

compare the clauses with the sections of the Act which they affect, will find nothing to cavil at in any shape or form. The amendments have been suggested by experts, principally the Registrar of Companies, the Institute of Accountants and the legal fraternity. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

(On motion by Hon. C. G. Latham, debate adjourned.)

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. S. W. Parker—Metropolitan-Suburban):
I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday the 28th October.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.58 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 22nd October, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

PRESTON RIVER.

As to Measures to Overcome Flooding.

Mr. **MURRAY** (on notice) asked the Minister for Works:

In view of statements to deputation regarding Preston River flooding, will he inform the House—

(1) Is it intended to construct levees from siltage reclaimed from riverbed?

(2) Will he ensure that heavy clay obstruction (at point known as Johnston's Bridge) will be removed to a satisfactory depth?

(3) What type of "dragline" is proposed for carrying out this work?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) The levee banks will be constructed of material obtained from other sources. Silt removed from the river, where suitable, will also be utilised.

(2) A report will be obtained.

(3) Dependent on No. (2).

NORTHAM HIGH SCHOOL.

As to Opening of Domestic Science Centre.

Hon. A. R. G. **HAWKE** (on notice) asked the Minister for Education:

(1) What are the causes responsible for the delay in opening the new domestic science centre at the Northam High School?

(2) When is the centre likely to be opened?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) Delay is entirely due to shortage of materials and labour in the provision of furnishings and furniture.

(2) It is proposed to open the centre on or about the 25th November.

SILICOSIS IN MINERS.

As to Aluminium Therapy Treatment.

Mr. **SMITH** (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Mines:

(1) What progress has been made in the matter of installing apparatus for administering aluminium therapy in the gold mining industry?

(2) Is there any truth in the allegation that an approach has been made by the Government to the Mine Workers' Relief

Board to bear the cost of installing such apparatus, and that the board has agreed to the proposal?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Some delay occurred in getting replies from the McIntyre Institute, Canada, but definite advice was received last month that it will supply the specialised apparatus and aluminium powder required.

Following receipt of this advice, the position has been discussed with the various Goldfields bodies concerned and the department is now proceeding with final arrangements.

(2) The Mine Workers' Relief Board is prepared to bear the cost of medical and administrative expenses only. The cost of installation of therapy units at mines, and the provision of the treatment to employees will be the responsibility of the mine owners.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION ROYAL COMMISSION.

As to Evidence of Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY (on notice) asked the Attorney General:

(1) Did he observe evidence given to the Royal Commission on workers' compensation by the Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs appearing in "The West Australian" newspaper on Friday, the 17th October, 1947?

(2) Was this officer's evidence given with his concurrence?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. In view of the increased number of natives working under industrial awards or agreements of the Arbitration Court, it was thought proper that the attention of the Royal Commission should be drawn to this development. The evidence of the Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs suggested that, to the extent that any such natives should come under the Workers' Compensation Act, consideration would need to be given to some provision for payment of any compensation to the Department of Native Affairs in trust for the native to ensure that the compensation moneys were utilised in the best interests of the native and his dependants.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Western Australian Trotting Association Act Amendment Bill.

BILLS (4)—FIRST READING.

1, Land Alienation Restriction Act Amendment (Continuance).

2, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

3, Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act Amendment (Continuance).

Introduced by the Minister for Education.

4, Industry (Advances).

Introduced by the Premier.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Rodoreda, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. W. D. Johnson (Guildford-Midland) on the ground of ill-health.

BILLS (3)—REPORTS.

1, Wheat Marketing.

2, Child Welfare.

3, Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment.

Adopted.

HAMPSHIRE & SONS' CATTLE AND T.B. SELECT COMMITTEE.

Consideration of Report.

MR. HOAR (Nelson) [4.40]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should give effect to the recommendations of the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the incidence of T.B. in certain dairy cattle.

Members will recollect that when this inquiry was instituted certain points were submitted to the committee for inquiry. They were: (1) the incidence of tuberculosis in the 90 registered Guernsey cattle offered for sale by Messrs P. G. Hampshire and Sons at Yarloop on Tuesday the 12th November, 1946; (2) how many such cattle had been infected since the sale and had reacted to a T.B. test; (3) how many such cattle were tested before the sale and with what result;

and (4) whether there were any reasonable grounds for Hampshire and Sons to suspect this disease in their cattle before the sale.

The committee decided that the best approach to the inquiry would be to seek information not only from the buyers of cattle at the sale, and from Mr. Hampshire, but also from any person who was in any way associated with the herd through the years from the day of its establishment. Such an inquiry involved calling as witnesses the three managers of Mr. Hampshire, whose terms of service spread over the ten years during which the herd was in existence up to the time of the sale; two veterinary surgeons, one of whom had a considerable amount of experience with the herd; the Chief Veterinary Officer, on matters of departmental policy; the senior health officer of the Public Health Department, who conducted several post-mortem examinations; and a representative of Elder Smith and Co. who, in conjunction with Goldsbrough Mort, conducted the sale. Furthermore, we had as a witness the president of the State branch of the Guernsey Cattle Society of Australasia; and, finally, Mr. Hampshire himself. In addition to this evidence, correspondence was received from almost all buyers of cattle from this herd disclosing whether or not their animals had been tested since the sale and with what result.

Therefore, so far as we know, there was no worth-while avenue of investigation that was not fully explored by the committee in order that the House might be completely informed on this subject. A perusal of the evidence will disclose that, in all, 84 cattle were yarded at the sale and 65 were sold. To this number must be added another eight that were sold some days after the sale by private arrangement. So, in all, the total number of cattle that the committee had evidence of having been sold was 73. The committee also wrote to all the other buyers of cattle at the sale who had not previously contacted the committee. They were asked to state whether they had had their cattle tested and with what result. Unfortunately, in 11 such cases, representing 20 head of stock, the writers informed the committee that owing to the difficulty of obtaining veterinary service it had been impossible for them to have their cattle tested, and they were therefore unable to tell the committee exactly what was the position.

This brings the number that the committee is able to say were definitely tested up to 53 and of those 42 are known to have reacted to a T.B. test and to have been destroyed. Two others were destroyed without a test because their condition was so far advanced as to make such a test unwarranted. Therefore, 44 out of 53 animals were definitely destroyed as a result of having T.B. The committee naturally wondered whether this disease, which is known to have struck down 44 out of 53 cattle, was first introduced into the herd during the period of its early history and whether it became consolidated and afterwards steadily progressive during the years, or whether, in fact, the distressing results of the sale were brought about by a rapid acceleration of the disease over a comparatively short period before the sale. Evidence was submitted by two of Mr. Hampshire's managers that there were definite signs of the disease in the cattle in 1941 and 1945.

Mr. Mann: What do you mean by definite signs? Were they tested or was the conclusion reached as the result of the appearance of the animals?

Mr. HOAR: It was decided on appearance only. In those two cases of 1941 and 1945, it was the opinion of the managers that the animals were definitely infected with the disease; but so far as the committee has been able to determine, the complaint was limited to those two animals. Mr. Hampshire does not consider this to be reliable evidence of the existence of T.B. in the herd. In any event, the committee does not wish to labour this point; because, so far as it was possible for us to obtain evidence on all aspects of the inquiry, we concluded that there were no reasonable grounds for anyone to imagine at that stage that the disease in the herd was any more advanced or widespread than in any other herd in the State. I mention that in passing because it is relevant to the inquiry; and, as a matter of fact, it is important.

The committee had reliable evidence with regard to the type of property on which these cattle were raised. Mr. Hampshire's Yarloop property was only about 70 acres in extent and was subject to fairly heavy flooding in winter. In the winter period of last year, there is no question that this restricted area of 70 acres was further reduced considerably, and the only dry place the

cattle could find to stand on, or rest on, or shelter on was on the river bank. So a herd of 90 head of stock were congested into that small area and the committee has every reason for believing, as the evidence will disclose, that rather than the disease having been firmly established in the herd during the earlier years, the distressing circumstances that arose out of the sale were brought about largely as a result of the conditions under which the cattle were expected to exist in the few months before the sale took place.

The peculiar thing about the disease is that a whole herd of cattle may to all intents and purposes be entirely free of T.B. There may be no clinical evidence to suggest that the cattle have the disease, and yet a large number of them may re-act under the searching methods of testing that are in use today. That fact has caused a train of thought to run through Mr. Hampshire's mind. He believes that under existing methods of testing cattle for T.B. a large number of them which, if permitted to live their normal lives, would continue to be of great economic value and use to the community, are being needlessly destroyed. Mr. Hampshire has little or no faith in present-day testing methods for T.B. in cattle, and he quoted a number of cases of conflicting opinions of veterinary experts on this matter. He also gave the committee a number of extracts from various overseas journals, published in England, Sweden, and elsewhere, that indicate the difference of opinion existing in regard to the tests for this disease.

Those extracts were submitted to the committee, and are now in evidence. He also suggested that all valuable stock—and stud stock in particular—that have re-acted to a T.B. test should be subjected to a further examination before they are slaughtered. When Mr. Hampshire expounded his theories I felt there was some merit in them, and I believe other members of the committee were of the same opinion, but we had to look at the question from the point of view of a committee of laymen, without a technical knowledge of animal diseases. We were therefore not disposed to attempt to weigh the merits or demerits of these highly technical and professional matters, which we thought were questions entirely for the Department of Agriculture. Our inquiry, in

any case, lay in a different direction. So, although the committee has not made these questions the subject of its report, I mention them in order to indicate to the Minister that these theories have been advanced in some detail and are now to be found in the evidence. I believe that it might pay the Department of Agriculture to scrutinise them carefully.

Apart from the committee's duty to ascertain, if at all possible, the extent to which T.B. had affected this herd, its further responsibility was to determine whether there were any reasonable grounds on which Mr. Hampshire should have suspected that the disease was present in his cattle to any extent before the sale. I have already stated that up till within a few months of the sale there appears to have been no reason for Mr. Hampshire to believe that T.B. had entered his herd to any appreciable extent, but about six weeks before the sale two animals—one a valuable bull—took sick and re-acted to the test, and were destroyed. The veterinary surgeon who conducted the test stated that he had never seen a more active reaction than that which was obtained in the case of these two animals. That view was supported by the Senior Inspector of Public Health, who conducted the examinations and postmortems, not only on these two animals but on 14 others that were bought at the sale subject to test and later re-acted. That officer said that out of the 16 animals that re-acted and were examined, 10 were condemned for generalised tuberculosis while the other six were passed as having localised infection only.

My point here is that no matter how the disease entered the herd, it was definitely well established at the time of the sale. The question then arises as to whether that fact should have been known or suspected before the sale. It is the opinion and experience of officers of the Department of Agriculture—in the Veterinary Branch—that where one finds one or two known cases of T.B. in a herd, with definite clinical evidence, one can expect an abnormally high percentage to re-act if the rest of the herd are also subjected to tests. The Chief Veterinary Officer is of the opinion that the two animals destroyed before the sale would have led his department to consider that there was an abnormally high incidence of the disease in that

herd. He also expressed the opinion that the condition of the two animals in question should have given Mr. Hampshire reasonable grounds for suspecting that other animals in the herd were affected.

After considering the evidence from every angle the committee is of the opinion that there does not seem to be any other view possible than that Mr. Hampshire, as an ex-superintendent of dairying, and one who has since operated as an adviser on dairy cattle, as well as the Department of Agriculture, had reasonable grounds for suspecting that other re-actors would have appeared had wholesale tests been made of the herd at the time of the sale. I do not believe that anybody—Mr. Hampshire included—thought for a moment that the disease had reached such alarming proportions as was actually revealed by the tests, but there is no doubt that there was reason for expecting some reactions in the rest of the herd. The question then is what is to be done in a situation of that kind, and whether the cattle should have been dispersed or not.

Under the present system governing the sale of cattle the onus of bearing losses resulting from disease in cattle is placed entirely on the buyer, unless, of course, he takes the precaution—as is done in some cases—of buying the cattle subject to test. If that is done the vendor bears the loss. That course is not often followed and the position normally obtaining in this State is that a herd of cattle are offered for sale, and because they look well they are considered to be normal, healthy and prime cattle. There is always the inference that the buyer is buying something of value for his money. That is how our sales operate under the present system, and so long as that system endures it will enable the seller, with all the power of the law behind him, to offer for sale cattle that may ultimately prove to be diseased, and the buyer must bear the whole loss.

I say that such a system is not in the best interests of the community, and it places the buyer in an unenviable position. He bears the whole of the loss, but that is not the chief danger that I see in the position, although that is bad enough. It is far worse that the present system enables diseased cattle to be spread through healthy herds throughout the State, without the presence

of the disease being disclosed until later, when tests may be made. The Department of Agriculture has full power, under the Stock Diseases Act, to do anything it deems fit to prevent the spread of diseases but, like everyone else in the cattle business, the department is not in a happy position. It has all the necessary power under the provisions of the Act, but not the means of enforcing them, nor can it have the means until some compensation fund is brought into existence.

What would be the position of the Department of Agriculture if it had to go to a man—Mr. Hampshire or anyone else—and say, "We have reason to believe that a large percentage of your animals are diseased. We insist on a test"? The test might ultimately mean the loss of 70 per cent. or 80 per cent. of the herd, which might easily ruin the man concerned. Therefore I can easily understand why it is that the Agricultural Department is reluctant to enforce the provisions of the Act, although I say they should be enforced in the interests of the State and in advancement of the departmental policy, which is, ultimately, to cleanse the herds of Western Australia. Until such time as a compensation fund is established, I do not see how the officers of the Agricultural Department could take any action other than that which they have in the past. In the circumstances we, as a committee, say it is absolutely essential that some compensation fund should be established from which the owners of diseased cattle that have been destroyed may be compensated for their losses.

We make no suggestion as to how such a fund should be established. That is for the Government to determine. I have no doubt it will overcome whatever obstacles confront it in that regard. We also say it is necessary to inaugurate a scheme that will make it possible for cattle to be tested for tuberculosis and contagious abortion prior to sale. There again, we offer no advice as to how that should be accomplished. At the same time, as a committee, we feel that to throw the whole cost of such a step entirely on the sellers of cattle would represent an imposition. The Government, in its wisdom, may see the necessity of establishing some sort of contributory fund that would enable it to accept full responsibility of seeing that cattle are tested prior to sale instead of placing the whole cost on

the seller. Finally, in regard to the actual losses that were incurred as a result of the sale which was the subject of the inquiry, the committee would like the Government to give serious consideration to making some form of compensation available to the buyers, particularly in view of the fact that such high prices were recorded and heavy losses experienced by the purchasers. I can see the Premier smiling at the suggestion.

The Premier: I am wondering just where that would land us.

Mr. HOAR: The committee appreciates that there is no such fund in existence at present. For my part, I claim that as a result of the publicity given to the inquiry by the Select Committee, there will be no more sales of cattle in this State until the Government takes some steps to afford protection to vendors and purchasers alike. That being so, the Government's total liability, in my estimation, would be limited to the number of cattle that were sold in November of last year, and in fact, any such provision would apply to the one particular sale.

Mr. Triat: Would Hampshire lose anything? Will he contribute anything to offset the loss?

Mr. HOAR: He has lost a considerable amount of money as a result of cattle being sold subject to tests. Of course, so far as the law is concerned, Mr. Hampshire was definitely entitled to carry on with the sale. As for the moral angle, that is entirely a different matter. I would indeed be glad if the Government could see its way clear to provide some compensation for those people who have lost so much. That loss is not represented so much in cash as in the fact that they are poor farmers, whose ambition was to start their herds off on right lines by obtaining the best stock available and taking advantage of the best opinion open to them. After taking advantage of all that, they found themselves faced with the total loss of their cattle, which is altogether too much. It would be a fine gesture on the part of the Government if it could provide compensation to some extent for those buyers as a set-off against their losses. The evidence contains references to quite a number of other matters that constitute a big temptation for discussion but, as members will have ob-

served, I have restricted myself entirely to the terms of reference and I hope the committee's report will find favour with the Government. I trust effect will be given to its recommendations and that they will prove of some value to the dairying industry of this State.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [5.5]: In seconding the motion, which I strongly support, I trust action will be taken by the Government to rectify the position that has arisen with regard to disease among the cattle, and particularly among the dairy herds. During the inquiry the significance of the position was brought forcibly home to the members of the Select Committee. Evidence was adduced from sales people and those who were directly concerned in the sale of cattle, as well as from many producers and owners of dairy herds. Their reaction was such that I was surprised at the tacit acceptance of the position and the unconcern and indifference of the owners and breeders regarding the incidence of such a dread disease in their herds. One would have thought that the incidence of contagious abortion in the cattle would have been viewed with very great alarm. With that disease there would probably be no progeny, but with regard to tubercular cattle the animals had some sale value seeing that they were capable of producing young stock, which, in many instances, would not show any signs of the disease for some years.

We have to consider what all this means with respect to dairy cattle. We have to appreciate that milk produced by them is sent to the metropolitan area where it is supplied to children and young people generally. We know how dangerous that is. The effects of the disease are spread through the bowels. That being so, the eradication of this particular disease at the source should be taken in hand. The indifference, or acceptance, of the position that has gradually grown up amongst the breeders over the years is a matter of concern. In the early days very little disease occurred in my father's herds and those of our neighbours, because the cattle were not of such a high standard and were not inbred. They were run on a class of country in Victoria that was selected, and suitable areas were procurable in those days because so much land was available. With

regard to the property where the cattle that were the subject of our inquiry were run, it comprised about 70 acres of flat land that was irrigated.

In winter time, with almost 100 head of cattle continuously on that small area, which included no high ground, the conditions were not at all satisfactory, particularly when there was so much inbreeding going on. I think the conditions that obtained brought about the results that are to be found in many herds run on congested irrigated areas. If the properties concerned had winter and summer land, I do not think so much difficulty would have been experienced. Certainly, congested areas are conducive to the spread of tuberculosis among cattle. As a matter of fact, the findings of the committee, particularly those that relate to the provision of compensation and the compulsory testing of cattle prior to sale would, if adopted, merely represent an extension of what is already being done with regard to metropolitan dairy herds. Steps should be taken to make it possible to have cattle tested for tuberculosis and contagious abortion prior to any sale. Even if that could not be put in hand, I think we should at least attempt to provide compensation for those who have suffered losses in connection with their stud herds.

It was suggested by different breeders that the amount of compensation would be very high. We know that many of the cattle were sold for £60 or more. But I do not think compensation should be payable along those lines at all. If the sale of cattle is such that an ordinary cow valued at £20 would bring £60 at a stud sale, I take it that the extra £40 is paid on account of certain considerations. It is paid in recognition of the fact that the cow has been bred for the production of milk or meat. Another consideration is the soundness of the beast. On the other hand, if the animal is not sound and is allowed to spread disease amongst other herds, the disease itself counteracts any value that attaches to the cattle. If a beast is infected with tuberculosis, it is most unfortunate for the owner; but nevertheless he should not be allowed to enable the beast to spread the disease amongst other cattle. In the case of the cow I mention, I think the payment of £20 from the compensation fund would be quite ample.

If we take the businesses in which members themselves may be interested, they will

recognise that they often have unsaleable stock or lines that are out of fashion or are damaged. That represents a loss to the trader in his particular class of business. If a man has a stud herd, he is out for high prices for his stock. That is the particular commodity that he is selling; and if his cattle are high priced and are diseased, they are a menace to other herds and therefore are of really no value at all. I say that in those circumstances the man should be paid nothing in compensation and only those who have purchased stock that had to be destroyed because of the disease developing, should be compensated. The manner in which the cattle under consideration were disposed of with no guarantee regarding their health was, we learned, the universal custom throughout the State and possibly throughout other parts of the Commonwealth.

The cost of compulsorily testing these cattle and of their destruction, if they are found to be infected with T.B., would only be a phase for the second or possibly the third year. After that, the incidence of the disease would be very slight. There would be no spreaders of the disease and the proportion of diseased cattle would gradually decrease over the years. In the congested areas where cattle spread the disease we find a very high incidence of tuberculosis. On higher land, and in areas of greater extent, the cattle spread out and do not come in very close contact with each other. On this high, dry, suitable land we found that the proportion of cattle infected was only three or four per cent., against a percentage for the metropolitan area that is very high. I would not like to say what it was. Action should be taken immediately to rectify such a condition as we found existed in Hampshire and Sons' herd and which, reading between the lines, exists in one half of the stud herds in the southern part of the State.

MR. NIMMO (Mt. Hawthorn) [5.17]: I desire to congratulate the member for Nelson on what I consider is an excellent job. Being the novice on the Select Committee, I wish to support the remarks of the hon. member as well as those of the member for Victoria Park. There are, however, one or two matters about which I am rather concerned. A cattle owner in my electorate informed me that only a few days ago he lost 80 of his 120 cattle. I am

very concerned about that. What we have to decide is how we are to prevent this disease. At the hearing before the Select Committee a question was asked about feed boxes and we were told that at the saleyard at Subiaco there is a tongued and grooved feed box. Cattle which are free of T.B. may be sent there and remain for perhaps a day or longer, feed out of that box and so contract the disease. I hope the Government will take steps to prevent the spread of the disease by paying attention to such cases as the one I have mentioned.

Mr. Reynolds: How could the Government do that?

Mr. NIMMO: By tightening up the law. Another matter that has come under my notice—it has been mentioned in the Press—concerns privately-owned cows. In my electorate there are two herds and between them there are some privately owned cows which I consider should also be tested. I said so to a man who has been in the milk trade for over 30 years and he told me that if the privately-owned cows were tested very few private people would own cows.

Hon. A. H. Panton: They are like the backyard orchards.

Mr. NIMMO: I hope the Government will pay special attention to the prevention of this disease and tighten up some of our laws in regard to stock.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [5.20]: I do not intend to delay the House very long. I think the Select Committee has done some good, but this question is really the responsibility of past Governments, as no attempt has been made to compel the inoculation of dairy herds and stud cattle.

Mr. Reynolds: What has the member for Beverley been doing?

Mr. MANN: I have sat in opposition for 14 years. I was a member of a Select Committee, which was afterwards converted into a Royal Commission, consisting also of the present Premier (Hon. D. R. McLarty), the Minister for Education (Hon. A. F. Watts), the member for Nelson (Mr. Hoar), and the member for Mt. Magnet (Mr. Triat). Three years ago that commission made a thorough investigation of the vermin question, including the diseases of stock, and made recommendations to the Government of the day to which the chairman of this Select Committee agreed. That Royal Commission came to the

conclusion that a fund should be created to provide compensation for cattle compulsorily destroyed. At almost every centre the commission visited, suggestions were made that compensation should be paid for diseased cattle destroyed. That recommendation has not yet been given effect to.

Although the present Government has been in power for the past six months, it has not yet brought down a Bill for that purpose. It is essential that Parliament should pass legislation of that kind and I hope the Government will take the necessary steps as early as possible. I am not in agreement with the member for Nelson when he suggests that the Government should pay compensation for the cattle purchased from Hampshire and Sons and destroyed, as this would result in other claims being brought forward and would involve the payment of many thousands of pounds. I point out that the stud breeder is not paid compensation when any of his cattle are destroyed. I defy any person to detect the presence of T.B. in cattle without a tuberculin test. A cow might be poor or rickety and yet be free from T.B.; another cow may appear to be in perfect health and fit to exhibit at the Royal Show and yet be infected with the disease.

I believe that Hampshire and Sons did not know their cattle were diseased until the tuberculin test was made. There is at present a movement on foot to slaughter dairy herds with the object of wiping out this T.B. curse in Western Australia. What is being done? A man has 120 cows tested. Probably 40 react to the test and are destroyed. He buys from Jones another 40 cows that are not tested until the following year. Therefore, the disease is spreading all the time and it would take five years to clean the herd of the trouble. I suggest that every herd in the State should be tested immediately if there is any doubt about their having contracted the disease. Those infected should be destroyed until in time the whole herd is clean.

When swine fever broke out in this State the reason why pig breeders held back their pigs was because they would not receive compensation if the pigs were destroyed. It may be hard on the man who buys, but it is also hard on the man who sells. He loses money, too. I suggest to the Government that it bring down a Bill to provide for the testing of stud stock, because that is the source of infection. If our present policy

of destroying dairy cattle is continued—it is estimated that 1,200 cows will be destroyed in the metropolitan area before Christmas—we shall have no milk, T.B. or otherwise.

Mr. Read: We would be better without infected milk.

Mr. MANN: That is nonsense. It has been proved in America that pasteurisation will kill the virus. The scalding of milk will eradicate the germ and purify the milk.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do you mean that scalding will purify the milk or actually kill the virus?

Mr. MANN: According to some medical evidence, the scalding or pasteurisation of milk will destroy the T.B. virus. I point out that no farmer allows his cows to drop calves from January to March, because of the hard living conditions in those months. The cows calve in the winter months and that is when the milk comes on. I know a dairyman who paid £17 or £18 for two mongrel cows that would not yield a pint of milk per day. I know the law of supply and demand operates. If this heavy destruction continues, dairymen will be paying as much as £40 or £50 for a cow in March. I have had experience of farming and I warn the Government that we are about to face a very serious position in the milk industry. No dairyman can afford to pay £40 for a cow. Had the recommendation of the Royal Commission been adopted, we would have had a fund out of which compensation could be paid to dairymen whose cattle are compulsorily destroyed.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you agree with the report?

Mr. MANN: Yes, definitely, but I am making a contribution to the House that I think will help the position. If this Select Committee has done nothing else, it has at least brought this matter to light and pointed out how serious the position is. It is for the Government to rectify it now; but I cannot see the Government agreeing to pay compensation to the unfortunate people who bought cattle from Hampshire and Sons, because both the Treasurer and the ex-Treasurer know that if that were done there would immediately be an enormous number of claims put forward involving, as I have said, many thousands of pounds.

Mr. Hoar: This is an exceptional case.

Mr. MANN: No. That is nonsense. I am sure the Treasurer would not agree to pay

compensation on the lines indicated in the recommendation of the Select Committee.

Mr. Reynolds: Let him speak for himself.

Mr. MANN: I am speaking for him on this occasion. I hope the Government will take this matter up seriously. The past cannot be remedied, but legislation could be brought down to provide for tuberculin tests in order to ensure clean herds. Should some of our herds be wiped out, the loss would be enormous.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.30]: It was not my intention to make any remarks on this matter, because I felt that those who had spoken had said all it was necessary to say about it, but something said by the member for Beverley has obliged me to rise. Before dealing with that point, however, I want to take the opportunity to say that I endorse the remarks of the member for Mt. Hawthorn when he said that the member for Nelson did a particularly good job in handling the Select Committee. He dealt with his witnesses particularly well, and I thought he carried out the inquiry in an excellent manner. The committee examined a number of witnesses, held a number of sittings and gave close attention to the matters submitted to it for inquiry. There can be few people who, upon reading the evidence, would disagree with the conclusions to which the committee came. The committee was unanimous in its recommendations, and I hope the Government will be in a position to take some notice of them. The member for Beverley said that past Governments should take the responsibility for the fact that there is no provision existing in Western Australia for cattle compensation.

Mr. Mann: Outside of dairying.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes. I remind the hon. member that last year I introduced a Bill to provide for the compensation for cattle, other than dairy cattle. The present Premier, when speaking to that Bill, pointed out that its provisions were very close to the recommendations of the Royal Commission, to which the member for Beverley has referred, and this is what he said—

This is a Bill to provide compensation to the producers of beef cattle slaughtered as the result of disease. It also includes those owners whose stocks are slaughtered to prevent disease. The measure follows many of the recommendations of the Honorary Royal Commission that investigated diseases, vermin and

scourges, but it has departed from some of the proposals in a number of respects. We have other stock compensation funds to which the Treasury has made contributions.

Members who were here last session will recall that the Bill provided for compensation in regard to tuberculosis, pleuro-pneumonia and actinomycosis. Although the Bill was debated at some length in this House, it was not proceeded with for the reason that the present Premier brought to me a deputation representing interests in the North-West, and it put up such a strong case for the exclusion of that part of the State that I was obliged to agree to it. Upon that section of the State being excluded, the Bill could not have established a sound compensation fund, because the fund depended for its solvency upon contributions being received from all over the State, including the North-West, where so many cattle are to be found. The exclusion of the North-West meant that the financial position of the fund would have been such that it would not have been possible for it to carry the burden which would have been imposed upon it.

Mr. Mann: It was quite easy to subsidise it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If that is so, I have no doubt that the Treasurer will do that in the present case. We can, therefore, expect before very long to have a cattle compensation Bill introduced providing for a fund which will be heavily subsidised by the Treasury in accordance with the desires of the member for Beverley, who is a supporter of the Government. I rose to show that the present position in this State is not due to any lack of thought or attention on the part of previous Governments. Had it been merely a matter of depending upon the support of members, I have no doubt that the Bill I introduced would have become law, but it was perfectly obvious to me, apart altogether from the strong case put up by the North-Westerns as to why they should not be included—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Because their cattle were not so liable to these diseases.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is so. They satisfied me that it was unfair to place upon them the burden which would have been imposed under the Bill. It was obvious to me, that being their view, that had I persisted with the measure it would not have had a thousand to one chance of passing the Legislative Council, and would not have be-

come law. In those circumstances, it would have been a sheer waste of time to have proceeded with it as it was drawn. The present Select Committee has simply emphasised the need for the establishment of some sort of fund if a concerted effort is to be made to eradicate stock diseases from Western Australia. We cannot proceed with a programme involving the wholesale slaughter of cattle unless we provide some form of compensation for the owners who will be involved in tremendous losses.

We know there is a fairly high incidence of disease among the cattle of this State, but that is not peculiar to Western Australia; it is to be found everywhere. It cost a tremendous sum of money in America to deal with this problem, as it has done in other countries of the world. There are very few places where the job has been done adequately. But modern thought is certainly trending towards the eradication of disease in cattle, as well as humans. It is remarkable that in some instances more attention is paid to the eradication of disease in cattle than in humans. However, the fact remains that it is desirable and necessary to tackle the problem of the eradication of disease in cattle, in the interests of the public health. We make a valuable contribution towards the general health of the community if we improve the animal health. But we cannot do that unless we are prepared to make some compensation available to the people who would be ruined without it.

The member for Nelson mentioned that the officers of the Department of Agriculture showed reluctance to carry out wholesale testing because of the fact that to do so would almost inevitably result in the discovery of much disease, with the resultant destruction of animals and consequent ruin to the producers. Those officers are human and have a disinclination to ruin people, and so they have adopted the attitude that they would like to see things improved. They show how that can be done, but under existing conditions they do not think they ought to force the position. The department suggested previously that a cattle compensation fund was necessary to enable it to proceed in the direction that it ought to go, and that is why the Bill was introduced last session. There is no adequate law on the subject today, and so there is still need for this legislation.

I hope the Government will look at the position and do what is possible to effect some improvement in the animal health of this State, and thereby make a valuable contribution to the health of the community. But, I repeat, unless there is a substantial fund from which compensation can be paid, the problem cannot and will not be tackled. The question to be decided is: How is this fund to be established? Is it to be established wholly and solely from the contributions of producers, or partly from their contributions and partly by subsidy from the Treasury? Those points are for the Government to decide, but as the matter has now been brought prominently before the people, and emphasis given to the need, I trust that one of the results of the Select Committee will be that in the near future a compensation fund will be established in Western Australia.

On motion by the Minister for Agriculture, debate adjourned.

BILLS (6)—RETURNED.

- 1, Municipal Corporations Act Amendment (No. 1).

With amendments.

- 2, Milk Act Amendment.

- 3, Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation).

- 4, Road Districts Act Amendment (No. 1).

- 5, Western Australian Bush Nursing Trust Act Amendment.

- 6, Law Reform (Contributory Negligence and Tortfeasors' Contribution).

Without amendment.

MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Second Reading.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [5.45]: In moving the second reading said: This is my first attempt at introducing a Bill and I therefore trust the House will be indulgent. At present local governing authorities have power to enforce certain provisions regarding the erection of buildings, that is to say to make it compulsory that there shall be a certain standard of building and appurtenances of various types attached to the premises. They are empowered to make regulations governing the admittance of

natural light to premises, ventilation, the provision of facilities for washing and bathing, the disposal of waste, the types of walls and so on. This Bill merely seeks to give authority to municipal councils to ensure that owners of buildings under certain conditions shall have their premises wired for the serving of electric current for the benefit of the tenants of such premises. It was my original intention to introduce a Bill to make it obligatory that any person who was residing in premises at present, or in connection with any premises constructed in the future within a reasonable distance of an electric main, should be compelled under the law to instal electricity.

I feel that at the present stage of progress electric lighting and other domestic facilities are just as essential to congenial life as many others that can be enforced today. It has been suggested that a person in his own home who desires to suffer the inconvenience of kerosene lamps or some alternative method of lighting, should be entitled to do so, as it would be his own business. To some extent the same argument could be used with regard to the other features I mentioned; to wit, if a person desires to live in a house in which the rooms are ill-lighted by nature, and in which there is poor ventilation this should be his own concern. We believe, however, that there is a responsibility, as law makers, upon us to insist that there should be a certain minimum standard. If I proceeded along those lines, apart from other factors, I would be fearful of possible action on the part of another place.

Accordingly, the Bill has been shaped to dilute considerably the original intention. The genesis of this measure rests on the fact that in my electorate of East Perth there are seven houses in a dead-end street that lies between Hay-street and St. George's-terrace. The people who are living in these houses are still using kerosene lamps. I had occasion recently to call on several of them in connection with another matter, and was escorted during the evening from room to room by people who carried hurricane lamps.

The Honorary Minister: What is wrong with kerosene lamps?

Hon. A. H. Panton: You cannot get kerosene.

Mr. GRAHAM: The Honorary Minister may be merely facetious or else she is some-

what archaie in her outlook. A short time ago it was a rarity for a person to indulge in the luxury of a bath, and in such instances one could say, "Why should local authorities have power to insist that there shall be proper bathing facilities provided in every home?"

Mr. Marshall: What is wrong with the old bath-tub?

Mr. GRAHAM: The position is that a number of the tenants to whom I have referred have from time to time made repeated requests to the landlord for the installation of electricity, but without result. I, too, have made representations in writing to him and he has not had the courtesy to reply. The matter has been discussed by me with the agents who state—I have learned this also from my own experience—that the landlord is adamant and will take no steps whatever in that direction. Prior to having legislation drawn I discussed this matter with persons who, in my opinion, are qualified to express an opinion.

I had a conference with the general manager of the City Electricity Department. I do not wish it to be thought that he is wedded to my Bill, because I did not discuss the matter with him for the purpose of obtaining his opinion of it. He suggested that a distance of a quarter of a mile from an electricity main, with the qualification that it should be one capable of being used for lighting purposes—some of the power mains not being suitable in that respect—was a reasonable distance. The Bill provides that a tenant upon receiving no satisfaction from his landlord, in other words, a refusal, could apply to the municipal council which would have the discretion to require the landlord to instal the necessary wiring for the connection of electricity.

In the event of a main being more than a quarter of a mile distant from an isolated building, in order to save expense it is not unlikely on some occasions that a municipal council would refuse to issue the order. It would not desire to be involved in the expense of erecting the necessary main. If the building happened to be a quarter of a mile from an electricity main or even further than that from the power supply in the city or town, quite a burden would be cast upon the owner. I think it is generally agreed that local authorities are reasonable

in their outlook and would not be likely to impose a terrific burden on landlords. It must be borne in mind that already they have power to insist that certain work shall be undertaken under their bylaws. The premises I have mentioned are approximately a mile from the Perth Town Hall and are abutting on Hay-street. Within the last 12 months or so the Perth City Council has compelled the owner to instal brick wash-houses with troughs and coppers to serve all seven houses.

Mr. Read: That is a health matter.

Mr. GRAHAM: These are facilities or amenities that any civilised person has a right to expect. I am not criticising the Perth City Council as the hon. member who apparently represents that council in this Chamber thinks I am. I am merely stating that the Perth City Council issued an order to the owner of the premises to instal these facilities. The cost was approximately £50 in each case. I am told by an electrician that the cost of wiring and installing other fixtures in these houses, and providing them with electric light and power for ordinary domestic purposes, would be between £8 and £10 in each case. The reason I am mentioning this is to demonstrate to the House that local governing authorities are already exercising their power to compel the owners of premises to instal certain amenities, although those instances may not be quite parallel with the one I am interested in.

The reason why I mentioned that phase is that these buildings have been erected for more than half a century, and that health laws, regulations and bylaws of the Perth City Council have been in operation for many years. I do not say this critically, but in reply to the member for Victoria Park it is only in recent months that action has been taken to compel this particular owner to instal these facilities for his tenants. Incidentally I discussed this matter with the Town Clerk of the Perth City Council. He agreed that this was an essential step to take and something that people had a right to expect. He pointed out that tenants were often placed in an invidious position, as it was unreasonable to expect them to instal electrical equipment in a house that they might be leaving in quite a short time. All such fixtures would of course become the property of the landlord. In the case I have mentioned the landlord was required to pro-

vide facilities costing in the vicinity of £50 per house.

Similarly in other cases action could be taken to ensure the provision of facilities which would make possible electric lighting, the use of heating appliances, wireless and so forth. There may be other cases than that of the seven semi-detached houses to which I have referred. Instead, therefore, of bringing down legislation to deal with one set of circumstances I suggest that members will agree with me that the law should be made to apply throughout the State, leaving it to the good sense and judgment of local governing bodies to determine whether or not they will compel owners to have these facilities installed.

I sought advice from the Chief Medical Officer on the provisions of the Bill and he said that, on the ground of health, an argument could be advanced in favour of the installation of electricity in homes, particularly when facilities are so readily available; that is, when electric mains pass within a reasonable distance of the homes. For health reasons, we insist upon premises being connected with the deep sewerage system or being provided with septic tanks—though perhaps the Honorary Minister would like the old pan system to continue in vogue—and leave it to the discretion of the householder or the landlord as to whether effect is given to some provisions more in line with modern thought. I do not intend to over-emphasise the health aspect, although it is an important one. Members are aware that kerosene lamps consume a certain amount of oxygen in a room, in addition to which certain gases are given off that tend to make the atmosphere heavy.

In the event of a kerosene lamp being knocked over or of curtains being blown in proximity to the light, there is a danger of fire being caused. I am not suggesting that these are severe hazards, but they are possibilities. The effect of the poorer illumination on the eyesight of children should not be overlooked. The parents may be reading or writing in the sitting or dining-room and members of the family may be endeavouring to pursue their studies, and it is exceedingly difficult, especially in small homes, for them to gather around a lamp, whereas, if electric light were installed, the whole of the room

would be well lit. During the first half of my life, the nights were spent under kerosene lamps. That was a matter, not of choice, but of hard necessity, I having been born and reared in the country. We appreciate the benefit of running water, sewerage facilities and so forth, but I was denied those conveniences, and other arrangements had to be made.

I cannot believe that the requirements of the measure will impose any hardship whatever on a landlord. I believe there is a recognition on the part of owners that electric lighting facilities are essential and that only a very few owners, who have let premises or portions of premises to tenants, would place themselves in such a position that the local authority would have to give effect to the provisions of the Bill. The measure is an exceedingly small one and I am not rigidly bound by the terms in which the provisions are framed. Whether the distance be a quarter-of-a-mile or half-a-mile or some less distance is immaterial. What I desire is to have the general principle adopted. Provision is made that electric wiring shall be undertaken within a month of notice having been given by the council to the owner of the premises. I believe that a month would be a reasonable time, but if members feel that a longer period should be allowed, I shall not be averse to an extension.

If any member had recourse to renting premises, bearing in mind that at present it is practically impossible to exercise any choice in the matter, one having to take what is offering, he would find that by the time he had made application to the landlord and received a refusal, then applied to the council, and by the time the council had made inquiries and a month's notice had been given, a considerable period of inconvenience would have been experienced by the tenant, and therefore I say that a month's notice, as proposed, is not too short a period. That is all I desire to say on Clause 3 of the Bill.

The other provision is to make a minor amendment in the list of penalties that may be imposed in respect of various matters where owners of premises refuse to give effect to an order of the council. Four are referred to specifically, and the Bill proposes that its provisions be included also in order that a penalty may be imposed in

those rare cases where the owner of a building used for human habitation refuses to supply electric light upon being requested to do so. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Local Government, debate adjourned.

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

Second Reading.

MR. GRAHAM. (East Perth) [6.8] in moving the second reading said: In addressing myself to this Bill, it should suffice to say, "Ditto my previous observations." All that this measure seeks to do is to give the road boards similar authority as is sought to be given to municipal councils under the preceding Bill, so that owners of premises may be required to instal electric wiring and fittings in a building used for human habitation upon an order from the council following a request by the tenant. The arguments adduced in support of that measure apply equally to this Bill.

The only other observation I wish to make is that, not in this case particularly, but in many other instances this session and in other sessions since I have been a member, the absurdity of having two statutes to cover the activities of local governing authorities has been brought increasingly before our notice. I cannot see why there should be any distinction or why there should not be a single consolidated measure to provide for the functions of road boards and municipal councils which, in essence, are identical. In some parts a township is covered by the Municipal Corporations Act, while an adjoining township comes under the provisions of the Road Districts Act, and both bodies seem to be able to carry on without hardship.

Therefore I consider the time has arrived, if it is not already long overdue, when the Government should give serious consideration to introducing a measure that will cover all local governing authorities throughout the length and breadth of the State. Apart from the convenience of having some uniformity, it would overcome the necessity, when a minor alteration to the law is required, for a member having to introduce two Bills couched in the same language to achieve the same purpose. I do not claim any origin-

ality for this suggestion, but I submit it for the serious consideration of the Government. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Minister for Local Government, debate adjourned.

MOTION—GOLD.

As to Treatment of Refractory Ores.

Debate resumed from the 15th October, on the following motion by Mr. Kelly:—

That in the opinion of this House, because of the urgent need for increased gold production, the Government should give early and favourable consideration to the erection of refractory ore treatment plants in all districts where proven refractory ore bodies exist in sufficient quantities, and of sufficiently high grade, to warrant the erection of such plants.

MR. NALDER (Wagin) [6.12]: I claim the indulgence of the House for a few minutes to speak in support of the motion. The member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie, in moving his motion, referred to the district of Ravensthorpe. As I have some interest in that district, seeing that it is in my electorate, I should like to give a little information to the House. The hon. member informed us that, some time previously, an inspector of the Mines Department had made a survey of the refractory ore deposits of the State and had confined his investigations to three districts, namely, Kalgoorlie, Southern Cross and Ravensthorpe. The member for Leeder-ville, by way of interjection, informed us that at Ravensthorpe a very satisfactory pilot plant was operating.

I have had the pleasure of looking over that plant and the gentlemen operating it, the Whurr Brothers, have installed it at much inconvenience owing to lack of finance. They have constructed a plant out of scrap metal and material, and it is an education to see how they have assembled the machinery to operate successfully the plant which they have and which they hope eventually can be worked at a profit. The Government could greatly assist the industry in this district by making finance available to these men. At present they are wasting precious time and money with their improvised plant when a plant of modern design and efficiency should be installed. I was astounded to have imparted to me information regarding the population of the district prior to the

1914-18 war. I was informed that in the district there were 5,000 residents, who were independently working in the mining industry.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. NALDER: Before tea I spoke of the urgent need for an up-to-date treatment plant at Ravensthorpe and also of the large number of people directly or indirectly interested in the industry before the 1914-18 war. Because of the little knowledge that existed concerning the treatment of the ore at that time, all that was mined was shipped to Germany; and it appears that very little further knowledge has been obtained on the subject even up to the present. Older members of this House will recall the incident that occurred and that was referred to earlier in the session by the Attorney General, which cost the Government a considerable amount of money.

The point I wish to make is that prior to the 1914-18 war many people were able to find work in this district, which is so rich in refractory ore; and as little or nothing has been done since then, there must be a great deal of rich ore still to be recovered from the earth in that area. So I hope this Government will do all it can to stimulate interest and to assist where possible this almost untouched field. Members on the opposite side of the House who have visited the district and have a knowledge of it will support me when I say that the district is very rich in refractory ore and a good deal of experimental work can still be carried out.

Hon. E. Nulsen: The Ravensthorpe district is rich in refractory and copper ores.

Mr. NALDER: That is a fact, although I have very little knowledge in that regard. It gives me great pleasure to support the motion.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [7.33]: This motion is one to which I think every member can enthusiastically subscribe. It is worded in such a way as to make it very easy for the Government to give effect to it and the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie is to be complimented on initiating a discussion on such an important subject. I suggest to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines that if his Government has any enthusiasm with regard to in-

creased production of gold, the obligation upon it is to give effect to this motion. The Minister gave us very little information, apart from telling us about one or two matters with which we were already well conversant.

Hon. A. H. Panton: He told you all he knew!

Mr. MARSHALL: If the Minister has done nothing more than associate himself with the Prospectors' Association at Kalgoorlie in an endeavour to ascertain from that organisation the quantity of refractory ore that may be available in that circumscribed area, all I can tell him is that he is groping in the dark; for I cannot conceive how it would be possible for the Prospectors' Association at Kalgoorlie to have any fuller knowledge than is to be found in the records at the Mines Department. The Mines Department closely follows the procedure of tabulating every ton of ore that is mined or crushed throughout the auriferous belt of this State. The officers of that department are particularly keen on keeping a correct record of all such factors. It is true that at Kalgoorlie a private company at one time treated refractory ore for prospectors in and around Kalgoorlie. If such records are not to be found in the Mines Department they would be available to the Minister from the company. From those two avenues all the information it is possible to obtain upon this subject would be available.

The reason I say the Prospectors' Association at Kalgoorlie could not give the Minister any valuable information lies in the fact enunciated by the Minister representing the Minister for Mines when he contributed to the debate on this motion. When we refer to refractory ore—it is sometimes called sulphide ore—we include all those deposits and all that class of ore which contain a mixture of metals and present several problems associated with efficient extraction. The characteristics of sulphide ores vary. Some possess pyrites, which is a type of oxide of iron and presents some difficulty when an attempt is made to extract gold that may be contained in it. Sulphide ores sometimes contain such ingredients as sulphur and arsenic. These three factors may be found in combination with cobalt or nickel and antimony and, worst of all, copper.

If we consider arsenic, sulphur, and pyrites—and we can find deposits composed mainly or solely of those three factors—we find that they do not offer the same difficulty as is the case when the ores are associated with metals such as copper or antimony. Cobalt is not as injurious as copper; nor is nickel. Copper is the worst metal known to the metallurgical world when associated with gold from the standpoint of efficient extraction. Many of our mines find no great difficulty in getting efficient extraction, provided copper and antimony are absent. So it goes without argument that if we could locate deposits in which those three metals alone prevail, provided the right type of plant were installed a very efficient extraction should be obtained. The Prospectors' Association at Kalgoorlie would not know what the various deposits would contain in the way of metals apart from gold. That could only be ascertained by making an analysis of the deposits.

When I assumed office as Minister for Mines I was desirous of having something done in the way of ascertaining what wealth lay in these known deposits of a refractory character. So I delegated one of the most able men we have in the Mines Department to make an inspection of the various districts in which it was known that refractory ore existed. That officer made his report just prior to my vacating office, and I think it will be found that the inspection he made was not as thorough as it should have been. I repeat that some deposits, although referred to as refractory ores, offer no great difficulty so far as extraction is concerned, while other deposits offer the greatest difficulty.

It appears to me, therefore, to be most essential for the Mines Department to make a thorough inspection of all known deposits with a view to ascertaining the gold content and also discovering the quantity of other metals or other impurities which may be associated with the gold, in order to obtain a clear picture of what can be done by the department in the way of encouraging prospectors to produce such ore by installing a suitable plant for the treatment of the different kinds of refractory ore. Until that is done I will not agree that the Government—or the Minister for Mines—is conscientiously endeavouring to secure for the benefit of the State the real values that exist in those deposits. The in-

spection could not be made without the expenditure of a considerable sum of money.

In the early days when prospectors were faced with a proposition involving refractory ore, it was generally considered that they could no longer carry on. In those days, also, the extraction of gold from the simplest forms of refractory ore was considered an extremely difficult problem. In many cases it will be found that deposits of refractory ore lie below water level, and in the old days water created a much more difficult problem than is the case today. In the past steam engines were almost the sole means of driving pumps, and the average prospector could not hope to meet the cost involved. Today, with Diesel type engines and centrifugal pumps the capital cost involved is no greater than it was with steam engines, yet efficiency has been increased materially and maintenance costs have been greatly reduced.

These deposits, of which there are records in the Mines Department, are valuable, and the records indicate the values attached to the respective deposits, many of which are below water level. Assistance should be given in the unwatering of those shows and samples should be assayed to discover the gold content and the percentage of base metals that might render the problems of extraction more difficult. Until that is done we will not know what wealth we have or what quantity of our refractory ore is possible of treatment. Copper, in association with gold, offers one of the greatest problems from the point of view of efficient extraction.

I am surprised that the Minister representing the Minister for Mines made no reference to the development of a small plant at Ravensthorpe. A party of prospectors is working there. Evidently they are men of considerable ingenuity, besides being efficient prospectors, as they have succeeded in developing a small plant which has proved—to a degree at all events—successful in obtaining a fair extraction from copper-laden ore. I think that is one of the most important developments in the handling of refractory ore deposits. It will be agreed that many discoveries have been almost accidental and in many cases have been made by individuals with no technical knowledge of the propositions they were handling.

I am given to understand that the effect of cyanide on gold was discovered by accident. These two men at Ravensthorpe have put a fair tonnage through their little plant and, although it has not proved 100 per cent. efficient, it has gone a long way in that direction, and I think the Mines Department could not do better than give this party every assistance.

Hon. E. Nulsen: You are referring to the Whurr brothers?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. They have a process by which they grind the ore particularly finely and put it through a flotation cell. They obtain the concentrates from that cell and dry them. They then treat the concentrates by putting them through a sintering plant, which drives off the sulphur contained therein, leaving the product ready for smelting. I understand that the sinter is mixed with a flux, consisting largely of siliceous quartz. The result, after smelting in a water-jacketed furnace, is metallic copper of from 90 to 95 per cent. purity. The concentrates are then forwarded to the Port Kembla refinery, where whatever gold they contain is recovered, as well as the copper. As copper presents one of the most difficult problems associated with ore treatment, I think this development should receive special consideration from the Mines Department, and that every possible assistance should be given to these men, who are endeavouring to improve their plant, and are succeeding day by day. Both technical advice and financial assistance should be made available to them.

I have known of many endeavours, by metallurgists of high standing, to attain an efficient extraction from refractory ore containing a percentage of copper, but as far as I know they all failed. I understand that the ore in this extensive belt of country at Ravensthorpe is particularly rich, and I reiterate that we should do everything possible to encourage these men. If they are successful in improving their method of treatment until it reaches a high degree of efficiency it will be possible to exploit other well known and rich deposits that at present cannot be developed owing to the presence of copper. The type of plant that the Government might consider it advisable to install offers the difficulties referred to by the Minister representing the Minister for Mines.

With some refractory ores two or three different processes are necessary in order to treat the respective contents of the ore. I know of one deposit in particular that was owned by a company, which apparently did not know, when installing its plant, the type of ore with which it would have to deal. That should have been known to those advising the company, because invariably our oxidised loads change to sulphides at depth. I think that occurs, without exception.

Mr. Friat: Sometimes at great depth.

Mr. MARSHALL: Consequently the plant that will treat oxidised ore is useless for the treatment of sulphide ores. The company that I mentioned did particularly well by treating the oxidised ore but, when it reached the sulphide zone at a depth of approximately 400 feet, the plant became valueless. The capital had run out, as most of the returns secured from the oxidised ore had been expended in dividends. The mine remains idle today, although I know that the values contained in the deposit are particularly high. I was employed on that mine and was informed by the manager that if we could get a certain tonnage through the plant—notwithstanding the residues which would go out at 7s. 6d. per ton—we would still show a handsome dividend out of it. That would imply that the deposit contained a great deal of wealth, but unfortunately that plant would not treat 120 tons per day.

It will be realised that deposits of varying make-up require different types of plant, and unless the Minister representing the Minister for Mines can secure records to show exactly what such deposits contain, the Government will only be stabbing in the dark in deciding what plant should be installed. At Kalgoorlie there should be found any amount of evidence to show the contents of most of those deposits from which, on the whole, a great deal of ore must have been taken and treated. Sulphide ores containing no impurities except sulphur, arsenic and pyrites, can be treated by oil flotation, and then roasted. It is quite a simple and efficient extraction that can be obtained by means of that process. When it comes to other minerals I am afraid a different type of plant will be required. I hope every encouragement will be given to the experiments that are being carried out at Ravensthorpe.

The difficulties associated with the treatment of certain refractory ores can be viewed in the light of the operations carried out by the mining interests at Wiluna. In the deposits there, apart from arsenic, there is a percentage of antimony. Although the company treated many hundreds of thousands of tons of ore, it is now found possible to re-treat the residues that were processed in years gone by, because of the high value of the residual contents. If the mining company at Wiluna, with the advantage of an abundance of capital and after having experimented upon the deposits there for a considerable time before deciding upon the type of plant to be put in for the treatment of ore—I should say that the most efficient type of plant known to metallurgy at the time was chosen—can now undertake the re-treatment of the residues after having permitted them to be oxidised for a period of years and extract a further percentage of gold on a payable basis, it demonstrates the problems associated with such an undertaking.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the ore at Wiluna is one of the most difficult types to treat. Taking our known refractory ores into consideration, it would be difficult to select a type more difficult than that at Wiluna—with the exception of the deposits that contain a high percentage of copper. In fact, copper seems to be the worst type of metal to be associated with gold from the standpoint of efficient extraction. Strange as it may seem, while that base metal would associate with many other types, gold seemed to be its wedded partner. Gold, of course, will rest in the bowels of the earth with almost any other type of metal and it presents many problems from the point of view of extraction or divorcing it from the partner it has chosen.

I put it to the Minister representing the Minister for Mines that the goldmining industry, if we value gold at all, must receive close attention because its problems today are different altogether from what they were thirty or forty years ago, both from the standpoint of prospecting and from that of extraction from refractory ore. Prospecting is not the simple job today that it was in the past. Hence it is that, when I was Minister for Mines, I set out to make it easier for prospectors to continue their

operations. Where it presented little trouble to prospectors in years gone by to get indications of something rich in close proximity to where they were, today it is a job for experienced men to loam and trace indications up to the point of origin. However, that is a different question from that involved in the motion. I feel we must now depend upon the discovery of quartz and oxidised deposits, wholly and solely.

The motion deals with a problem which must be solved. Whatever may be discovered in oxidised deposits or quartz—I have known quartz deposits to change over to sulphides at depth—the problem remains inevitably for solution. From the Minister's remarks, I understand the Government contemplates installing a pilot plant at Kalgoorlie, and it would be well if the advice embodied in the motion were followed and that question given early and favourable consideration. In my opinion the Minister for Mines should follow up the investigations which I initiated when I held that portfolio, and proceed with the unwatering of some of the old mines with a view to making further examinations, sampling and analyses. There are other auriferous belts containing sulphide ores beside those at Ravensthorpe and Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Kelly: There is Southern Cross.

Mr. MARSHALL: That district should receive immediate consideration. However, I understand that a company is operating there, and should it decide to exercise some of its options, the intention is to install a plant capable of treating refractory ores.

Mr. Kelly: That is too indefinite.

Mr. MARSHALL: And it would not go very far unless the company were prepared to treat ore for prospectors. Usually a company installs a plant to treat the deposits in which it is interested, and each and every one of the known deposits has a solution unto itself. Where the company may install a plant to treat a certain type of ore, that plant might not prove capable respecting the major sulphide deposits in the district.

The Chief Secretary: Is that not the great difficulty, to get a plant capable of treating ores from different areas?

Mr. MARSHALL: That depends, as I tried to point out, upon whether sulphide

ores vary very much in their characteristics in one district. Kalgoorlie should provide the Minister with a clear indication in that respect, because quite a number of different types of ores have been treated there. That should help in the solution of the problem. The difficulties I have indicated are those respecting which the Minister should accept the responsibility for investigating and endeavouring to find a solution. The motion is couched in fair and equitable language and effect should be given to it in districts where there is sufficient ore of a requisite value. Apart from that, we have in this State mineral wealth the limits of which we do not know. To ascertain that, should be our objective.

If we respect the value of gold and the great mining industry, the Mines Department must undertake that task. I agree that the difficulties are many and it could easily be that one district could be served by one type of plant that would be unsuitable in another. It might be necessary to vary the cycle of treatment as between districts. Unless enthusiasm is shown in the matter by the Mines Department and every endeavour is made to get a complete picture of the wealth of the known ore deposits together with the extension of encouragement to the prospectors, there will not be much in the future for the industry. The department should give daily attention to these matters, otherwise it will not be long before the department itself will be merely a memory of the past.

Although the problems are difficult, we have capable men in the Mines Department and I am doubtful whether any of the problems associated with the industry are beyond their capacity to solve up to a point. For that reason, I want encouragement to be given to the experiment that is being carried out at Ravensthorpe, because that will help in the solution of the difficulties that the metallurgical world faces in connection with the extraction of gold from refractory ores. I compliment the member for Yilgarn upon his motion which should receive immediate consideration. If we do not pay attention to the industry with a view to assisting it to the utmost degree so as to secure the development of the known deposits, we cannot expect prospectors to interest themselves in the discovery of new fields.

I have in view a district far removed from the seat of government. It receives little attention. I refer to the North-West auriferous belt. I have been through much of it and am favourably attracted to it. We have a belt of country there which I am convinced possesses vast quantities of mineral wealth, both gold and base metals. But if we cannot get some solution of the difficulty close at hand, how can we expect men to explore those areas? They know full well that if they discover refractory ores they have found something which, no matter how much wealth it may produce, will hold nothing for them. I want the Minister representing the Minister for Mines to inform his colleague that we expect an enthusiastic effort to be made to solve this problem of treating refractory ores. If they solve that problem it will prove of inestimable benefit so far as the production of wealth for this State is concerned.

HON. E. NULSEN (Kanowna) [8.17]: I desire to commend the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie on having brought forward his motion. I feel it will do much good. In my electorate there is not much refractory ore, although at Laverton there was at one time a big smelting plant but, when a certain depth was reached, it was found that the ore was unpayable. If the Government takes heed of the motion some good will come of it. A district which is not in my electorate, Ravensthorpe, has an ideal plant for experimentation in this connection. A former Minister for Mines (Hon. A. H. Panton) had much to do with the introduction of the plant at Ravensthorpe and he has earned the gratitude of those who are doing their best to make it pay. Copper is the most refractory of ores and causes the most trouble, but the plant at Ravensthorpe could be developed in such a way as to extract not only the copper but also gold, which could be considered more or less as a by-product. Copper would be the main product.

It was pointed out by the member for Murchison that oxidised ores are being more and more depleted, and that when we reach a great depth much of it cannot be treated freely. That is why the sulphide ore treatment plant which has been suggested would prove of such great benefit. I feel the member for Yilgarn-Coolgardie has brought before the House a subject that will arouse

the Government and the people of the State to the necessity for the establishment of a plant to extract gold from refractory ores. We have the example set by Whurr Bros. at Ravenshorpe in their great efforts for the prospectors, and themselves of course, with the plant there and by the help of the Mines Department. We could safely erect a plant where there is sufficient refractory ore to be treated. I should say it would prove to be a success. I feel the Government will take notice of the motion and will do something that will be helpful to prospectors in those areas where these refractory ores are to be found.

MR. KELLY (Yilgarn-Coolgardie—in reply [8.21]: I do not desire to detain the Chamber to any extent. I thank members for their contribution to this motion and am pleased to learn that the Government has made a move towards establishing a sulphide ore treatment plant at Kalgoorlie. However, the Chief Secretary said when speaking to the motion that even though the plant to be placed at Kalgoorlie would be a pilot plant, he would require a guarantee of 1,500 tons per month for treatment before the plant was installed. That guarantee is likely to cause much delay, because some time must elapse in the breaking of the ore, unless a fairer guarantee is required of the prospectors in connection with the shows that are now closed down. Actually, the Government intends to erect a sulphide treatment plant at Kalgoorlie only if and when the quantity of ore is available.

The Chief Secretary: There is no question of guarantee. I said, "If it were available for treatment."

Mr. KELLY: The Chief Secretary said that it would be necessary for a guarantee to be given by the Prospectors' Association that 1,500 tons would be available per month before a treatment plant would be considered and that investigations were being made with this object in view.

The Chief Secretary: I did not use the word "guarantee."

Mr. KELLY: I have it here that the Chief Secretary used that word in his speech. If he is wrongly reported I cannot be held responsible for that.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Chief Secretary would not remember!

The Chief Secretary: You would be rude!

Mr. KELLY: It may not be possible for the prospectors to be able to guarantee 1,500 tons per month; it may not be possible for them to mine anywhere near that quantity. I ask the Chief Secretary: Is the pilot plant to be held up until such guarantee can be given? He has said that no guarantee was spoken of, but it appears in his speech. He also said that the installation of a satisfactory plant presented considerable technical and scientific difficulties. He further stated that the success of the treatment plant would depend upon its capacity to deal with the particular ore. I entirely agree with those statements, but I feel justified in pointing out to the Minister that the South Kalgurli Consolidated was never called upon, at any stage during the period it operated, to treat ore other than that which could be successfully treated in the type of plant available at that time. There is no reason why a Government plant of a similar type could not be installed if that were the only difficulty. I consider it possible to install a much more modern type of treatment plant, such as an oil flotation plant, at very little extra outlay.

The success of the Government's action would undoubtedly be assured if this type of plant were installed. That would overcome many of the obstacles that at present appear to confront the Government. The Minister attributed the closure of the South Kalgurli Consolidated to the expensive treatment methods employed. Unquestionably the costs were high, but they were borne ultimately by the prospectors and small companies whose ore was treated at that plant. However, the expensive treatment method was not the sole contributing factor to the closure of the South Kalgurli Consolidated. There was an acute shortage of labour during the war years and the necessary stores and other essentials for treatment of ore were not available during those years in quantities necessary to keep the mill working. Finally, one other contributing factor to the closure was the obsolescence of plant. The mill or plant was a dry-treatment plant and it presented many difficulties. The modern type of plant is the one more favoured. The company's ore, irrespective of prospectors' ore, that was originally treated at the South Kalgurli Consolidated is now being treated by the Kalgoorlie Ore Treatment

Co. This company has installed an up-to-date plant and is handling ore for the three associated companies, but not for the public.

It would not be difficult for the Government to reach a decision on the type of plant. The plant at the South Kalgurli Consolidated treated over 20 years almost every type of ore that the Government is likely to be called upon to treat. Therefore the Government should overcome its hesitation to install a satisfactory plant. The time has arrived when the Government must take a courageous stand, a far-seeing stand, if this sulphide ore treatment plant is to be installed within a reasonable time and if it is going to be installed with the object of producing the dollars that we have so frequently spoken of as being a dire necessity in these times. I thank members for the manner in which the motion has been dealt with.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

BILL—SUPPLY (No. 2), £3,100,000.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading—Amendment.

Debate resumed from the 15th October on motion by Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, as amended—

That the Bill be read a second time, to which an amendment had been moved by the Attorney General and amended on motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman as follows:—

That the following words be added to the amended motion:—"after consideration of a Bill to be introduced by the Government this session to extend the franchise for the Legislative Council to the wife of an elector for the Council and to the occupier of a self-contained flat, and to provide that no elector possessing qualifications entitling him to be registered as an elector in more than one province, shall be registered as an elector in more than one province, but such elector shall by notice in writing to the Chief Electoral Officer make choice of the province in which he desires to be registered as an elector and having made such choice and becoming so registered for a particular province no further choice shall be permitted or such registration changed to another province unless such elector shall cease to possess the qualifications entitling him to be registered as an elector in the province for which such registration has been effected.

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1947-1948.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 14th October on the Treasurer's financial statement and on the Estimates; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £3,028:

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [8.32]: I compliment the Premier on the manner in which he delivered his first Budget speech. I also wish to congratulate the Leader of the Opposition on his informative criticism of the speech. The Premier made an interesting admission when he said the economic conditions of the world were somewhat upset, despite the fact that more than two years had elapsed since the conclusion of the war. I also noticed the timely criticism of that admission by the Leader of the Opposition. He pointed out that there is a vast difference between that statement and the one contained in the Premier's Policy Speech, when he was simply the Leader of the Liberal Party. In that speech he said he was tired of the wartime excuses by the then Government. Since accepting office, he has come to realise that they were not excuses, but were incontrovertible, stubborn facts. He is also beginning to realise that his chickens are coming home to roost. He has the responsibility of looking after the finances of the State.

Budget speeches have lost much of the interest that they used to have. At one time we listened to the Budget speech for indications of public policy in the way of public works and other important undertakings, but today we simply have a financial statement of income and expenditure put before us, because the Treasurer cannot see too far ahead owing to his dependence on the bounty of the Commonwealth Treasurer. During his speech, the Premier referred to the question of the financial relations of the Commonwealth and the States. He pointed out that he was successful in having a resolution carried at the last Premiers' conference to bring about a meeting of representatives of the Commonwealth and the States to review our

financial relations. I am glad he was successful in that.

I regret to note the unfavourable attitude taken up by the Prime Minister in connection with that proposed conference. We are informed that he will not arrange for representatives of the Commonwealth Government to be at that conference. That is regrettable. He also referred to the resolution secured by the member for Gascoyne, when Premier and Treasurer, in his endeavour to get a new set-up in regard to the Commonwealth Grants Commission. That move would have been of much benefit to the people of Australia, and particularly to those of the so-called smaller States. Unfortunately we have not gone much further in that regard. We are still in the unfavourable position of having to present our case to the Grants Commission and, as it were, shut our eyes and open our hands and wonder what the Commission will give us. The difficult Commonwealth-State financial relations are nothing new. We had the first instalment when the Financial Agreement was included in the Constitution. Of course, the difficulty has been intensified by the advent of uniform taxation.

The position was bad enough prior to uniform taxation, but since then it has gone from bad to worse. A State like Western Australia, with a small population and an extensive area, suffers more than the other small States. The fact that Western Australia has been, until quite recently, largely dependent on its primary products, makes its position much more difficult than that of South Australia or Queensland. Our secondary industries have only recently become a factor in our economy. Previously, because of our dependence on our primary industries, our position was more difficult than that of the other States. From time to time we have heard condemnation of unification. I venture to say that since the Financial Agreement was entered into and incorporated in the Constitution, we have, to all intents and purposes, had unification in the Commonwealth. Particularly is that so since uniform taxation became law. We have on occasions heard a lot about our sovereign rights.

So far as the States are concerned, there is no such thing as sovereign rights. As

the Treasurer has to go cap in hand to the Commonwealth Treasurer for sufficient money to carry on the State, there is no use in talking of sovereign rights. I sincerely hope that the conference to which the Premier referred will soon meet, and that a different set of circumstances will obtain, particularly so far as our financial relations are concerned. There is need for a review of the whole Constitution. Many weaknesses have, during the 46 years of its existence, been discovered in it. From time to time efforts have been made to alter it so as to bring it into line with modern needs. There is a vast difference in the people of Australia from what there was 46 years ago when the Commonwealth Constitution came into being. It is almost impossible to secure an amendment of the Constitution to bring it into line with modern times, because a double majority is required. I do not greatly object to that, but anyone who studies the history of the Commonwealth over the past 46 years will appreciate at once that the only chance of securing a vital amendment of the Constitution is to have an agreement between the three political Parties. While those three Parties disagree on the question of amending the Constitution, there is scarcely any hope of an amendment being carried.

There are arguments against the double majority because a minority of the people of the Commonwealth could defeat an effort to amend the Constitution. It is necessary to have a majority of the States and a majority of the electors voting in favour of an amendment, and the large populations of the States of New South Wales and Victoria might well give a majority of the people while a majority of the States with a lesser number of electors could defeat the proposal. Many vital amendments are necessary after the lapse of all these years, and so I look to an agreement between the Parties as affording the only opportunity of securing any vital amendment to the Constitution.

I consider that the time is opportune for the holding of another convention to review the Constitution and suggest alterations. This is not the first time that such a suggestion has been made in this House, but I venture to say that it cannot be iterated too often. I would not be an advocate of an elective convention as was

considered necessary to bring about the inauguration of the Commonwealth. If the respective Governments arranged for a number of delegates from each State, consisting of men who have taken a keen interest in the political activities of the Commonwealth, representatives of the several Governments and Opposition Parties, together with representatives of the commercial and industrial sections of the community and those possessed of constitutional knowledge, such a convention, I believe, could draft recommendations for an alteration of the Constitution that would be acceptable to the Parliaments and to the people. That convention could review the Constitution in the light of present-day requirements.

The Premier: Do you think the Prime Minister would agree to such a Convention?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I think he would, and I suggest that the Premier should give a lead in the matter. I believe the other States would fall into line if he gave a lead.

The Premier: I did not get much encouragement from the Prime Minister when I did so.

Mr. NEEDHAM: But that was on the question of financial relationships, and I think the Premier did a good job there. I really believe that the Commonwealth would agree to the holding of such a convention. I know that when the late Right Hon. John Curtin was alive, he would have welcomed a convention of this description. I consider that such a gathering would be of great importance to the people of the Commonwealth as a whole, but particularly to the people of Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania.

A discussion of the Budget gives one an opportunity to deal with matters generally and I intend to take advantage of that opportunity by referring to our economy as a State and mentioning a few facts regarding our progress towards the establishment of secondary industries. Our State economy has been dependent for many years upon primary products such as wool, wheat, gold and other minerals, and this has left us in a very insecure position. To bring about a balanced economy, we must encourage the establishment of secondary industries. An attempt to this end was made in 1933 and has been carried on successfully.

It was left to the Collier Labour Government in that year to take a very active and

practical part in encouraging the establishment of secondary industries. Before that, spasmodic efforts had been made to encourage such industries, but, as I have already pointed out, it was the Collier Labour Government that took the practical steps and established what we now know as the Department of Industrial Development, out of which came the Council of Industrial Development. The progress made in the secondary industries has been largely due to the ability and courage of the Director of Industrial Development, Mr. Fernie. This has resulted in progress being made to supply the home market and even to cater for the export trade. Under the Labour administration, we are indebted to the first Minister for Industrial Development, Mr. J. J. Kennally, who worked very hard in the endeavour to establish secondary industries.

In 1939 the inaugural meeting of the Council for the Development of Industries was held, presided over by the then Minister, Hon. A. R. G. Hawke. The council consists of members of the legislature, representatives of Government departments and representatives of the manufacturers in this State. Its main duty is to suggest lines of inquiry into any phase of local industry and its production or its sales and distribution. Industrial panels functioning under the department are set up with the idea of obtaining the views of experts concerning any particular industry of which the introduction or expansion in the State is considered. There are in existence at the present time a coal panel, a drug panel and a linseed panel, while a number of other panels dealing with hops, mica, sulphur, vermiculite, phosphate and asbestos have not yet been disbanded. Although the major part of their work has been finished, they still meet occasionally when circumstance warrant and are available in the event of their services being required.

With the advent of the war, the drive for a more industrialised Western Australia was given a considerable boost. We knew that we had the men, the skill and the material, but somehow there was a lack of courage to undertake the work. Then the grim necessity of war arrived and our expansion as a nation was imperilled, but we found the men and the material and turned out some of the best of work.

In 1938-39, the number of factory employees in Western Australia was 23,211, whilst at the present time it is at the all-time high level of nearly 35,000. This shows that there has been an increase of about 50 per cent. above the pre-war figure. Even with this increase, there is ample room for more industrial expansion. I have quoted the number of employees in factories. Now I come to the value of factory production for the same period, which shows an equally promising picture. In 1938-39 the net value of factory production was £8,776,000 and for 1944-45 it was £12,960,000. The main industrial groups show the great change that occurred in this State during the war.

I have some very interesting figures dealing with the average number employed in factories including working proprietors. A comparison of employment and net production values for the years 1938-39, 1944-45 and 1945-46 in the main industrial group below shows the broad changes which occurred in this State during the war and the extent of the subsequent changes in 1946. I will not read all the figures but merely state the totals. These are—

Industry:	1938-39	1944-45	1945-46
Treatment of non-metalliferous mine and quarry products	764	448	670

Other industries are dealt with, the totals being 23,211, 29,146, 30,256. There are corresponding figures dealing with factory production, showing the net value of production by industrial groups for the same year. The totals are as follows:—

1938-39	1944-45	1945-46
£8,776,000	£12,960,000	£13,827,000

The extreme shortage of shipping space has had an adverse effect on the development of Western Australian industry during the past 12 months. That handicap would have been much severer had it not been for the work of the Industrial Development Department. By constant representations to the Commonwealth authorities that department was able to reduce the handicaps so far as shipping was concerned. Many shortages still exist and these have retarded our industrial expansion programme to a certain extent. Those difficulties are gradually being overcome. The transition from war to peace was one of the main factors in the scarcity of shipping, but unfortunately, there were

others. Industrial disputes in the Eastern States contributed to the scarcity.

Between June, 1945, and June, 1947, factory employment increased 14 per cent.; the State which showed the next highest rate of increase was New South Wales, where the increase was 8 per cent. This is largely due to the fact that most of the types of manufacture commenced in this State during the war were new or relatively undeveloped industries and that much non-essential production ceased. Consequently, the rise in factory production and employment is a real one, as most of the industries which were classed as non-essential have now commenced to re-manufacture and those that started during the war have been able to gain a post-war market. I said earlier in the evening that not only were we balancing our economy and establishing a home market, we were gradually building up an export trade.

Much has been said about the Welshpool area and many people wondered what was going to be done with the buildings there when the war was over and the Commonwealth did not require them for munition factories. That problem has been solved. Together with 60 acres of adjoining vacant land, the buildings have been taken over by the State Government and are providing valuable factory space for nearly 20 industries. These include the manufacture of metal furniture, aluminium household requisites, electrical goods, clothes-wringers, furniture, plumbing equipment, toys, electric irons etc. Three of the largest buildings are occupied by Chamberlain Industries, which is now tooling up in preparation for the manufacture of agricultural tractors. This tooling up has been retarded, unfortunately, by industrial troubles in the Eastern States, but on present indications the factory should be in production next year. When in full operation it will employ about 850 hands producing about 2,000 tractors per year. That will be of great benefit to the State and will substantially help our agriculturists.

The Industrial Development Department is also responsible for the Wundowie charcoal-iron project. This industry was the subject of an inquiry by a Royal Commissioner appointed by the present Government. His report is clear proof that the undertaking was a wise one and will prove profitable to the State. There is also the Lake Chandler

alunite venture. Lake Chandler is situated about 30 miles north of Merredin. The alunite clay deposits there are being exploited for the production of potash. Current output has been stabilised at 300 tons of potash fertiliser per month, at which level 130 operatives are employed. Ultimately, the expansion of the annual output to 12,000 tons is contemplated. The bureau, after considerable difficulty, has been able to secure the services of a qualified fuel technologist, who commenced duty at the laboratory some weeks ago.

Then there is the fishing industry, which is doing very well and employing a number of returned ex-Servicemen. I hope that as the industry progresses we will have a reduction in the price of fish. It is rather regrettable that this important food, of which there is an abundance, is invariably at a price which is prohibitive so far as the average worker is concerned. Fish is a necessary food for children and adults, but particularly for children; but there are many homes in this State where fish never enters because the breadwinner cannot afford to pay the price required. It is hoped that as a result of the encouragement given to this industry by the Department of Industrial Development, the price of fish will be considerably reduced.

There are other industries to which reference could be made but I will not occupy the time of the Committee further except to say that the department is still carrying on its good work, and the present Minister for Industrial Development is performing his duties with the same enthusiasm as was displayed by his predecessor. I have been a member of the Council of Industries since its inception and it is to his credit that he has as much desire as the member for Northam to see that our industries are encouraged. The Government through the Council has been able to advance a considerable amount of money to help people who are endeavouring to establish enterprises here. Much of the money advanced has been repaid to the Treasury and from information we have we are confident that all the industries that are being helped by the Government will eventually be able to look after themselves and there is not the slightest danger that the Treasury will sustain any financial loss. I cannot conclude

without paying a tribute to the Director of Industries, Mr. Fernie. I think the Minister will agree with me that he is a splendid officer, and that his knowledge, experience and enthusiasm have constituted a considerable factor in helping to bring about an improvement in our secondary industries, thus advancing the interests of our State.

MR. YATES (Canning) [9.12]: I have listened recently to quite a number of remarks from members of the Opposition as to the credit due to their Government for what was accomplished when it was in power. Tonight I intend to pay a tribute to the Premier for his first Budget speech and to say I am proud to be a member of the Government Party, to have been in the House to hear that very fine speech and to realise the possibilities of this State in future under the guidance of the present Government. I agree that the Labour Government attempted many things, some successfully and some without a fair measure of success. I am also confident that a sane Government, by careful study of conditions both at home and abroad, and by implementing the policy defined in the recent Policy Speech prior to the elections, can do much to assist in exploiting the possibilities that lie ahead. As a new member of Parliament, I have had a period of six months in which to study my colleagues on this side of the House and discuss with many members the different topics that are of interest to all of us, and I am quite certain that if we put the effort into the tremendous task that confronts us—an effort that is required in order that the State and the Commonwealth can be lifted out of the position into which we are in danger of being led—we need not have any fears.

I have mentioned the danger into which we might be led. Are we all sincere in our unions, in our churches, in our political life? Are we sincere in what we say regarding the progress of the State? Have we a sincere determination to put forth that effort that will help to make this State second to none in the Commonwealth? I feel that the new Government has established a lead. Much has been said of the many cobwebs that were flung far and wide throughout the State. Many have been swept away. Perhaps many remain. I did not see any. I am not interested in that at all. There should not be cobwebs at any

time under the guidance of any Government. But I am certain that if they have existed they will be entirely swept away by the end of the three-year term of the present Government. I think we have had reasonable co-operation from the Opposition. If that co-operation and assistance are forthcoming in the future I am certain that the task confronting all of us will be made easier.

The Premier mentioned many items in his Budget speech. He spoke of the future of the wool, the wheat and the goldmining industries and the secondary industries, and said that big business people in the Eastern States were looking towards Western Australia as a place in which to expand their activities. He also made reference to the anticipated deficit. On looking back over the years since 1900 I find that there have been many ups and downs in the finances of this State. During that period a large public debt has been created. I think the amount is roughly £99,000,000. The debt per head of population has increased from £118 0s. 8d. to £195 16s. 4d. in 1947. That is a reasonable increase. But the State is expanding and the amount of money received by way of revenue has increased out of all knowledge since 1900, until this year it is estimated to be in excess of £15,000,000.

With the expansion of the State our expenditure must grow also and our public debt must gradually increase. However, I do not think there is any cause for worry provided the finances of the State are on a sound footing. There are many avenues open, not only to the primary producers of this State, but to all people engaged in industry to expand production for the betterment of the people and to provide for the increased population that must come through migration and for the extension of educational facilities for the children.

Today I had the pleasure of attending a sports day at the Kent-street school and I was accompanied by the member for Victoria Park. The Minister for Education was also present. We witnessed a remarkable display by the pupils. The headmaster, Mr. McGrath, gave a fine address on the possibilities of the future of the children if they are guided right and given proper assistance by the Government for their education. This is really an excellent example of what

our future schools should be. It gives a new atmosphere. It has large classrooms with plenty of light and modern facilities. The school is built on top of a hill instead of in a hollow and has everything necessary for the future welfare of the children. The schools that have been up for 40 or 50 years are most dismal places. Even the members of the staff working in them have their outlook affected by the buildings. We can see that when we visit those schools, and when we go to a modern school we can notice the different outlook in the teachers and students.

Much has been said about gold and quite a lot about coal, not only from the Collie field, but the future of coal in the Geraldton district. The expansion of our coal industry will be part of the backbone of this State's future. I was pleased to hear the member for Collie give the fine address that he recently delivered on the Collie coal situation, and to the remarks of other members which prove that most, if not all, members are fully aware of the possibilities of the coal industry. I will always do what I can to assist in seeing that the industry is looked after and that facilities are provided not only for the men who produce the coal, but also for their families so that they shall have the proper amenities of life instead of having to scrape and struggle to get the amenities that the city folk have.

What I have said is not so applicable to the Goldfields where people live in much more modern surroundings than do the inhabitants of Collie. There is a tramway system on the Goldfields, and wide modern streets. The people there are well catered for with all sorts of facilities, including a swimming pool. These things are a credit to the people there, because had they not had the initiative to look ahead that part of the State would not be as important as it is today. The pioneers showed foresight in laying out the city, the wide streets which will cater for any traffic for centuries to come. That is not so in the metropolitan area where we have narrow, dingy streets, shooting off in all directions, and making dangers for our ever-increasing road traffic. We must get the co-operation of the unions—of the men who work in industry—today. I mentioned that once before in this Chamber. I know that with the amenities the workers now receive by way of the 40-hour

week they will pull their weight if they have the right guidance.

Mr. Mann: Will they?

Mr. YATES: Yes.

Mr. Mann: No!

Mr. YATES: Yes. The future of this State is just as important to the unions as it is to the primary producers, the gold-mining industry and other sections. Although I am not a unionist, I believe that they carry a fair amount of weight in the community. We must be fair in all our dealings with them. I am quite certain that this Government will be just as fair to them as was the previous Government which would tend to favour the unions more than would most members on this side of the Chamber.

Mr. Styants: It depends on the type of union.

Mr. YATES: There are unions and unions.

Mr. Styants: There is the B.M.A. and the Law Society.

Mr. YATES: Yes, they all have their uses, and if they function in the right way they will not do any harm—in fact, they must do good. That is why I am in favour of unions, of solicitors and of the B.M.A. and all other associations that have done good in this country.

Mr. Mann: The Farmers' Union.

Mr. YATES: Even that has done some good. It amalgamated last year, and by so doing has done away with a lot of bickering. I am now going to get off the general topic, and speak on one or two subjects. One in particular is the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. I have been interested in this society for some time, and members know the tremendous amount of good it has done both in the metropolitan area and in the country. We all see members of that society scooting from one place to another on motoreycles on errands of mercy to relieve the pain and suffering of some wounded or sick animal, which they either put out of its misery or take to a dogs' home or some other place where it will receive expert attention. The society operated under tremendous difficulties during the war years. Its future, financially, is not very bright.

I have a few figures dealing with its last year's activities. Its total income last year from all sources, including subscriptions, donations and interest on various funds which cannot be touched, amounted to £3,603 15s. Its total expenditure which had to be guarded very carefully, amounted to £3,065 15s. leaving a credit balance of £538 to be carried forward. I do not want that figure to create a wrong impression. The total salaries paid last year amounted to £1,802 19s. 5d., which is not a decent salary for three good men. The bulk of the work of that society is done by a couple of men on motoreycles, working from 60 to 80 hours a week, but loving their job and doing it for the sake of humanity and of the animals of this State. Their expenses are increasing year by year. Expenditure this year on motoreycles amounted to £200, and on ammunition and revolvers £58. Then there were uniforms and so on. In all there is a large annual expenditure and I think the time has come when the Government should increase its annual grant, which at present stands at a paltry £50.

Mr. May: Shame!

Mr. YATES: It is a shame. I do not think there is any other society in this State doing so much good for such a small annual outlay. If there is, I take my hat off to it.

Mr. Styants: Do they not charge a fee?

Mr. YATES: Yes, but if members work out the cost involved in these men going from place to place it will be realised that unless they charged a fee they would soon be bankrupt. However, if people cannot pay they charge nothing.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: After the pat on the back that you gave the Premier the society should be certain of a large increase.

Mr. YATES: I think it should receive an increase.

The Premier: Do not bring it up on the items.

Mr. YATES: It is not a Party matter and I think all members should be in favour of further assistance being granted to this society, which is doing such a tremendous amount of good. All those who have had animals in pain and have called on the society will know the ready and quick assistance that it offers at all times, 24 hours a

day. Time means nothing to those men. I come now to deal with the question of a bridge across the Narrows.

Hon. A. H. Panton: I hope the Government will never give that away.

Mr. YATES: There is no doubt about that. The previous Government was saddled with it and now we are saddled with it, but I feel that the time has come for a further review of the proposition that a bridge be placed across the Narrows, not only to relieve the congestion on the present Causeway, but that which is certain to ensue on the new Causeway, if it is ever completed.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: I thought the Minister for Works had committed himself on this proposal.

The Minister for Works: Part way; I do not mind admitting that.

Mr. YATES: For a city such as Perth, ever-expanding in all directions, to have only one outlet at its eastern end is ridiculous. At present people crossing the Causeway by car at night have sometimes to wait in a queue for 20 minutes before getting to the other side. The quickest way to cross the Causeway, during the peak period is—strangely enough—in a tram, and even that is dangerous.

Hon. A. H. Panton: At last we have heard something good about the trams.

Mr. YATES: To travel from the city to Mill Point one has to go east, over the Causeway, then along Suburban-road and back to the river again within a stone's throw of Mounts Bay-road. A bridge has been advocated by various engineers and experts in the control of traffic.

Mr. Styants: And it has been disapproved by a lot of them.

Mr. YATES: It has been approved by a number also, and I feel that those in favour of it more than outweigh those against it.

Member: There should be a bridge, but not at the Narrows.

Mr. YATES: Not necessarily there, but plans have been drawn up for that area. If a more suitable spot on the river can be suggested, taking into consideration the cost involved with the extra width anywhere else, I will be pleased to hear of it.

Mr. Marshall: Would a subway be possible there?

Mr. YATES: I think that at present the Narrows would be the cheapest spot at which to build a bridge and, as finance must play a big part in the scheme, I am keeping to the Narrows.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Let us get the Causeway finished first.

Mr. YATES: I think that will come, eventually, and it should be an improvement on the old Causeway, but there is always a chance of a flood washing part of it away.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That does not say much for the Minister for Works.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: There will not be much of South Perth left, if that happens.

Mr. YATES: We can rely on the bridge across the Narrows, if that happens. I think the Government should re-open the question, which was shelved during the war. The previous Minister for Works had a lot of correspondence on the subject, and from what I have heard I think he was sympathetic towards the project. If his sympathies are echoed by the present Minister I feel certain that a more vital approach will be made to this subject in the near future. I come now to a subject dear to me, the defence of this country. Together with many others, I was appalled recently at the statement, appearing in the Press, about what is practically the abolition of the British Home Fleet.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It knocked the lower deck down.

Mr. YATES: Although I am not a naval man I have probably had a more extensive training in Army matters than have most members in this House. I was a member of the Permanent Forces before the war, and had extensive training in both Naval and Army procedure. The activities of the British and other Navies have been well known to me for years. It is widely realised that the power of England for centuries has been maintained by her fleet, as a bulwark against aggressors. That was borne out in World War I, when Britain relied on the Navy to get her supplies across to France, and during the recent war when she was practically isolated from the rest of the world and the Navy carried her supplies through and took her men to the various theatres of war. To read that statement so soon after the ces-

sation of hostilities, with the world still in a state of turmoil, and while no-one knows which way Russia and other countries will go in the future, suggested a shocking state of affairs. It is appalling that the Government of Great Britain should at this stage reduce its fleet to such a low state of efficiency—merely a token fleet which can protect nothing should sudden aggression occur. At present it leaves the door open for any nation of strength to move right in. Perhaps that might be the idea of certain people.

Mr. Hoar: Do not say that.

Mr. YATES: I can see no other reason for it but that. They claim that the finances of the country are such that they cannot keep the fleet up to its pre-war standard or carry it on while a gradual reduction is made. Such a wholesale reduction in a short space of time is out of all reason. The Empire found the money to prosecute the war, and had hostilities continued for another three years finance would still have been available. The Army is being reduced and its men have been taken out of India. I wonder where it will all finish. I hope that does not happen in this country, but that, as Britain becomes weaker, we may become stronger so that if the necessity ever occurs, we shall be able to fill the breach temporarily until Britain can build up its strength again. A navy cannot be built in a day, but it can be destroyed overnight.

I am very pleased to see that the Commonwealth Government is strengthening the Australian Navy, but I am not satisfied with the additions it is making to the Army. I still think that this country should adopt compulsory military training. I believe that all youths between the ages of 16 and 21 should take their share in learning how to protect the country. Military training is of great benefit to young men and one that will prove of great value to the people in the future. If we can spend millions of pounds on useless projects—and many on which we are spending money today are useless—let us spend some of those millions on year-to-year instruction and training of our youths as they enter the various age groups, and thus re-introduce what we had before 1927 when compulsory military training was the order of the day.

The youth of those days, with the exception of an odd slacker, enjoyed the work,

and the training instilled into their minds, despite the lapse of 10 or 15 years, enabled them to go back and do their bit, and it was not long before they were in their stride again. It is easy to teach young men, but it is hard to teach men between the ages of 27 and 30 years. It is easy to remember that type of training, and in the years to come such training must prove of great benefit to our people. I strongly urge on every possible occasion that the Government should support the reintroduction of compulsory military training throughout Australia. For my part, I shall do all in my power to see that it is brought into effect.

HON. A. H. PANTON (Leederville) [9.43]: I am speaking at this juncture notwithstanding that I believe the usual custom will be followed of Ministers introducing their own Estimates when their departments are reached, as the Premier has intimated they will do. The member for Canning is wrapped up in military training, while I am wrapped up in Servicemen's land settlement. Since the 31st March, there has been a considerable amount of publicity of the subject and a number of reports have appeared of speeches made by the Minister for Lands on the subject. I am taking this opportunity to deal with some of his remarks so that the Minister may amplify or explain them at a later stage, because they are not very clear to me and with some of them I am anything but satisfied. Therefore, I hope the Minister will take the opportunity of making an explanation.

The Minister has made many speeches, particularly at the R.S.L. Settlers' Conference. Reports have appeared in the Press, which I am assuming were the result of interviews given by the Minister, as usually occurs on such occasions. The first one to which I wish to refer appeared in a leaderette in "The Western Mail." I entirely agree with the statements in the leaderette. Not often do I read leading articles, but I happened to notice this one. I propose to read it because it has some bearing upon the matters that I desire to discuss. It stated—

Probably no Minister for Lands in this State has ever taken over the portfolio with such an opportunity to make a name for himself as Mr. L. Thorn. Ready to his hand lies not only the solidly constructed machine of the War Service Land Settlement Scheme, but also an open cheque from the Federal Government for the money to carry on the scheme.

Last week the Director of Land Settlement revealed that the long months of preparatory work were bearing fruit. This was confirmed by the Minister for Lands, Mr. Thorn, on the Sunday previous in "The Sunday Times."

As ex-Minister for Lands, I can thoroughly agree with that leaderette. I looked up the issue of "The Sunday Times" referred to and found fairly large headings—"War Service Land Settlement; Fifty farms available; One hundred more by June 30". The report stated—

Within the next few weeks, the allotment of the advertised first quota of 50 farms for War Service Land Settlement should be made, and thereafter regular monthly quotas, it is expected, will be made available. Probably an additional 100 farms will be advertised before the end of June, said Lands Minister L. Thorn yesterday.

I shall not read the whole of it, but the last paragraph, which is particularly interesting in view of statements which have since been published, read—

Purchase of properties is progressing at a good rate and the indications are that about £1,000,000 a year may be spent for this purpose during the first two or three years.

On the 13th April the Minister said that there were 50 farms available and 100 more would be ready by the end of June. I regard the last paragraph as being particularly important because the Minister said he expected that about £1,000,000 a year would be spent on the repurchase of estates. As the Minister assumed office on the 1st April, we must conclude that the 50 farms were the ones left ready to advertise on the 31st March. Now I wish to deal with the Minister's statements at the R.S.L. I take it that the reports were reasonably accurate; otherwise they would have been corrected, and I have not seen any correction or alteration. The following was published in "The West Australian" on the 30th September—

Not all the responsibility for the long delay in the War Service Land Settlement Scheme belongs to the Commonwealth. Plenty is within the State set-up. In the six months that I have been in office I have made every endeavour to push the Scheme along. When I took office I studied its progress, and it was not three months before I realised that there were many causes of delay, and so Cabinet, on the report of the Minister invited the director of Commonwealth War Service Land Settlement to visit this State.

According to the Minister a telegram was sent to Mr. McLaren, the Federal Director. He replied that he would be over in a fort-

night; but according to the Minister it took him three months to get here. I presume when he did arrive that the Minister had a discussion with him. The Minister then found that the idealistic side of the scheme had been built up in Western Australia and not by the Commonwealth Government. I want to know—and I hope the Minister will amplify that statement when he introduces his Lands Estimates—just what idealistic side the Minister referred to. I want him to tell the Committee about any scheme, idealistic or otherwise, that has not been demanded by the Commonwealth or is not essential under the agreement which was made an Act of Parliament some time ago, to implement soldier settlement.

I would like the Minister also to tell the Committee what endeavours have been made to break down what in my opinion are some of these Commonwealth ideals and with what success those endeavours met. I would like him to say, when introducing his Estimates, if that is the reason for the appointment of the committee of inquiry mentioned in "The West Australian" of the 10th October. The committee is comprised of Messrs. Brownlee, Byfield and H. E. Smith. Mr. Brownlee is a Commissioner of the Rural Bank; Mr. Byfield is Assistant Under Treasurer and Mr. H. E. Smith is Under Secretary for Lands. I wish to make it quite clear that I know each of these three gentlemen particularly well. I also want to say that in their own particular departments they are excellent and able officers. But what has intrigued me is the fact that these three gentlemen, who are in three separate departments, are now formed into a committee to inquire, as we find from the report appearing in "The West Australian," into the administration of and other matters affecting a very highly placed officer, Mr. Fyfe, who has been doing all the preparatory work for the past 2½ years.

One of the terms of reference that this committee has to deal with is, "All matters affecting the administration of the War Service Land Settlement Scheme." The Director of Land Settlement, Mr. Fyfe, as I think most people will agree who have any knowledge of him and I certainly was very closely associated with him during the time I was Minister for Lands, is not only an extremely able officer, but a particularly energetic officer, an officer who works very hard. Of all the boards and committees that have been

appointed by the present Government—and there are many—this is the most absurd committee of the lot. Knowing the members of the committee as I do, I can imagine them inquiring into the administration of this particular department. They can only get the information from the person who has been administering it and that is Mr. Fyfe himself. Unless there has been a complete alteration since I left the department, I should say that Mr. Fyfe is just about as busy a man as any officer in this State. Yet this committee will ask him to sit down—I presume this is what they will do if they want the information—and explain to them his 2½ years' administration. I venture to say that after he has explained why this was done, when that was done, and how it was done, knowing these three gentlemen as I do they will come to three different opinions as to how it should have been done, why it should have been done at all and why it is going on.

Mr. Fyfe, instead of getting on with his essential work—work that many people have said should have been done long ago—will have to sit down hour after hour. He can give this committee plenty of detail, but he will have to spend half his time for the next few weeks doing so after the committee has set out on its job. The committee would at least be taking up a tremendous amount of the time of an officer who should be doing other work. The principal fault I find in Mr. Fyfe—if I find a fault at all—is that he does too much work. I have told him time after time to allocate much more work to some of his officers instead of trying to do it himself. He would then not be so worn out and overworked.

The Attorney General: You are probably right.

The Minister for Lands: I appealed to him to do likewise.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I issued an order to him to take a fortnight's holiday on one occasion. That is the only fault I find in Mr. Fyfe. He has suffered a terrible disability and is still suffering from it today. I refer to the carping criticism of people who know little or nothing about what was going on behind the scenes in regard to soldier land settlement. I do not think it very much encouragement to Mr. Fyfe to have three officers of this description, with

all due respect to their ability in their own class of work, embarking on an inquiry into his administration over the past 2½ years. He has been doing a colossal task.

Mr. Hoar: What do they have to gain?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I do not know. Ever since there has been a soldier land settlement scheme, the Minister for Lands has attended conferences in regard to it. Mr. Troy and my leader have attended such conferences. I also have attended them and the present Minister has followed suit.

The Minister for Lands: I went along and listened to you, didn't I?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes. I told them a different tale from that which you told.

The Minister for Lands: You told them about the hard way.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I think the member for Beverley talked about the hard way. Another term of the reference is, "To inquire into the delay in the allotment of farms." I suggest to the Minister, in all fairness to the director, that the Minister could have ascertained the cause of the delay, if any, in the allotment of farms. I do not know the system under which the Minister works; he knows his own business best, but the first fortnight I was in the Lands Department I adopted the same attitude as I had adopted to the Health Department and the Mines Department.

I appreciated the fact that there was a tremendous job to be done and that the Minister would know little or nothing about it. I therefore arranged with Mr. Fyfe, the director, that as long as we both were in town, we should meet in my office every Monday morning at 9 o'clock and discuss what was being done, what was intended to be done and any delay or trouble he was in. I, as Minister, was quite satisfied that that could be done without appointing a committee of inquiry. The Minister could have obtained all the information from the director, that is, of course, if he trusted his officer. If he does not trust a highly paid officer like Mr. Fyfe then of course there is some justification for a committee. As far as I am concerned, however, I can see no justification for it at all. The next term of the reference is, "An examination of the cost of farm lands so far acquired and expenditure entailed in bringing any farms to a

point where they could be allotted to ex-Servicemen." I propose to deal with the first part of this item now, "examination of the cost of farm lands so far acquired." This is an extraordinary thing.

Here we have three men making an examination of the cost of farm lands so far acquired. Unless the Minister has learnt something since the 31st March—I prefer to say the 31st March rather than the 1st April, which is a date that does not appeal to me—about the system adopted in acquiring farm lands, I may say that there is a Lands Purchase Board, the personnel of which is rather interesting, at least it was on the 31st March. That board was responsible for the recommendation to both the State and the Commonwealth Governments as to farms to be acquired, land to be acquired, value, purchase price, and everything else. The personnel was Mr. W. V. Fyfe, Director of Land Settlement as chairman; Mr. T. S. Parry, the Surveyor-General; Mr. G. K. Baron Hay, Under Secretary for Agriculture; Mr. C. L. Clarke, a retired Rural Bank Commissioner; Mr. V. L. Steffanoni, Chief Valuer of the Taxation Department; Mr. W. L. Devitt, Lands and Surveys Valuer; and Mr. B. C. Chambers, representing the R.S.L. Messrs. Bostock and Diver were also members of that board for a few months, but they retired for reasons best known to themselves.

If we examine the personnel of that board, apart from Mr. Fyfe, whom I have already discussed, we find that Mr. Parry is a man who knows this country well, through his surveying activities, from one end of the State to the other. Mr. Baron Hay, I should say, would be in a position, if anybody is, as Under Secretary for Agriculture, to give some valuable information as to the productive capacity of the land proposed to be bought. Mr. Clarke the retired Rural Bank Commissioner, had a wonderful experience, and I believe, everybody was well satisfied with his knowledge of the land, particularly in the South-West, where a large number of properties were being acquired. Mr. Steffanoni, the Chief Valuer in the Taxation Department, I understand, knows the value of land better than any man in Western Australia—certainly better than any of the three men appointed to this committee. Mr. Devitt I do not know personally, nor do I know Mr.

Chambers who, I presume, was nominated by the R.S.L. because of his knowledge.

This board held its first war service settlement meeting in August, 1945. I am now quoting from the report I received prior to my leaving office. By September, it had considered about 50 private farms offered for sale. So the members of that board were pretty busy and energetic, and valuers of the Taxation Department and inspectors of the Lands Department were actively employed in the field to assist the board while it was waiting for the appointment of additional experienced valuers. That was one of the early difficulties which faced the board—the inability to obtain experienced valuers. They were all engaged by the Commonwealth Government in connection with war service, particularly the surveyors and valuers generally. I do not know how many we have now. I have never asked for the information. I have been careful to keep away except when I wanted to see the Minister himself. I left on the 31st March, and we had built the number up to 12 valuers but were still very short. In addition to that, this board was busy with soil classification and in obtaining other data for several hundred properties that had been offered.

I want to deal with repurchased estates directly. Up to the 31st March, 1,374 private properties had been offered for sale. Of that number, 1,035 had been considered by the board, of which 348 were rejected as unsuitable, 135 were withdrawn, and 610 had been passed for valuation by the Taxation Department. The valuation reports received from the department totalled 320, and there were still 172 valuations to be made at the 31st March of this year. The board had inspected and recommended the purchase of 157 private properties comprising 489,315 acres, at a total cost of £962,660. Those are the purchases that the old Land Purchase Board recommended. The board could only recommend; the Commonwealth had to decide finally whether a purchase should be made or not. The committee that has been appointed by the Minister will have to report to him as to the value of the properties already acquired up to the 31st March, and I presume there have been others acquired since; at least, I hope so.

The committee will have to inquire into the value of 1,035 properties, and of 157 private properties valued at £962,660. That is a colossal task to give to three men. How are they going to value those properties? Are they expert valuers? Are they going to travel all over the State having a look at the land and do their best to value it, or are they going to take valuers with them to assist them in the task and then tell the Minister and, through him, Cabinet, whether a reasonable price is being paid? And it will be paid by the Commonwealth Government, of course! If the committee is going to take valuers along, has it been able to obtain the services of valuers apart from those already employed in the valuation of these properties? Those are things I would like to know. It would be very informative to know how the committee is working and what the Minister expects it to do.

The Premier: The hon. member knows it is necessary, from the Treasury aspect, to learn what losses we are up for, since we have to bear two-fifths of them.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The Treasurer knows as well as I do that whatever the valuation of those 157 properties is—whether it is good, bad or indifferent—he will still be up against that because the Commonwealth has accepted them and paid the money. So what can come out of this I do not know. He cannot sack the Minister, because he has been sacked! He might sack Mr. Fyfe, but he cannot sack Mr. Steffanoni, because he belongs to the Commonwealth.

The Premier: It is not a question of sacking anyone.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: We will leave it at that. Perhaps the Minister can give a better explanation than the Premier. I hope he can because the Premier's explanation is not a good one, to my way of thinking.

Mr. Hoar: He is going to have a thorny time!

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Included in the number were 16 properties comprising 34,128 acres of a total value of £57,762, which were rejected by the Commonwealth for various reasons. I hope the Minister will be able to tell us about that. It will give the Committee some idea of the posi-

tion. I expect, and I certainly hope, we will have the report of his committee tabled. These properties have been rejected by the Commonwealth and they may be some of the idealistic properties about which the Minister spoke—too idealistic for the Commonwealth. If they were, then the Government's tune has been altered a great deal since the 31st March. There are also six properties comprising 10,887 acres, of a total value of £36,679 that were withdrawn. I know why they were withdrawn. It was because the Commonwealth was too slow in making up its mind. Those properties were sold privately. So the committee of inquiry need not worry about that aspect. Eighty-five properties have been approved for purchase, comprising 311,154 acres, at a total cost of £666,179. That was the amount the Commonwealth agreed to pay up to the 31st March.

I might state, too, that great difficulty was being found in securing properties for purchase. In conjunction with the Director of Land Settlement, I signed no fewer than 160 letters to different people who owned fairly good properties, and that was done about May, 1946. These letters went out to all these people—the owners of Tootra were amongst them—asking whether they were prepared to sell at valuation so that the properties could be used for soldier land settlement. That was the only way we had of getting any idea of just what land was available, and could be utilised quickly. These properties were minutely examined by the Commonwealth. Now, as I say, we are going to have a committee to inquire into the operations, over the last 2½ years, of the Land Purchase Board.

The committee recommended to the State Government methods which might be adopted to enable the settlement of ex-Servicemen to be carried out more expeditiously. It may evolve some scheme which may be carried out expeditiously, but it seems to me that there is only one way to carry out this work more expeditiously, and that is to double the present staff and get a lot more of the expensive machinery that the Minister speaks of, and about which I would like him to tell us something. We would also need to amend the Closer Settlement Act along the lines of the Bill introduced by the Leader of the Opposition, which the Speaker, with a good deal of justification, thought fit to disallow.

The Minister for Lands: That will not be necessary, because the letters that you sent are becoming effective in result.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Thank God I have done something! I do not quite agree with that, either. I went over many of these places, some of them comprising huge areas of 9,000 to 12,000 acres. Little or nothing has been done on them excepting what we did after acquiring them. It is more than passing strange that this land could be taken up at about 10s. an acre and have little done to it—certainly a fence was put around it and a little bit of subdivision was done, and there were a few sheds here and there—and then we had to send out 160 letters so as to repurchase at a fairly high price. It may be necessary even now to amend the Closer Settlement Act with a view to getting some of that land which is not being utilised to anything like its capacity. However, I leave that in the hands of the Government.

I presume that when the Speaker ruled out the Bill of the Leader of the Opposition, the Government had some idea of doing something itself. The other matter mentioned by the Minister is that it is proposed to appoint a board because the job is too big for one man. I am not surprised that the Minister should appoint a board because if there is one thing this Government has done it is to appoint boards. As soon as it comes up against a problem it seems to appoint a board or a Royal Commission. I think the Premier will admit that this Government will go down in history principally because of the number of boards of inquiry it has appointed in its first few months of office.

The Premier: Will you tell us which are not justified?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: This is certainly not justified. What is this board going to do? All preparatory work has been done.

The Minister for Works: How many boards have been appointed?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am sorry I spoke so loudly; I did not intend to awaken the Minister for Works.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Now he is awake he will be bored.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Let me say that I have many things to do.

The Minister for Works: You should not raise the matter if you do not know anything about it.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: The Minister goes on to say, in connection with the inspection of these properties—

Mr. Thorn explained that he had inspected the properties that had been purchased for the scheme and were being developed, and found that all was not right with that aspect of the scheme. Gangs of men had been employed on some of the properties for two years, and a large quantity of expensive machinery was in use.

I want the Minister to tell the Committee, and myself in particular, about that. One of our greatest troubles was that we could not get machinery, expensive or otherwise.

The Minister for Lands: They suckered that particular property, erected new fences and then let the suckers grow, and the fences were burnt.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It is of no use the Minister trying to sidetrack the issue like that. He made the statement that gangs of men had been employed on some properties for two years, and a large quantity of expensive machinery was in use. The Minister made a public statement about this expensive machinery, and it reflects on one of two people—the director or myself. According to this report the expensive machinery was lying idle. The report continues—

For this reason it had been decided to appoint as supervisor in the field the most competent engineer that could be obtained.

I assume that that is really a condemnation of the field superintendent, Mr. Casselton. He has been there for 2½ years battling, to a large extent, without machinery. After 2½ years of this heavy work, and getting everything in order, we are to appoint an engineer.

The Minister for Lands: You are jumping to conclusions.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I am only taking the report. I said, from the inception, that I was speaking to give the Minister an opportunity to explain this report.

The Minister for Lands: I appreciate what you have said.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I would sooner the Minister replied when introducing his Estimates than by way of interjection.

The Minister for Lands: I will do that.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I would like him to explain what this expensive machinery is, and I would also like him to say whether he considers machinery to be expensive if it is carrying out the work economically and efficiently. It was a long time before we were able to get machinery of any sort. I think we ultimately hired it from the P.W.D. We had a go at hand labour while waiting for machinery, and we found that to deal with the heavy karri regrowth, including the burn-up, it cost £36 per acre. Then we got a bulldozer or two and that reduced the cost to £12 or £14 per acre. That was a reduction from £36 to £12 or £14, owing to the machinery.

The Minister for Lands: Where did you get those figures?

Hon. A. H. PANTON: They were given to me before I left the department.

The Minister for Lands: I got a set of figures different from those.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I will be pleased to hear them.

The Minister for Lands: You will hear them. They are reduced considerably.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: This was heavy karri regrowth. The work done by hand labour on jarrah and red gum country, including the burn-off, cost £25 per acre, but that cost was greatly reduced by the use of the bulldozer. The work was done by those men—

The Minister for Lands: But you were Minister in charge of the job.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: It was done by members of the A.W.U. and they were a good team. This method reduced the cost from £25 to £12 per acre. I had a good look at the clearing up of the fallen timber. It had previously been cleared and seeded, and by hand labour it was costing from £7 to £8 per acre to get the logs together ready for burning. The bulldozer did that work for about £4. No machinery is expensive if it does the work economically and efficiently. When I saw the bulldozers working I was sorry that we had not had a number of them from the inception of that work. We took over many places from the Rural Bank and I presume some of them are still not cleared. It was marvellous to see the bulldozers going through the re-growth just like a reaper through a field of corn. One of the troubles in clearing this country is the neces-

sity of having expensive machinery. I am glad the member for Beverley is back in his seat again, as I think he has been talking to the Minister for Lands.

Mr. Mann: I thought you were concentrating on the Minister.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I will concentrate on the member for Beverley now. He believes in clearing the land and farming the hard way, as he has said in this Chamber. That is why he looks so old and rugged. It is because he has worked the hard way. He made that statement at a settlers' conference, after the Minister had made his address. One of the pleasing features of the report was that the conference carried a resolution, even after hearing the Minister and the member for Beverley—I can imagine his eloquence—supporting the present scheme and the way in which the work is being carried out. Those men do not want to do the work the hard way. I will now deal briefly with the Tootra Estate, which, according to the Minister, would involve an expenditure of £250,000. I think we should be glad we got that estate, which is one of 150, the owners of which were written to in May, 1946. Mr. Steffanoni, an energetic valuer, had classified and valued these holdings many years ago. That was followed up by Mr. Steffanoni and others from May, 1946, until a short time ago, which will give members an idea of how long it takes and what is involved in purchasing an estate such as this.

The Minister for Lands: That was because the principals were in Scotland.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I see. They are Scotchmen. Mr. Steffanoni had classified and valued the holding many years ago. He and others have valued most of the land in this State and I think the Minister knows by now that the Taxation Department has the valuation of every piece of land worthy of the name in Western Australia. That has been the practice all along, and when an estate is offered the Taxation Department's valuation is referred to and the Land Purchase Board then goes out with that valuation as a foundation. I was interested and amused to read that the new State President of the R.S.L., Mr. W. J. Hunt—who is an old friend of mine—had something to say about the purchase of Tootra. He said—

This is real progress and the Government is to be congratulated for having taken the opportunity to acquire large properties, such

as Tootra, which will ensure the development of the land settlement scheme and the settling of ex-Servicemen on the land at a faster rate. It is to be hoped that the Committee of departmental officers which has been appointed by the Minister for Lands (Mr. Thorn) to inquire into the operation of the scheme will be able to submit similar properties in the near future for the same purpose.

It took nearly 18 months to get this one going.

Another pleasing feature of the purchase is that a large proportion of Commonwealth money will be expended in this State.

That ought to ease the Treasurer's mind.

It is understood any writing down found necessary in respect of such properties acquired will be borne in proportions of three-fifths by the Commonwealth and two-fifths by the State.

The last paragraph intrigues me.

It is very gratifying to the R.S.L. to realise that the Minister for Lands is adopting methods which will enable the settlement of ex-servicemen to be carried out more expeditiously. Perhaps the Minister can explain to which Minister that refers.

The Minister for Lands: I think it must refer to you.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I would hate to think I had written to these gentlemen and that the present Minister was to get the credit for it. An amusing part of it is that one of the things with which Mr. Fyfe's time was taken up was explaining to the R.S.L. land board what was going on and what had been done. The board had already recommended the purchase of 489,315 acres for £962,660. That had been done before the 31st March, so perhaps Tootra is just like the bigger motorcar that is given to a little boy who has been used to having a smaller one.

The Minister for Lands: It is real progress.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Yes, but the Minister might have done what I did when I thought it was necessary. I gave the people credit where it was due. Messrs. Fyfe and Steffanoni are the people who did the job, not the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: I did not write that article.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I know who wrote it, and immediately it was written I said, "I am one of those who believe in giving

credit where it is due." The Fyfe-Steffanoni combination did wonderful work.

The Minister for Lands: I am not looking for any credit.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: I will give the Minister all the credit that is due to him, but will not allow Mr. Hunt or anyone else to take the credit from the people to whom it is really due. Those people are Steffanoni and Fyfe and their staff of valuers, who worked incessantly. The member for Canning mentioned 40 hours a week, but these men never thought of working only 40 hours a week. They were on the job day and night.

Mr. Yates: But the public must know that the Minister is not responsible for all these things.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: My experience is that the minds of the public are generally influenced by the last thing that is said, and the last thing on that occasion came from Mr. Hunt. Finally I wish to say that, irrespective of what the finding of the committee may be, I hope that it and the Minister and Government will at least give credit to the staff that has done all the preparatory work. The members of the staff have borne the heat and burden of the day and have done a wonderful job in the face of innumerable difficulties, difficulties of which the Minister should be aware because he was on the R.S.L. land board for a long time and that body was kept in touch with affairs throughout.

I am anxious to know where this idealistic scheme that has been propounded has been put up. I hope the Minister will be able to produce evidence that he has been in any way able to influence Mr. McLaren or his Minister, Mr. Dedman, to move one inch from the agreement that was embodied in an Act of Parliament passed here last session. I spoke to Mr. McLaren and to Mr. Dedman both in Canberra and in Perth, and they were always going to do something, but they did not do it. Mr. McLaren said he would be here in a fortnight, and it took him three months, I think the Minister said, to get here. We were up against that sort of thing all the time. When the Minister talks about the idealistic part of the scheme—there has been a change; it used to be academic—it will be interesting to hear who was responsible for it.

If any apology is necessary for my remarks, I wish it to be clearly understood that I have not set out to criticise the Minister, but I have given him something to answer and I want an answer to the statement published in the Press. I occupied the office of Minister for a considerable time and I feel, as the member for Canning said, that I am responsible, and I am prepared to accept my share of the responsibility. That is why I want this matter cleared up. That statement was made to an R.S.L. conference and the report appeared in the Press. It might not have been a full report, but the published statement was not contradicted or altered. Therefore I say the Committee is entitled to know—and I am entitled to know—the exact position.

This is the only way I have of getting the information without going to the Minister's office, and he knows that my bashfulness would not permit me to do that. That is all I have to say on the question at the moment. I trust that the Minister will give us the information. So long as I can use my tongue—and I hope that will be for a long time—the members of the staff who have done all the bullocking work will not be deprived of the credit due to them for any committee of inquiry, engineer or gentleman who may come along now.

MR. BOVELL (Sussex) [10.34]: For many years I, as an elector, have read with interest the Budget speeches delivered by various Treasurers in this State. Through the courtesy of the electors of Sussex, I am now privileged to participate in the debate. At the outset, I wish to congratulate the Premier on having displayed the courage in his first Budget speech to budget for a deficit of £681,788. If I had any comment to make upon that, it might be that I regret that the expected deficit is not double or treble that amount.

Members: Hear, hear!

MR. BOVELL: I feel that this State, containing of one-third of the area of the Commonwealth, has such potential wealth in both primary and secondary industries that the Commonwealth Government should be made to realise the fact. Though we may be the Cinderella amongst the States from every point of view—defence is not excluded—this State must have an oppor-

tunity to develop very rapidly. I repeat that if I have any comment to make on the Premier's speech, it is that I regret he has not budgeted for a deficit many times larger.

MR. GRAHAM: What about sound finance now?

MR. BOVELL: It is sound finance, because we have the potential asset in the State. From my experience as a banker, I say that any proposition in finance showing promise of a reasonable return makes the investment worthwhile.

MR. GRAHAM: Although showing a trading loss every year.

MR. BOVELL: Who is showing a trading loss?

MR. GRAHAM: Read the figures for the last few years.

MR. YATES: That is only on paper.

MR. BOVELL: I am concerned with the future, not the past.

MR. GRAHAM: A pity the banks are not.

MR. BOVELL: I shall deal with the banks later. I repeat for the benefit of the member for East Perth that the potential value of the assets of this State is not comprehended by the vast majority of the people in the Eastern States, and with them I might include the member for East Perth.

MR. GRAHAM: That is just plain silly, is it not?

MR. BOVELL: That is a matter of opinion. Primary production is and has been our greatest asset, and we must not neglect our interest in the primary producers, who are the master craftsmen that have built up the wealth of the State. I refer not only to the farmers, but also to the producers of coal, gold and timber, all of which are primary products in this State.

Regarding the dairying industry, with which I am vitally concerned, I was amazed when reading "The West Australian" this morning at the figures quoted by Sir Earle Page. According to those figures, butter production in the Commonwealth has decreased to an alarming extent. I hope and believe that the State Government will give full consideration to the question of stimulating our dairying industry. The farmers in my electorate feel considerable anxiety about the presence of contagious abortion and sterility in their stock, and I hope it

will be possible to establish a farm research station south of Busselton. That area is the main centre of our dairying industry. Through the great foresight and statesmanship exhibited by Sir James Mitchell and later by the member for Boulder in establishing and carrying on the Group Settlement Scheme, a very stable industry has been created in this State.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Sir James Mitchell did not have much foresight when he gave away the Savings Bank.

Mr. BOVELL: I am not talking about banks at the moment, but if members opposite will bear with me a little I may have something to say on banking later. I was very interested in the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition about the attitude of the Commonwealth Government. He used a word that is new in our vocabulary so far as politics are concerned. That word is "recession" and it was invented by the present Prime Minister.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Not at all.

Mr. BOVELL: It was invented as a counter to the word "depression".

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I am afraid the word is older than you are.

Mr. BOVELL: Possibly, but it has not been brought into our political life to such an extent as it has been by the Prime Minister.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I do not use words politically; I use them suitably.

Mr. BOVELL: I would say that the Prime Minister is trying to hide what he said about the golden age which he promised us would follow upon the successful issue of World War. II. In view of the fact that both he and his followers had used the word "depression" so much, they found it necessary to employ another word, recession. The Leader of the Opposition led me to believe that he was alarmed about the control of the Commonwealth over the States. If my impression is correct then I am thoroughly in accord with his sentiment. The Commonwealth is so strangling the States that they will soon be out of existence. It is strangling them by the most realistic and effective means, finance.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The present Government was going to stand up against that.

Mr. BOVELL: It will. It is doing so.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: How? It is not meeting with much success, apparently.

Mr. BOVELL: Members opposite have been rather frequent with their interjections about banking since I commenced speaking. Following on the strangling of the States, the present socialistic Commonwealth Government is now implementing a policy to strangle the individual by attacking the financial structure of Australia. If the Commonwealth Government persists in that course we shall find ourselves, as individuals, strangled as effectively as the States of Australia are.

Mr. Graham: Would you like us to be as free as we were in the early 'thirties?

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: During the recession!

Mr. BOVELL: The bombshell of banking nationalisation which the Prime Minister threw into the midst of Australia is bad enough. If we had nothing to do but attend to our domestic affairs the position would be serious enough; but we, as Australians and an integral part of the British Commonwealth of Nations, at present have to shoulder the greatest responsibility we have ever shouldered, and that is the responsibility of assisting the Mother Country in the hour of her greatest trial. In all sincerity, I charge the Prime Minister—since our friends opposite have brought the banking issue into my speech—with causing a domestic upheaval and dividing opinion within the Commonwealth to the detriment of our effort to help Britain in her need by endeavouring to nationalise the banks in Australia.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The banking interests have done what you are charging the Prime Minister with doing.

Mr. BOVELL: I feel that the Commonwealth must assist this State to the full limit of its financial resources.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Hear, hear! We all agree with that.

Mr. BOVELL: We need every penny we can get to assist in developing our primary and secondary industries.

Mr. Triat: We get half our revenue from the Commonwealth now.

Mr. BOVELL: We require more than half. We need treble the amount. We need an immense sum to defend our shores against any threat of invasion.

Mr. Fox: That is not a State matter.

Mr. BOVELL: It is. I would advocate the appointment of Under-Ministers of Defence, or Assistant Ministers of Defence, in each State of the Commonwealth. I am not sure that the present Defence Minister can provide adequate services to defend our vast coast line without the co-operation of State Governments. The present turmoil in the world is so serious that we must be prepared.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.18 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 23rd October, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

PIG FEED.

As to Waste of Swill.

Mr. MANN (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is it a fact that valuable pig food is being buried by the Perth City Council?

(2) In view of the urgent need for pig meats by the United Kingdom, has he endeavoured to prevent this economic waste?

(3) What steps has he taken to divert this valuable pig food to the production of pork?

(4) If the answer to (1) is in the affirmative, why is the pig swill still being wasted?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.

(3) The ban on pig swill has been lifted providing it is sterilised; approval has already been given for one digester capable of treating a large quantity of pig swill in the metropolitan area. Approval of further digesters is contemplated.

(4) The Council is not favourably disposed towards diverting the swill to the digester, although the owner of the plant has offered to compensate the Council for any extra cost involved.

MILK.

As to Treatment Licenses Issued and Under Consideration.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How many treatment licenses for the current year have been issued by the Milk Board in the exercise of its powers under the Milk Act?

(2) What is the number of applications for treatment licenses at present before the board and upon which a decision has not yet been made?

(3) How many of the 20 treatment licenses issued under the Milk Act for the year ended the 30th June, 1947, have not been renewed by the board for the current year?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Four.

(2) Nineteen.

(3) Four.

FEED OATS.

As to Fixed Price and Exports.

Mr. ACKLAND (on notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is it a fact that the Prices Commissioner has fixed the buying price for feed oats for the 1947-48 season at 3s. 3d. per bushel, country sidings?

(2) Does this price include the price of bags?

(3) If not, how much is allowed for bags?

(4) Is it a fact that approximately 3,000 tons of oats were exported from Adelaide last month?

(5) Is there any truth in the rumour that the Australian Barley Board sold the oats mentioned above at a price substantially above 10s. per bushel, free on board?