of the day had a big burden to carry. The main point is that the cost of

Parliament and of the activities associated with Parliament in this State is 4s. 8d. per head of population. The Commonwealth figure is 1s. 8d., and figures for the other States are as follows:—New South Wales, 1s. 11d.; Victoria, 1s. 5d.; Queensland, 2s. 7d.; South Australia, 3s. 9d.; and Tasmania, 4s. 2d. The average for all the States is 3s. 11d.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Are those last year's figures?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: They are the latest I have, covering 1937-38. We must appreciate the fact that we are slipping back, and if we continue to do so, and our position grows weaker, our powers of resistance and negotiation will be small in proportion. I question whether we should continue to maintain a Lieut.-Governor and a Government House. I do not think we should try to do so. I do not believe we need an Agent General today, nor do I consider he has been wanted for a long while. We do not need a Licensing Board when we have a magistracy capable of doing the work. There are other boards within the State whose activities should be reviewed, because such functions limit more necessary activities.

The social services will suffer because of Federal encroachment and, if we can reduce expenditure, that will enable us to maintain those services. We should attempt to do so. It would be worth while for us to have a special committee of Parliament whose duty was to check up on the Disabilities Commission, to watch its operations and investigate its figures and make a comparison of the treatment of this State and other States by the Loan Council. We can do that because we are not altogether down and out. But if we neglect to do it the drift will be serious. The new order that I suggest is the acquisition of a little more knowledge and the exhibition of greater determination by the State Parliament.

The Minister for Mines: That will not get you far.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am just pointing out things as I see them and I accept responsibility for what I say. I believe it would be all to the good if my suggestion of appointing a special parliamentary committee to go into these matters, instead of leaving it to civil servants to make representations to the Disabilities Commission, were agreed to.

I do not propose to labour the question any further, but we have to realise that there are other activities that need a good deal of watching. Take the debate the other night on the Companies Act and the association with company law of the late Harry Boan. I am not convinced about that. At the moment I do not believe that the proper probate tax has been paid. I would not mind if probate was subject to the scrutiny of the Taxation Department.

Mr. Abbott: It is!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: No. Probate is purely a State activity.

Mr. Abbott: They work in with the department.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I have had a good deal to do with this matter. I have had to deal with estates of under £500, and I always got all the documents and signed them at the Crown Law Department.

Mr. McDonald: I am afraid the Probate Department always gets the best of it.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The hon. member will not dispute that it is a State activity.

Mr. McDonald: And Federal.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Yes, and Federal; but I am speaking about the State and it is my opinion that our State Crown Law Department is not quite up to matters of this kind.

Mr. Abbott: The Crown Law Department does not attend to them.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Somebody should! I do not consider this matter has received the attention it demands.

Mr. Abbott: It has not been dealt with yet.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: It has been dealt with in this House, and an announcement has been made in the public Press in regard to exactly how the amount upon which probate was paid, or is to be paid, was assessed.

Mr. Watts: It is still under review.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If that is so it can be left to see how it pans out. I do not say I understand it, but I am concerned about it. I think it something which requires very close investigation.

The Premier: It is getting it, too.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I am glad to hear that, and particularly glad to hear that the matter is not finalised but is still being reviewed. The figures I heard made me think it necessary that the matter be closely

investigated. I have reviewed the State as I see it, and I do it on my responsibility as a State member. I have had a good deal of experience, and I have no hesitation in saying that the position in this State is serious. It is not because of the Government—this Government is as good as any Government—it is because of the circumstances under which the Government operates, and because of the fact that the State Parliament has ceased to be an organised body which can assist Governments in the general administration of the State affairs. I, therefore, appeal to members to realise our position, and appreciate that our assets are depreciating; that non-essentials exist and essentials are being starved, and that it is all due to the fact that, in our struggle to stand up against this small amount of revenue, the enormous expenditure over a huge area is enveloping us in a condition of hopelessness.

The matter must be taken seriously; and unless I tell my electors what should be done to achieve stable economy in Western Australia I will not do my job thoroughly. The limited power of the State Parliament should also be brought before electors. It is wrong to make them believe we can do anything. The State Parliament is under the control of the Federal authority today, and it, together with the Disabilities Commission, is assisting the Loan Council to direct the affairs of this State to a speeding up of the day of complete unification. It is a sad thing to see, particularly in this State, how unification can gradually but surely be accomplished. The fact that we are so poverty-stricken gives the opportunity to do it in an organised way without any protest; and as it is our turn today, so it will be the turn of other States tomorrow.

The Premier: We are not poverty-stricken! The standard of living here is higher than in any other State!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I do not like the position of the assets of this State. I know sufficient of the position of assets in this State to know that they have not been wonderfully well maintained.

The Premier: Why are we poverty-stricken?

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Because our assets are not being maintained at the proper standard, and we are resorting to tactics, which are no credit to the Government, to raise revenue to maintain these standards.

The Premier: We are not poverty-stricken!

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: We are forcing workers to contribute to the maintenance of our charitable institutions and hospitals. It is not true economy to penalise the worker to the advantage of the rich. The rich are not buying lottery tickets; they are not investing in starting price betting. It is the workers on salaries and wages who do these things. That is the kind of economy I am against. I want a better and higher standard, and I want the workers to get it. I want them, however, to get it cleanly and in a healthy atmosphere so that they, and their families, will be elevated and not degraded by having to live in an atmosphere which is demoralising, and not elevating.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [9.45]: The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) at the beginning of his address told this Committee what it should do, and when it should do it. Why should he take on himself the right to tell members what they should do?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I want members to get practical results.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I resent that type of advice.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is very sound advice.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member also made a complaint about the manner in which the Estimates are presented to this Committee. I have a keen and distinct recollection of the time when he was a Minister of the Crown, and I do not see any difference in the present manner of tabling the Estimates.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is exactly what I say.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. NEEDHAM: I was led to believe from the member's remarks that when he was a Minister of the Crown the Estimates were dealt with differently.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I did not say that at all. I said the Loan Council did not have a hand in the Estimates.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member did qualify the statement by including the Loan Council. We know that is something by which the Government today is bound. The hon. member also said that the Estimates resulted from Cabinet, and not from Parliament. He knows perfectly well that this Parliament is bound by the Loan Council

just as Cabinet is. Whatever sovereign rights this Parliament had have been taken from it because of that.

The Premier: No!

Mr. NEEDHAM: For that reason I could not follow his arguments when he tried to make out that there had been at some previous time a better way of presenting the Estimates than there is today. He went on to speak about the cost of Government. To my mind there is no need for a State Governor; but he went further and said that there is no need for an Agent-General.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Neither there is!

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member himself would have been very glad to have gone to London as Agent-General.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And he would have made a very good job of it too.

Mr. NEEDHAM: But he is not the Agent-General. Whilst I do not question his sincerity I cannot recognise any consistency in his argument, because if his own desires had been satisfied he would have been in London during this debate, rather than here.

The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) suggested the introduction of an innovation in this Parliament in that he claimed members should be allowed to read their speeches. I cannot agree with that suggestion. He pointed out that some Ministers read their speeches, and because of that advocated the practice becoming general and having application to private members.

The Minister for Mines: Ministers do not read speeches; they give information to the House.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The hon. member suggested that if members were allowed to read their speeches their utterances would be correspondingly improved. I cannot subscribe to that. I realise the necessity for Ministers being allowed to read their speeches for they cannot be expected to be intimately acquainted with all the details associated with the legislation they are called upon to present. In the circumstances it is only right that they should be accorded the privilege of reading such portions of their speeches as relate to subjects with which they are not fully acquainted. I go further and say that the leaders of parties sitting in Opposition should have the same right extended to them.

I sympathise with the Leader of the Opposition who, I appreciate, cannot possibly be intimately acquainted with all the subjects he is called upon to handle, sometimes at short notice. I had four years' experience when occupying a somewhat similar position in the Senate, and I know the difficulties with which one so placed is confronted. On the other hand, to suggest that the rule regarding speeches should have general application does not connote, to my mind, that an improvement would be effected in the calibre of the speeches delivered in this Chamber. What I do think would help towards that end would be an alteration of the Standing Orders to impose a limitation upon the duration of speeches.

Mr. North: Hear, hear! Speeches should be shortened.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I think that would certainly help to improve the quality of speeches delivered in the House.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: And they could be broadcast.

The Minister for Mines: Why impose that additional suffering upon the people?

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You would not call anyone a liar then.

The Minister for Mines: And you would not talk as you did on one occasion.

Mr. NEEDHAM: If a limitation were placed upon the duration of speeches, there would be greater concentration of thought and condensation of language. In the Federal Parliament there is such a time limit. When the alteration was suggested in the Senate I strongly opposed it. I thought an interference with the rights and liberties of members was involved. I lived to alter my opinion. I found it was better to have a time limit imposed on speeches than to have no limit at all. In the Senate Ministers were allowed an hour and a half for second reading speeches and for those delivered in connection with the Address-in-reply or the Budget, while an hour was allowed for private members. For debates in Committee there was a limit of 15 minutes. I reiterate that rather than permit the reading of speeches with a view to improving the quality of our deliberations, I would prefer the alteration of the Standing Orders to impose a time limit.

The member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) quoted the late Frank Anstey in support of his argument in favour of

the reading of speeches. He could not have been more unfortunate in his choice. Frank Anstey was looked upon as the finest speaker in the House of Representatives, an honour that was at one time attributed to Alfred Deakin. In my hearing, Deakin said that he was not in the same oratorical flight as Frank Anstey—and Frank Anstey never read a speech. Deakin paid the same tribute to Frank Anstey as did William Ewart Gladstone in the House of Commons to Thomas Sexton, a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Regarded himself as the finest speaker in the House of Commons, Gladstone said he was not, and that he gave that prize to Thomas Sexton. Frank Anstey was a man who spent much time in the preparation of his speeches, but he never used a note when delivering them. On one occasion, the Melbourne "Age," which at that time was not inclined to look with very much favour upon Labour members, devoted two columns to his second reading speech on the Australian Note Issue Bill. In the course of that utterance he traversed the history of note issues in different parts of the world, and during the whole time he was speaking he did not once consult his notes. At any rate, I cannot lend my approval to the suggestion of the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe that members generally should be allowed to read their speeches.

During the course of the debate references have been made to Western Australia and its participation in war industries. I agree with those who have contended that this State has not been treated satisfactorily in that respect. We must all deplore the fact that Australia and the Empire are engaged in a colossal war, but we must recognise that the war itself has helped Western Australia in the development of its secondary industries, and indeed has had that effect throughout the Commonwealth. Australia would not be in her present position of being able to play such a wonderful part in the war had it not been for the policy pursued by the Federal Labour Government in 1910-15.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There is altogether too much conversation going on between members.

Mr. NEEDHAM: It may be as well to refer briefly to the fact that in 1910-15 the Labour Government under Andrew Fisher was in power in the Federal arena. As a result of the policy it adopted, Australia

was able to play a big part not only in the last war but in the present conflagration. That Labour Government established the Australian Navy, a college at Jervis Bay for the training of officers for the Navy, a military college at Duntroon, the Commonwealth Woollen Mills, the Commonwealth Shipping Line, the Commonwealth Harness and Saddlery Factory and Remount Depot, and a number of other public utilities, the output from all of which was available during the 1914-18 war and, of course, has helped to place Australia in an even better position today from that point of view.

Furthermore, the Scullin Government of 1929-31 through its tariff, which was framed for the intensification and protection of Australia's industries, was the means of enabling the Commonwealth to accomplish what has been done in providing for the requirements of our Fighting Forces. Reference has been made to the delays that are taking place in deliveries under war contracts in this State. A little while ago attempts were made to get electric motors manufactured here. A motor that was made locally passed a University test, but that did not satisfy the Commonwealth authorities and the work was done in the Eastern States. We ought to insist upon decentralisation so that the skilled artisans in this State will be able to go ahead with war work.

The Leader of the Opposition, in his speech on the Address-in-reply debate, referred to the absence of skilled labour. He used these words—

The great advantage our common enemy has at present is the number of trained men at its disposal.

I do not think the Leader of the Opposition really understood the import of his statement. He did not say anything about the population of the common enemy as against our population. He continued—

In Germany, young men are placed in camps where they are trained thoroughly and efficiently.

Again I venture to say the Leader of the Opposition did not know the import of his remarks. Surely he knows that in Germany young men are put into labour camps and trained there! That is where Hitler got his men. I know the hon. member is not in sympathy with that sort of thing.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I did not suggest it. I said that is where we are having difficulty.

[Mr. Withers resumed the Chair.]

Mr. NEEDHAM: The young men in Germany were taken from their homes and placed in labour camps.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, but I did not say that we ought to place our men in labour camps.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That is the construction that might be placed on the hon. member's remarks.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Of course, that is what you would say.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I want to prevent that construction from being placed on his remarks. The hon. member added—

Thus a complete machine is operating against our Empire.

We are not going to put men into concentration camps in order to teach them trades. When speaking on the Address-in-Reply I pointed out that, had it not been for the apprenticeship system brought into being by the trade union movement, we would not have had the skilled men we have today.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We have very few.

Mr. Abbott: We would probably have had more.

Mr. NEEDHAM: No, we would not have had more. I refer the member for North Perth to the experience of the Eastern States where the apprenticeship system is not as rigid or strict as it is here. The system here is controlled by a board; the system in the Eastern States is unregulated and unrestricted. I deny that there is a shortage of skilled labour in the Eastern States. The argument of the member for North Perth that we would probably have had more skilled men falls to the ground. Let me tell him that, but for our apprenticeship system established by the trade unions, we might have had artisans but not skilled men.

There was a system of regulating apprenticeships, but when the Arbitration Court was brought into existence, provision was made for an apprenticeship board. The man who was responsible for that is the man who I am sorry to say will, in a few weeks time, retire from the bench of the Arbitration Court. I refer to Dr. W. Somerville. He was responsible for the system we have today; due to his initiative apprentices have been trained.

Hon. N. Keenan: Who told you that?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am telling the hon. member. If he can satisfy me that any man other than Dr. Somerville was responsible, I would be glad to hear it.

Hon. N. Keenan: Do you know when the first Industrial Arbitration Act was passed?

Mr. NEEDHAM: Yes.

Hon. N. Keenan: When?

Mr. NEEDHAM: In 1902.

Mr. Marshall: That fixes the member for Nedlands.

Hon. N. Keenan: You are wrong.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am not wrong.

Hon. N. Keenan: In 1898.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That was not an arbitration law; I am speaking of the real thing.

The Minister for Mines: That was a baby.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Yes. Will the hon. member tell me that, under that law, anybody suggested the regulation of apprenticeships? He cannot. Somerville was the man who was the means of getting the teaching and examination of apprentices provided for by regulation; and a breach of those regulations is a breach of the law. I repeat that, but for our apprenticeship system, there would have been a still greater shortage of skilled labour. If effect were given to the ideas of the member for North Perth regarding the apprenticeship system, we might have half-baked tradesmen but not really skilled men. When I remind members that we have men of sufficiently high skill to manufacture aeroplanes in this country, they should realise that the system of apprenticeships adopted by the trade unions is a sound one.

The CHAIRMAN: I draw attention to the fact that too much conversation is being indulged in by members, and that the "Hansard" reporters cannot possibly hear what the speaker is saying.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I wish to impress upon members that when the war occurred we had the skilled men here to do the work.

Hon. N. Keenan: Are they better than those in the Eastern States?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I venture to say that the tradesmen in this State are equal if not superior to any tradesmen anywhere, and I say that after having seen much of their work at Midland Junction. I speak as a man who had some years of experience in the iron trade in the Old Country and in Australia. The work of the Midland Junction workshops, including war work, I venture to say cannot be excelled in any part of the Empire. So much for that.

The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) on the Address-in-reply referred to the speech of the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat), who said he still remained in and supported the party favouring unification, the handing-over of all the Australian States to one centralised Government at Canberra, which would be controlled by Sydney and Melbourne as was the case already. If we in this State are governed by Sydney and Canberra today, could we be in a worse condition under unification?

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The remarkable thing about that reference is that the member for Avon supports a body that permitted the unification of the purse. The hon. member was not a member of this Chamber when the Mitchell Government handed over the State Savings Bank to the Commonwealth. Once that was done, the sovereignty of the State was gone. As a matter of fact, no one knows better than does the member for Avon what was the effect of that decision. No one knows better than he that the man or woman who controls the purse controls the household. I opposed the handing-over of our Savings Bank in the Federal Parliament and I opposed it in Western Australia. The member for York (Hon. C. G. Latham), however, supported the proposal. And yet members opposite growl at this party for advocating unification! Once we handed over, through the Financial Agreement, the control of our borrowing and spending powers, we handed over the whole government of this State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Labour Party of this State absolutely advocated that.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I opposed it. It is useless to say that the Labour Party advocates unification and one central government. The party in Opposition here supported the very thing equivalent to unification, namely, the control of the purse.

Hon. N. Keenan: When was the Financial Agreement adopted in this State?

Mr. NEEDHAM: Some time in 1924 or 1925.

Mr. McDonald: In 1926.

Mr. NEEDHAM: There was a referendum.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And the Collier Government introduced the necessary Bill.

Mr. NEEDHAM: There is unification of the purse. The present Government of this State and every other State Government must go cap in hand to the Loan Council, and then the Loan Council goes cap in hand to the Commonwealth and the trading banks before being able to get a penny to carry on with.

Mr. Seward: Would you sooner go back to the old method of each State competing for the money?

Mr. NEEDHAM: To my mind it was wrong to find two or three States in the Loan market at the same time. There could have been control of borrowing without unification, particularly in view of the existence of a so-called Commonwealth Bank. The State Treasurers would eventually have to abide by the decision of the Loan Council altogether—or of those who control the Loan Council, namely, the trading banks of Australia. That is the whole position. So, when it is all boiled down the trading banks of Australia then decide what amount of money this Government will get, or any other State Government and equally the Commonwealth Government. I was never in favour of different States competing with each other in the Loan market either in Australia or oversea; but that could have been corrected without doing what has been done—the unification of the public purse. The member for Avon can declaim as long as he likes, but by unification of the purse we have in effect unification of the States.

Mr. BERRY: I move—

That progress be reported.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	14
Noes	..	..	..	19
				—
Majority against	..			5
				—

AYES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Mann
Mr. Berry	Mr. McDonald
Mr. Boyle	Mr. McLarty
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Seward
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Willmott
Mr. Latham	Mr. Doney

(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Pantou
Mr. Fox	Mr. Raphael
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Styauts
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Triat
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Cross
Mr. Nulsen	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.	
AYES.	NOES.
Mr. J. H. Smith	Mr. Holman

Motion thus negatived.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore) [10.20]: I am sorry for the delay and waste of time that has just taken place. I was under the impression that the House wished to adjourn at half-past ten. The division was, as I said, a waste of time and I am sorry it occurred. When the member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) was uttering his wise words and making acute but unnecessary criticism, he suggested that the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) was not observing the rules of debate in the way the former member would like. That was unfair. Personally, I consider the member for Mt. Magnet made an able contribution to the debate. The charge that he did not discuss the Estimates particularly, or some aspect of them, while the Minister in charge was present is in my opinion unadulterated "hooley."

Mr. Marshall: The Minister happened to be in his seat while the member for Mt. Magnet was speaking.

Mr. BERRY: I agree with the member for Murchison. The member for Guildford-Midland said that we must not discuss Commonwealth matters in this House while dealing with the Estimates. We must not, he said, discuss anything extraneous to the Estimates. He said that the Budget discussion was a full-dress rehearsal, but, for the love of "heck" he stood up and himself discussed all the matters about which he criticised the member for Mt. Magnet and he took nearly two hours to do it. Anyhow, it is not my intention to criticise the member for Guildford-Midland for doing that. He has the same right to his say as has the member for Mt. Magnet. So long as I do not give offence to you, Mr. Chairman, I propose to say what I like in this Chamber.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. BERRY: As to the Estimates, I think it a matter for congratulation that there is a surplus of £11,111 5s. 1d. this year. That is an extremely good effort in war time, particularly when it was expected there would be a deficiency of £166,697. As the Premier pointed out, that meant the State made good to the extent of £177,808. That, of course, is a Chinaman's profit; neverthe-

less it is a nice one, more particularly as the year was not altogether an easy one. It was probably one of the most trying years this or any other Government of the State has had. We have had bad seasons, droughts, trouble over hay—in fact, we had one trouble after another. The result is, therefore, definitely good.

Leaving that subject I shall now pass to the more immediate question of secondary industries, and their relationship to the war. This is our third year of war. We are entering upon the third year of a struggle which, believe me, must be won by us. I am satisfied that Western Australia has done much. We are told by the Eastern States that Australia's war effort is 100 per cent. It is not; and it cannot be while the people of one State are not taking their 100 per cent. share. We owe that effort to our boys oversea. We should do everything possible, by will-power and determination, to ensure that those boys shall return to Australia and in the greatest number possible. As I said in my speech on the Address-in-reply, our boys oversea are Australia's heritage. They are Australia tomorrow. We may be Australia today; some of us may be Australia yesterday, but our sons oversea are Australia tomorrow. It, therefore, behoves this State, indeed every part of the British Empire, to do its utmost. We must insist upon the Commonwealth Government and the State Government—but the Commonwealth Government in particular—affording us every opportunity to make a stupendous effort to provide everything possible for the safety of our soldiers.

I shall not repeat what I said on the Address-in-reply debate with regard to ship-building, but the time has arrived when we must consider such matters. In fact, we must do more than consider them; we have been doing that for two years—we must do them. We must build those ships! We must start those factories! We must develop our resources! We must win the war! Knowing the English people as I do I believe we are capable of the effort, but I sincerely wish we were not wasting so much time in hopeless chatter. I do not wish it to be inferred from those remarks that I consider we have not done anything. I wish to make it clear that in my opinion we have not yet done enough; of that I am sure. I leave it for members to support me in every possible way in what I have said.

I now pass on to another matter, perhaps not quite so serious. I shall deal with the question of fish. A few days ago the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) asked some questions in this Chamber about the price of fish. The price of fish in Western Australia will always be high.

Mr. Marshall: So will the smell!

Mr. BERRY: The price will remain high so long as we fail to obtain what we have been requesting for 18 months, and that is a fisheries research vessel. In common with many professional fishermen, I am of opinion that fish on our inner coast are not present in sufficient numbers to prevent the price from rising every now and then. The fish for the most part are migratory; they come here, breed and leave. Unfortunately, our tendency is to net them while they are in spawn. That means that once these fish have been caught there can be no replacement. Because of our destruction of fish in spawn, as one year follows another, the migratory shoals must become less and less and the price of fish become higher and higher. I suggest that the reason for the constantly-recurring increase in the price of fish is that our fishing grounds are not in the immediate vicinity of the coast. If we had a fisheries research vessel such as is desired, I think it would be found eventually that fish were present on the sloping portions of the Continental shelf in such abundance as to make quite unnecessary further questions such as those asked by the member for West Perth the other night.

I hope that a fisheries research vessel will be obtained. The attempt to secure one has been fraught with the most extraordinary difficulties. I understand that 18 months ago an estimate was made and an offer furnished to the State Government for the construction of a vessel at a cost of £7,000. When tenders were called locally it was found that the most suitable was one of £8,240. Because of the difference in the two prices some hitch appears to have occurred between the Commonwealth Government and the State Government, and we were told that the order, which should have been placed in Western Australia, was to be placed in the Eastern States. Consequently I communicated with the Prime Minister and asked him if he would reconsider his decision, and have the vessel made locally. To my astonishment he wrote and asked me what I was talking about. He said the story I told—

which I had from a responsible source—was incorrect. I am also given to understand that some official has come to Western Australia and investigated the position, and that a target price of £8,250 was fixed at Fremantle. That, however, does not mean anything because the construction of the vessel has not been put in hand.

There is another story to the effect that this boat, which could be made here, will not be built in Western Australia because it is possible, for the sum of £5,000, to buy in the Eastern States a second-hand vessel that will serve the purpose. I contend that it would cost a great deal to bring such a vessel from the Eastern States to Western Australia, no matter by what route it came, and it would be very much better if a vessel were constructed here. While I congratulate the Treasurer on his £11,111 surplus, I think that should have been reduced by a few thousand pounds to permit of a fisheries boat being built here.

The Treasurer told us that amongst his many difficulties was that of the lost markets of the primary producers. We all know, or we should know, that the future for our primary products is very serious. We know that there will probably be a huge surplus of wheat, lambs and many other commodities. We understand the difficulties and the embarrassment of such surpluses, but I suggest that had we built some ships we might have been able to remove a large part of those commodities. I know that people in Colombo are trying to obtain control by purchase of that little ship we built in Australia, the "King Bay," to take goods from this State to Colombo.

We made a mistake during the first two years of the war in not facing this problem and grappling with the building of ships at an earlier date. That we can undertake this work I have not the slightest doubt, and that we will find the cost has risen by 40 per cent. in the last two years is certain. In spite of the increased cost, however, and in spite of the contention that there is no money available for this purpose, it is essential for us to build vessels in order that we may export our surplus commodities to other parts of the British Empire. Do not let us continue talking a lot of balderdash about beating Hitler in the kitchen by inducing the remnant of the people left in this country to eat lamb. Let us send this commodity to the

soldiers; let us send it in tins or in any way that is thought best. But let us send it!

The Minister for Mines: They want raw beef!

Mr. BERRY: Let us build ships and send our products overseas. The sooner we do that the sooner we will measure up to the big effort that has to be made to beat Hitler. Today's war news is not gratifying to us, and I maintain that every step that Hitler takes in Russia constitutes two steps nearer to Australia. It is only by matching our wits with those of Hitler that we will retard his progress. I do not hesitate to assert that we will not beat Hitler by indulging in Party political strife in Canberra or by industrial disputes, disorganisation and stupidity in the Eastern States or anywhere else. I agree with the statement of the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat) that there have been very few, if any, industrial troubles in this State. There was, of course, the one referred to by my friend on my right in which a band of little girls in the shops ran out and caused a disturbance for a moment.

The Minister for Mines: That was not a strike; that was only a picnic.

Mr. BERRY: It was a strike all right; it does not matter what the Minister thinks. I agree that there have been few troubles in this State; certainly no serious industrial disputes, and I think Labour in Western Australia is to be congratulated. I remember that when I came from Singapore to Australia, during the years from 1924 to 1930, I always experienced greater courtesy and met nicer people on the wharves of Western Australia than I found in the Eastern States, and I belong to the Eastern States.

The question of the fixation of prices was referred to by the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat). He properly criticised the profiteering experts who were also condemned by the member for East Perth (Mr. Hughes) the other night. Profiteering is still going on. People in the Eastern States, and probably in the West, are making undue profits. Perhaps even the worker in the Eastern States is profiteering. The demand for higher wages, and still higher wages, is just as much a form of profiteering as anything else. These people, however, may have certain rights. If the employer makes huge sums of money from the efforts of the workers, then he has to face his re-

sponsibility and see that the men who make that money for him get a fair crack of the whip.

The member for Mt. Magnet drew the attention of this Committee to the position of tea. I do not know how any person in Australia can control the price of tea, provided the price is fixed in the countries where it is produced. If the people in Java, India and Ceylon elect to demand a higher price, which they can get, I do not think any price fixing commissioner in this State can do anything about it. I myself am interested in rubber. Nobody in Australia is in a position to say what will be the price of rubber tomorrow in Singapore.

Mr. W. Hegney: The price is elastic.

Mr. BERRY: Yes. It is also resilient, like the member for Irwin-Moore. The price for commodities like tea cannot be fixed. It would be well to find out whether these rises which occur, as suggested by the member for Mt. Magnet, on Monday morning with such regularity are due to conditions in Australia or whether they are the outcome of rises in a market over which nobody has control, except the people who are in the market.

A little while ago I was told on very good authority that the Singapore ships leave Australia loaded to the Plimsoll but that when they return they do so with an average of something like 650 tons of available empty space. I suggested by question that that space should be occupied by petrol. All sorts of complications arise, however. If there are more than 13 cases of petrol on a ship it must not carry passengers. But in a time of emergency, when petrol is needed by virtue of that very emergency, and it is necessary for people to travel from those countries, they should take the risk, the same as anyone else does. The soldier going overseas on a ship takes a risk, and perhaps a greater one when he leaves the ship. People who travel on ships in time of war should have no special consideration. Had this matter been put before the Singapore Government it would have been agreed to, I believe, and we could have got our benzine down. It seems, however, to be beyond the ken of trading intelligence to do these things.

I do not know whether anyone blends tea here, but the price of tea in the countries from which it is exported could be discovered, and the difficulties connected

with tea shortages could most certainly be overcome. Many funny things occur in Australia because we do not know what is happening; or perhaps it suits somebody's pocket for us to be immersed in these troubles. That is a great pity. Possibly many things we require could be brought down. We have certainly sent away as much as people in those countries need.

The war effort in Australia includes the primary producer, and again we come back to this question: Where are our ships? The only answer we get is from Echo. This is the third year of the war and we are in a worse plight than when it commenced in 1939. It behoves us to see that that plight is rectified. It is in our own individual selfish interests to see that it is done apart from the great value it will be to those boys oversea, about whom I spoke earlier. While on the subject of surpluses, I point out that an effort was made by goodwill people to arrange aid for Russia. That is very proper. The idea is to send an ambulance.

The Minister for Mines: They will probably need an undertaker.

Mr. BERRY: Yes, and we might need one here, too. In a matter of a few months something of infinitely more value to those people than ambulances will be required—the surpluses which today we say are embarrassing. Again, we come back to the question of ships. I hope the question will not be lost sight of, because it is the medium between us and progress. There is no progress without maritime progress. When the war is over we will experience a dearth of ships, so that even the much-despised wooden ships will be of great value. Where are these ships coming from? America is building at an enormous rate, but that will not answer our problem. Whoever has the biggest mercantile marine fleet when the war is over will be the power in the world. Let us see that it is the British Empire, with Australia well in the lead!

A few days ago we had several vessels here, in Australia, from Soviet Russia. Did they come to play marbles? No. They came here looking for food. These ships are the forerunners of a tremendous demand from this country, to avert starvation in Europe, Russia and perhaps Asia. We can stop that starvation and save the world, and beat Hit-

ler, only if we have the ships. I am not allowed, I understand, to quote from "Hansard," or to read it.

Mr. Marshall: You can do anything until you are stopped.

Mr. BERRY: Unfortunately I have lost the place. When the Premier was speaking he drew attention to an important point. I think few of us realised what he said and I did not appreciate the importance of it until I read his statement in "Hansard." He mentioned that £10,000 had been provided for what he described as election expenditure. In the course of his remarks the Premier said—

If members feel that the expenditure is not justified and that the general election should not be held, I should be only too happy to accede to their request that the election be postponed.

Mr. J. Hegney: What do you think about that?

Mr. Fox: It is a fair offer.

Mr. BERRY: The Premier, by way of parenthesis, suggested that the Leader of the Opposition looked at him when he said that—presumably critically.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I knew how facetious the Premier was in making the statement.

Mr. BERRY: On the contrary, I regard the Premier's statement as pregnant with importance. I feel that at a time like the present, in view of the position to which I have referred during the course of my remarks, the Premier's assertion was important. The conditions I have in mind centre largely in the fact that Hitler is proving so successful in his invasion of Russia; we have only to watch the developments on the map to realise how successful he has been. I have pointed to the great need for curtailing expenditure. I state definitely that the State elections should be postponed.

Mr. Fox: Indefinitely?

Mr. BERRY: I do not know about that. All I say is that at present they should be postponed as one means by which economies could be effected. I further suggest that even if the elections are held, the result will not make very much difference in the constitution of this House. However, the Premier asked us for our views and said that if they were favourable he would be happy to accept a suggestion that the election should be postponed.

Mr. J. Hegney: Move accordingly!

Mr. BERRY: How can I move in that direction? Do not be childish!

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. BERRY: I do not view this matter lightly. I think the Premier was right in making that suggestion, and if he were to persist with it I believe he would have the support of the people. I do not think the State Parliament is worth the expenditure involved in the election, nor does anyone else. I agree that we must have a State Parliament, but in a time of crisis such as the present this Parliament as an institution is not worth the expenditure of £10,000 on an election, and possibly an additional £20,000 that will be spent by those participating in the campaign. An election involves the expenditure of quite a lot of money. The people want national unity and desire a national Government. They do not want the hare-brained thing that we have in Canberra. What we have will not win the war; it could not win its way out of a wet bag. The Federal Government is a disgrace to Australia.

The Minister for Works: Those two Independents are doing it, you know.

Mr. BERRY: They do not make any difference. The Minister for Works may choose to be facetious. I meant that. The Minister surely knows that a war is in progress. The people of Australia are sick to death of this stupid party business that costs the Commonwealth so much.

The Minister for Works: You ought to bring Wilson here.

Mr. BERRY: Wilson—fiddlesticks!

Mr. Needham: I wonder what Wilson thinks about it?

Mr. BERRY: Here is an opportunity to serve the country. Let us postpone the election and let the Premier seek the co-operation of the leaders of the Opposition and the National Party.

Mr. J. Hegney: What about the Independents?

Mr. BERRY: The longer I sit here with the hon. member, the more I want to go home. Some members have displayed a good deal of levity, but I notice that the Premier is not smiling. I believe the Premier was sincere in his suggestion, and I agree with his point of view. If he thinks members want merely to retain their seats in Parliament, he can disabuse his mind so far as I am

concerned. If it were for the good of the country for me to vacate my seat tomorrow, I would do so.

The Minister for Mines: Leave that to the electors.

Mr. BERRY: I hope this matter will receive serious consideration, and that the intelligence displayed by certain members of Cabinet will be sufficient to induce the remainder, even though they include at least one who sits grinning like a Cheshire cat when a serious suggestion is advanced, to adopt the course indicated by the Premier.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.56 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 7th October, 1941.

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

QUESTION—LIQUID FRUIT COMPANY.

Hon. C. F. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the Government made any monetary advances to the Liquid Fruit Company? 2, Has the Government made any promise to assist the company financially? 3, If any advance, guarantee, or financial assistance has been given, what is—(a) the value of such; (b) the reasons for assistance; (c) what protection has the Government got for any assistance rendered?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, Yes. 2, See answer to No. 1. 3, (a) It is the policy of the Government to treat such matters as confidential; (b) It is the policy

of the Department of Industrial Development to encourage secondary industries that provide an outlet for primary products. There are definite indications that if fruit juices are not produced locally, growing demand for them will be met by imports. Fruit juices from America are already being sold locally; (c) Security over land, buildings, and plant.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILLS (4)—THIRD READING.

1, Distress for Rent Abolition Act Amendment.

2, Government Stock Saleyards.

3, Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment.

Returned to the Assembly with amendments.

4, Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Assembly.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 11.

In Committee.

Hon. J. Cornell in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clause 11—Amendment of Section 50:

The CHAIRMAN: The Chief Secretary's amendment appearing on the notice paper constitutes a new clause and if accepted in its present form would be a violation of the Standing Orders. The difficulty can easily be overcome by putting the amendment in stages.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: Perhaps I may be permitted to explain the reason for the amendment which I move as follows:—

That all the words after the word "is" in line 1 be struck out and the following inserted