

the public will be amply protected. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. G. B. Wood, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 10th November, 1938.

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

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1. Superannuation and Family Benefits.
Introduced by the Premier.
2. Industries Assistance Act Continuance.
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 3).

In Committee.

Resumed from the 8th November. Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

Postponed Clause 7—Amendment of Section 65:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Paragraph (a) of this clause is certainly ambiguous, and I propose to substitute for it an-

other paragraph that will clarify the position. I move an amendment—

That paragraph (a) be struck out and the following words inserted in lieu:—

(a) By deleting Subsection 3 and inserting in lieu thereof a subsection as follows:—

(3) No person who at or in relation to any election—(a) acts as returning officer; or (b) has been appointed by the Minister to take absentee votes shall be or become a candidate at such election. Provided that this subsection shall not apply to a person who having been appointed to take absentee votes as aforesaid, by a notice in writing to the Minister, relinquishes such appointment before the nomination day for the election at which he proposes to be a candidate.

If this amendment is carried, no person who has been appointed a postal vote officer shall take postal votes unless he relinquishes that position prior to becoming a candidate for the road board. The amendment will make the clause clear.

Mr. SAMPSON: Some inconvenience will be caused in districts where there is only one postal vote officer if that officer is withdrawn. Is it intended that the withdrawal shall be only temporary, or does the Minister mean that after the election is over the person who has held the position shall automatically be restored to it? Would the Minister agree to the secretary of the road board being the postal vote officer?

The Minister for Works: For the most part he holds that position.

Mr. SAMPSON: But not always.

Hon. C. G. Latham: If he does not, the board is at fault.

Mr. SAMPSON: If the Minister is able to assure the boards that no inconvenience will arise in connection with postal vote arrangements, his amendment is quite clear.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No difficulty will arise with regard to postal vote officers, because the secretary of the local road board is almost always that officer.

Mr. Doney: Yes, in nearly every instance.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If a postal vote officer did desire to nominate, he would naturally notify the board accordingly and the board could make a recommendation so as to overcome the difficulty.

Mr. Sampson: That would be quite satisfactory.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—AMENDMENTS INCORPORATION.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. F. C. L. Smith—Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [4.44] in moving the second reading said: The Bill proposes to repeal the Amendments Incorporation Act, 1923, which was designed for the reprinting of statutes in consolidated form when that course became necessary. One difficulty regarding the existing Act is that no provision is made for the renumbering of sections. In a number of instances of amendments to statutes those amendments do not themselves make any provision for their places in the principal Act. In some amending legislation we have had before the House the amendments are stated in such a way that they appear in the amended Act as Section 10A or Section 10B. In such instances we know where those sections should be placed in the amended Act. One difficulty regarding that method of numbering sections arises in connection with future amendments, the proper place for which would be between Section 10A and Section 10B. I do not know how that difficulty is overcome by Parliaments that adopt that particular system for numbering their amending sections. In other instances Bills have been passed to amend Acts, and the clauses of the amending Bills are numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4. Then there are other instances where the amending provision is general in its terms, and although a place can be found for it in the principal Act, the amending legislation provides no indication as to where the provision should appear in the Act. In amendments relating to some Acts attempts have been made to overcome the difficulty by providing in the amending Act that the principal Act shall be reprinted and that the sections shall be renumbered in arithmetical order, together with the adjusting of cross references to the sections, subsections, paragraphs and subparagraphs. Provision is also made for the sections of the principal Act as amended being transferred and placed in proper order with all amendments incorporated in their proper places and suitable references to amended and transposed sections made in the marginal notes. Instances of that kind are to be found in the Factories and Shops Act Amendment Act, No. 54 of 1937, and also in the Bread Act Amendment Act, No. 49 of 1937. There

are other instances in our statute-book of amendments of that description. Where provision has been made for the insertion of amendments in their proper places, for their being numbered and relettered and for the alterations being incorporated in a reprint of the Act, it has been possible to undertake that work. A number of our statutes have been reprinted in consolidated form accordingly, but we find, with regard to many statutes to which amendments have been made such as I have indicated where the amending sections have been numbered 1, 2 and 3, and subsequently further amending legislation has been passed altering those amendments, thus adding further to the difficulty. In consequence, legislation upon the subjects dealt with has become very involved, even for members of the legal fraternity but, to a greater degree, for the general public. From that standpoint I may cite the Companies Act, which has been amended on several occasions, while another instance is provided by the Fremantle Municipal Tramways Act, which has been the subject of a number of amendments that have made the measure particularly complicated. The latter Act has been amended by legislation in which the provisions were numbered 1, 2 and 3, and, generally speaking, it would be impossible to consolidate that Act under the existing Amendments incorporation Act. Whilst in the main the provisions of that Act will be found in the Bill, the Bill goes further, because the Minister for Justice or the Attorney General may cause an Act to be reprinted by the Government Printer so that the reprint incorporates every amendment that is made by repeal or omission of any words, or by the substitution of any words in lieu of any words repealed or omitted, or by the insertion or addition of any words. The term "words" includes part, division, heading, section, subsection, paragraph, schedule and any other words, figures, or passages in any Act. I may point out that under the existing Amendments Incorporation Act, reprints are to be printed under the supervision of the Clerk of Parliaments. We propose to alter that provision, and so this measure provides that reprints shall be printed under the supervision of the Crown Law Department. When the Amendments Incorporation Act was passed, the then Clerk of Parliaments was a

member of the legal profession and consequently competent, on that account, to exercise the necessary supervision. Our present Clerk of Parliaments is not a lawyer, and so we feel these compilations would be better supervised by the Crown Law Department. The definition of the term "words" in the Bill is practically the same as that in the existing legislation; but the Bill provides for the renumbering and insertion, in their proper place, of amendments to principal Acts.

The Bill also specifically provides that the short title of the reprinted Act may be altered so as to indicate the year in which it was passed, and the year in which was passed the latest Act amending the reprinted Act. If any reference is contained in a reprinted Act to any other Act, or portion of an Act, for which some other Act or portion of an Act has been substituted, that reference may be altered to a reference to the substituted Act or portion of any Act. If any reference is contained in a reprinted Act to a name, style, or title of any place, person, body corporate or authority which name, style, or title has been changed pursuant to any Act or law, the reference may be altered to the name, style or title as so changed. Marginal notes to any section contained in a reprinted Act may be altered so as to accord with the true effect of the section.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You have taken notice of my suggestion.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Any words at the foot of a reprinted Act indicating the giving of the Royal Assent thereto may be omitted, provided that the date of the Royal Assent shall appear in every reprinted Act. Errors in spelling or numbering in any Act reprinted may be corrected. We have at present on our statute-book an Act entitled the Statutes Compilation Act.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Are you repealing that Act as well?

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: No. We do not think it proper to do so by this legislation. Personally, I think it undesirable to repeal it. It is somewhat cumbersome, I admit, as it provides for a resolution of both Houses of Parliament to be passed authorising the compilation of any piece of legislation. A Bill could then be brought down in a consolidated form and passed by both Houses. On only one occasion, I think, have we taken advantage of

the provisions of the Statutes Compilation Act, and that was for the compilation of the Pharmacy and Poisons Act. The Statutes Compilation Act was, of course, superseded by the Amendments Incorporation Act which, as I have indicated, does not go far enough. The Statutes Compilation Act was copied from a statute passed in New Zealand, I think in 1905. The New Zealand Act has, however, long since been repealed. The Act does have this advantage, that if a Government, or a Government department, were somewhat tardy in compiling existing statutes, members could bring the matter under the notice of Parliament, point out the necessity for the compilation of a particular piece of legislation and have resolutions carried for the purpose of effecting such compilation. That Act has not been availed of extensively, nor do I think it will be so long as the Government is reprinting Acts with reasonable expedition.

Legislation similar to the Amendments Incorporation Act has been passed in most of the other States of the Commonwealth, but that legislation is better designed to facilitate reprints than is our existing Amendments Incorporation Act. The present Bill will give all the facilities that are required in that direction. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—LIGHTS (NAVIGATION PROTECTION).

In Committee.

Mr. Sleeman in the Chair; the Minister for Justice in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Powers in relation to lights.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: As this is the most important clause of the Bill, I made inquiries and ascertained that the objections raised by the member for Nedlands are not valid. I am not suggesting the member for Nedlands contended they were; he merely raised doubts. Under the Constitution, we have concurrent powers with the Commonwealth over navigation. Under Commonwealth legislation, control is exercised by the Commonwealth over ocean lights, rather than over lights of the port and harbour authorities. The request for

a Bill of this description has come from the permanent committee of the Interstate Conference of Australian Harbour Authorities. It met in Melbourne on the 13th August, 1937, and carried a resolution requesting this legislation. The marginal note will indicate references to similar legislation in Queensland, Victoria and South Australia, as well as New Zealand.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 4 to 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment, and the report adopted.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1938-39.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 8th November; Mr. Sleeman in the Chair.

Vote—Medical, £38,260:

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported after this Vote had been partly considered.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.5]: The Minister should tell the Committee why the policy for the country districts in respect of the building of hospitals is different from that which applies to the Perth Hospital. For a number of years it has been the policy of the department to provide for the building of hospitals in country districts on the understanding that the local people contribute towards the cost. In the metropolitan area, however, it does not seem to be necessary for the community to make any additional contributions. There is a good deal more wealth in the city than in the country districts. Seasons as we know have been bad, and the strain will be far more severely felt by the farming community than by business people in the metropolitan area. So in country towns difficulty will be experienced in raising money for hospital construction. In the city there are millions of pounds' worth of property, and no call whatever is made upon the people. I hope the Minister will tell the Committee the reason for the difference in the policy of hospital building in the country and in the city. We have been informed that a new hospital is to be constructed in the city at a cost of three-quarters of a million, that the money will be found by the board of management, and will be guaranteed by the Government. I am certain

that many hospitals that are really needed in country districts would speedily be built if they could be financed in a similar manner. It is not fair that country districts should be treated differently from the metropolitan area.

MRS. CARDELL - OLIVER (Subiaco) [5.7]: I draw the Minister's attention to the fact that the newly-built King Edward Hospital has been constructed without a kitchen, and that it will be necessary to convey the food from the existing kitchen to the new building, a distance of approximately 200 yards. Attached to the old hospital there is a dilapidated kitchen, which is really a disgrace. The food will have to be cooked there and taken by an unsheltered path to the new structure. The Minister may, of course, arrange for some sort of cover, but so far I have not heard of this having been done. One can imagine in what condition the food will reach the building. It will be in anything but an appetising state. It does seem extraordinary that provision should have been made for the erection of such a fine building without a kitchen. Even though it be kept on a hot point, the food is no longer the same, and cannot be fit for consumption by people who are ill. I understand it would cost another £10,000 to add a suitable kitchen to the new structure. Even though it did cost that sum of money, the work would be well worth undertaking, because the newly-built hospital cannot be regarded as complete in every respect until the kitchen is provided. I regret that it has been necessary to roof the structure with galvanised iron. But apart from that, the real defect is the failure to provide proper cooking facilities in the building itself. The Minister mentioned that there would be a deficit of £40,000 on the vote, but even that should not prevent the provision of cooking facilities in the new building that has cost so much.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.9]: Many subjects have been discussed under this vote, but one I consider of importance and is a menace to health has not been touched upon, and that is the mosquito pest. If Perth is to become a city that will be attractive to tourists, we must make an attempt to eradicate mosquitoes. With the development of air navigation, the date is not far-distant

when air liners from overseas will be alighting on the Swan River. During the recent war scare it was announced that the British Government had made plans for a service of air liners from Africa to Western Australia. Should this come about, there will be the danger of malaria and other tropical diseases being brought here. This, therefore, is an important reason why mosquito eradication should be taken up in earnest as a public service under the Health Department. For years past, many hundreds, or even perhaps many thousands of pounds have been spent without success in an attempt to destroy the pest, and failure has been due largely to the fact that the districts of local authorities carrying out the work are not contiguous. Large areas between the territory controlled by the local bodies are left untouched, and so the money that the work of eradication has cost has not been spent to the best advantage. The Commissioner of Health has great power under the Act, far greater than he has exercised, and if he desired he could take over the work and save the community the cost of it. He could well impose a rate and save to the local authorities the money they are now expending on isolated efforts. I notice a few members smiling. I suppose it is because they are impervious to the sting of mosquitoes, but I repeat that if Perth as a city beautiful is to attract visitors we must consider this problem. Comparatively speaking it will cost very little bearing in mind the advantage that will follow. I trust the Minister for Health will give the matter some attention.

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [5.13]: I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister for Health the question of the lazaret at Wooroloo. This has been a contentious matter and the residents in the district have become really concerned.

Mr. Marshall: How many patients are there in the lazaret?

Mr. THORN: Seven, I believe, and I have been notified this week that another patient has been sent there. The existing state of affairs is causing some concern around Wooroloo and the matter should receive the attention of the health authorities. Some time ago I suggested to the Federal Minister for Health that there should be one lazaret for lepers for the whole of

Australia. We are continually being informed by the medical profession that leprosy is not contagious and that it is necessary really to come into close contact with a person to become infected. There is very definite evidence that the disease is on the increase. When I first brought the matter before the House there were four lepers at Wooroloo. Since then the number has increased to eight and naturally people in the district are becoming very concerned. The presence of the lazaret is having a depressing effect on their business and land values are reduced. To-day nobody wants to buy property at Wooroloo. About two years ago an inquiry was held but it was purely a departmental investigation and of course the findings were in favour of the department. I hope the time will come when the Minister will be able to have an impartial inquiry undertaken. I trust that a Commission representing different interests will be appointed to make a full inquiry. The people were very disappointed at the way they were treated on the last occasion.

Many years ago when the lazaret was first established at Wooroloo the people were promised by the Hon. Jabez Dodd, the then Minister for Health, that no additions would be made and that the erection of the lazaret was only a temporary measure. However, the lazaret has been continued and what concerns me is that money is being expended on more buildings and the lazaret is consequently becoming more firmly established each year. I do not know where we can transfer it. I got into trouble previously for suggesting where it might be established, so I am not going to make any further suggestions. I notice that the member for Kanowna (Mr. Nulsen) is looking very hard at me. Of course we are very sympathetic towards these unfortunate people.

Mr. North: Are they natives?

Mr. THORN: No, they are whites, and I am sure that we are all anxious to have them accommodated in the most congenial surroundings. The matter is one that must be dealt with because there is definite proof that the number of lepers is increasing and I do not think that Wooroloo should be made a dumping ground for them. Anyone passing along the Northam-road can see the leprosarium, which is a few hundred yards off the main thoroughfare to Northam. The inmates have no guard placed over them. They are told not to go away, but they can

go. One came to Perth some time ago and a week was occupied in looking for her. This is a matter that concerns the public. I know of one leper who came from Queensland. One of our local policemen who happened to know him saw him and he was then sent to our lazaret.

Mr. Cross: Is he one of the additions?

Mr. THORN: He is not one of the latest additions. The residents of the district are very perturbed about this serious question and I sincerely hope the Minister will suggest to the Commonwealth Government some suitable scheme for housing all lepers in Australia in one leprosarium.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [5.20]: Comparisons have been drawn between the manner of financing the construction of country hospitals and those in the metropolitan area. Apparently it is the intention to make hospitals in the metropolitan area a charge upon the public revenue. I can see no reason for discrimination of this kind in favour of metropolitan hospitals. I daresay the explanation advanced will be that in the Perth hospital, and possibly other hospitals in the metropolitan area, there is a very big proportion of patients from the country, but I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the fact that just recently figures relating to certain of the big hospitals in the country were examined. The investigation showed that there was a greater proportion of outside residents in country hospitals than of country people in metropolitan hospitals. The hospitals at Merredin, Katanning and Albany were selected at random for this examination and there was certainly a big proportion of metropolitan people in those hospitals. If this method is to be adopted in the metropolitan area of charging the cost of hospitals to Consolidated Revenue, perhaps the intention of the Government is to extend the same privilege to country areas, although I suppose the House will be fairly doubtful about that. It would, however, be one satisfactory reason for the Government's having decided to build the new Perth Hospital from the public revenue.

MISS HOLMAN (Forrest) [5.22]: I wish to thank the Minister and the department for many improvements to the hospitals in my electorate. Not long after the present Minister was appointed he started to visit country hospitals and as a result improve-

ments were effected at the Jarrahdale hospital. Like other electorates, mine is still waiting for a few more benefits. I understand that the Dwellingup hospital committee has submitted a plan for a new maternity ward and block and I trust that it will receive favourable consideration from the Minister. I believe the Mornington Hospital is not as fully staffed as formerly on account of the erection of a new hospital at Harvey. A request for a hospital has come from a little place called Donnybrook which is a very important centre, right in the heart of the fruitgrowing country in the South-West. Donnybrook is many miles from a hospital. It is in the middle of a triangle with Collie at one corner, Bridgetown in another and Bunbury, 25 miles away, in the third. An up-to-date little hospital to accommodate about nine people is needed there and an X-Ray plant and an up-to-date operating theatre are necessary.

I desire to pay a tribute to the people in the country who do such a great deal of work for hospitals. I could enumerate numbers of things that have been done by country committees. For instance, the Dwellingup committee supplies the whole of the linen for the local hospital. The women's auxiliary works every year to replace the linen and provides many other requirements. The children in country districts also assist the hospitals by holding egg days and in other ways. People support the hospitals by conducting sports gatherings and balls and all sorts of competitions. It is absolutely marvellous how folk in the country obtain money to maintain and improve hospitals. A few years ago Donnybrook raised £700 and the Government obtained a block of five acres on which to erect a hospital. The time has passed and the amount of money at present in hand is over £1,300. Of that amount over £300 was raised by the returned soldiers' committee and the citizens of Donnybrook in a big effort made at the beginning of this year. The people of the town are extremely anxious to have an up-to-date hospital. Donnybrook is 25 miles from Bunbury and, if an operation is urgently required, that is a long distance to take a patient. Donnybrook is the centre of a number of timber mills and of a great fruitgrowing area, and I trust it will not be long before the town has its hospital. I hope also that many other country centres will enjoy a similar advantage.

I wish to pay a tribute to the work of the Lotteries Commission. Quite a number of the facilities provided at country hospitals could not have been provided but for the assistance of the Commission. I congratulate the Minister on the acquisition of the travelling dental clinic that was handed over to him by the Commission this week. The clinic was provided as the result of £1,000 donated by the Lotteries Commission and it will be a great boon to the children in out-back centres who require dental treatment, and especially children of necessitous parents. As the Minister has stated, the provision of a travelling dental clinic is a marvellous improvement and a great innovation for this State. I trust it will not be long before many more of these travelling clinics will be provided because the State is so huge and so many need dental treatment that one clinic will be insufficient. Admittedly there are several school dentists and nurses, but those of us that represent country electorates know that the dentists cannot possibly visit all the centres. Sometimes two years elapse between visits to a particular centre.

MR. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle) [5.29]: Last year the department provided £2,720 for infant health clinics in this State and I notice that this year the estimated expenditure is £3,100. I suppose the Minister will say he is pretty hard put to find that amount of money, but I consider that the Government is getting out of this very lightly, because if the public-spirited people who do this work were to withdraw from it, the Government would be obliged to find the whole of the cost of establishing the clinics. Not the least important part of the work performed by the clinics is the giving of pre-natal advice to prospective mothers. That has undoubtedly resulted in a considerable reduction in maternal mortality, and represents an investment to ensure that the children are born healthy. That must save the State thousands of pounds later by obviating the need for enlarging hospitals. If children are born unhealthy, undoubtedly we are storing up for ourselves a considerable legacy of sickness and ill-health. I should like the Minister to endeavour to be as liberal as possible to the people establishing such clinics, for they give their time and their money in large measure. Almost without exception, mothers who go to the clinics make some contribution for the ser-

vice they receive. Cottesloe has a system whereby the mother contributes by putting a coin into a box for that purpose. No one knows the amount given by any particular person. If a person can give 3s. or 5s. she does so, and if she can only contribute 3d. she does so and nobody knows, not even the nurse in charge, how much she is contributing. That is an excellent idea, and its success proves that people are willing to contribute as much as they can afford. At the Cottesloe infant health clinic the system produces quite a large sum of money, enabling the clinic to do additional excellent work. I am glad to say that through the liberality of the Lotteries Commission it has been possible to extend the work to Mosman Park. I find the members of the Commission most sympathetic to the work; they deserve the praise and thanks of all members and of the Minister for the very sympathetic consideration they extend to projects of this nature. Undoubtedly, as regards Mosman Park, were it not for the helpful view taken by the Commission, it would not have been possible to undertake the new building which is in course of erection there and almost completed.

People opposed to lotteries should realise that without the Commission this community would have to do without many of those clinics.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Funds can be obtained by taxation.

Mr. TONKIN: It has been said here night after night that already we are taxed up to the hilt. I heard the Deputy Leader of the National Party say during this session that the stage of taxation which had been reached in Western Australia was such as practically to stifle industry; that it was impossible to impose further taxation without causing grievous harm. People object strenuously to direct taxation.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: In this matter they tax themselves.

Mr. TONKIN: They do not mind doing that. It seems to be a trait of Australian human nature not to object to indirect taxation. The Australian will contribute to all sorts of projects; but direct taxation, even for an infant health clinic, he objects to vigorously. I am perfectly convinced that in the absence of the Lotteries Commission there would not be as many infant health

clinics as exist to-day, and that many hospitals would not have the furnishings which the Lotteries Commission has supplied, such things as refrigerators and x-ray plants. For my part I hope the Commission will continue, so that infant health clinics may receive additional funds to extend their extremely valuable work.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That is not the way clinics get their money in Russia.

Mr. TONKIN: I see the Chairman looking hard at me, and I will save up my reply for another time. To reiterate, my thanks are freely given to the Lotteries Commission for the most valuable help that body has rendered towards the establishment of infant health clinics. I hope the Commission will extend its work, so that still more of these clinics may be established throughout the State. I know of no more valuable health work than that done by the clinics. Marvellous work is being done by people who give their time, their money and their energy to the furtherance of these clinics. I say again that not the least important part of the work is the pre-natal advice given to mothers. The figures of recorded attendances show that more and more mothers are attending the clinics for advice, and undoubtedly the nation is benefiting considerably as a result of their establishment. Whilst I am pleased that the department anticipates some extension and will spend an additional £380 this year, I ask that the most liberal treatment possible be given to this branch of the Health Department, because its work, and that of the people connected with it, are entitled to every encouragement.

MR. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.37]: I congratulate the Minister on the very clear way he has submitted these Estimates. The hon. gentleman outlined the activities of the department and showed what it was doing in the metropolitan area and also in country districts. I support the previous speaker's suggestion that the vote for infant health clinics should be substantially increased, because the increase will definitely bring about a saving of human life. The saving of lives in this connection means the saving of expense to the State. A great deal of money has been spent on immigration, on trying to induce people to come here. Therefore the saving of children born here represents definite gain to Western Australia. Any in-

creased expenditure in this direction will be recouped in days to come.

Glancing at the vital statistics contained in the "Western Australian Pocket Year Book" I observe that between 1928 and 1937 there has been an increase of one per thousand in the marriage rate. Turning to the birth-rate figures, I find that in 1928 the rate was 21.36 and in 1937 only 18.93, showing a decrease of nearly three per thousand. As regards infant mortality, I find that in 1928 the deaths of children under one year were 48.12 per thousand, and that in 1937 this rate had decreased to 37.52. In other words, in 1937 as compared with 1928, 11 lives per thousand were being saved. There is need for that saving, as the birth rate has diminished by approximately three per thousand. There is need for it even though between 1928 and 1937 the marriage rate increased by one per thousand. Expenditure on infant health centres, therefore, is excellent expenditure. The Infant Health Association, which functions under the Health Department, could probably develop the work further. There is room for more infant health centres not only in the metropolitan area but also in the outback districts. I speak with some authority on the subject, because although I have only a family of two I can say that had it not been for the assistance of infant health centres it is certain my children would never have been raised, on account of difficulty in feeding. Many mothers in this community who have raised four, five, or even six children without difficulty, find that the raising of yet another child is another matter. In those circumstances the mother can seek advice and assistance at an infant health centre from a sister who is skilled in regard to the bringing up of children, their feeding and so on. Thus in the saving of child life, a matter of great importance to the State, the clinics are doing admirable work. The increase of approximately £400 in the vote will soon be eaten up. I trust that next year's Estimates, irrespective of what Government may be in power, will show a substantial increase in this vote. Thus we shall save life, and the best kind of life for this State—the native-born—and offset the money spent on immigration.

The value of the infant clinics' work is well known to me. At many clinics the nurse carries on under exceedingly difficult conditions—in a mere room without the

necessary equipment. The member for North-East Fremantle has indicated how largely the Lotteries Commission assists local efforts to provide buildings in which the work can be carried on to the best advantage. Even though the State may wear an appearance of indigence and in spite of the inevitable cry "Where is the money to come from?" there is no more important work than that of saving newly-born children to take their places in our community. To achieve that end we cannot do too much.

Members will recollect that some years ago the Commonwealth set up a Nutritional Committee to inquire in the various States how the people were being fed, the kind of food they were eating, and the value and sufficiency of that food for physical well-being. I do not know whether the Department of Health co-operates with that committee, but I do know that in the other States local committees assist in this direction. The Department of Health should certainly co-operate with the Commonwealth Government. In Queensland there is a committee established and it is doing excellent work. I have no knowledge that anything of the kind has ever been done here. Perhaps the Minister will indicate whether the department works in conjunction with the Commonwealth in this direction. The same thing might be said in respect of physical exercises and physical development. In every part of the world to-day, and more particularly in the United Kingdom and European countries, physical development is regarded as a matter of the first importance, and it applies not only to youths but adults. The object naturally is to bring about a better condition of health by inducing everyone to indulge in physical exercises beginning at the school period. The effect of the exercises has been to keep many away from hospitals and in that way we can readily understand that a considerable sum of money must be saved the community in the way of having to provide hospital accommodation and medical attention. Great success has attended the keep-fit movement, particularly in Great Britain and Germany. We are aware that the Commonwealth Government has carried out some initial work in this direction, but it should be done in co-operation between the Health Department and the Education Department. There is every need for all to keep fit, so as to be able successfully to carry on our various activities in life. I trust the Minister will give

consideration to this question, which is of considerable importance to the community.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [5.48]: I congratulate the Minister on the success of the Perth dental clinic but at the same time I should like to tell him that there is need for considerable improvement. Very often we come into contact with old-age pensioners, widows and people in destitute circumstances who are not in a position to pay for having their teeth extracted. In Perth teeth are extracted free of charge, but the patients are obliged to wait a considerable time before the dentures are completed. If the Minister made an additional sum of money available, it could be used with advantage in the direction of assisting those people. Very often, however, when indigent or aged people are obliged to travel from Fremantle to attend the Perth Dental Hospital, the fare to the city has to be supplied by friends. It would not be too much to ask the Health Department to work in co-operation with the dental clinic at Fremantle, so that some of the work might be carried out there. The clinic is doing excellent work. Another matter to which I desire to refer is the Old Women's Home at Fremantle. The Minister visited the institution recently and said that the inmates were comfortable. I pass the home regularly and I assure the Committee that it is not a very inviting place. The building is surrounded by a heavy stone wall and it may not be generally known that many years back it was a lunatic asylum. Let us contrast that home with the comforts and the pleasing surroundings that are afforded the men residing at Claremont. The contrast is decidedly in favour of the Old Men's Home. It is nearly time that the Fremantle home was closed and the women provided with quarters elsewhere and in more congenial surroundings. To do anything in the shape of gardening in the existing grounds is completely out of the question because of the rocky nature of the ground there. Perhaps no harm would be done if the Minister were to approach the Lotteries Commission for assistance towards building a suitable home for the elderly females, many of whom have done so much in pioneering the State. Another matter that needs the earnest consideration of the Government is the danger arising from the lumpers having to work bulk wheat at Fremantle, from which so much dust arises.

Some time ago we approached Dr. Atkinson and asked him to deal with the matter from the aspect of the health of the men engaged in the work. I am not aware whether anything has been done, but there is urgent need for investigation. Men that have been working there for any considerable time have felt the effects of the dust and quite a number have refused to return to that class of work. Dust is very bad in the holds of vessels and even when lumpers are loading bags the fibre rubs off and floats on the air. This, too, is harmful. It is necessary that the Health Department should ascertain whether the health of the men is being affected, and if that is proved to be so, then those who are suffering should come under the provisions of the Workers' Compensation Act. The burial of destitute persons is another question to which I wish to refer. Tenders were called recently.

The Minister for Health: That has nothing to do with the Health Department.

Mr. FOX: I think it has. Instead of letting the tenders at a ridiculously low figure, there should be a recognised amount. I know that undertakers submit low figures in the hope of being able to recoup themselves from the relatives who, in some instances, may be well off. I trust the Minister will look into the questions to which I have referred.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [5.55]: I shall endeavour to reply to the various queries that have been raised by members. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the policy of compelling people in the country to contribute towards the cost of hospitals in their centres and to the fact that in the metropolitan area nothing was sought from the community. The hon. member should be in a better position to answer that query than I am. This policy has been going on for many years, at any rate during the past six years. I have not been able to trace the origin of the policy.

Mr. Watts: We want to see the end of it.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am afraid the hon. member will not see the end of it for a time. I agree that there is no reason why people in the metropolitan area should not contribute their quota towards the building of the Perth Hospital; but there is a difference between the Perth

Hospital and country hospitals. So far as I know, every country hospital is open for the treatment of the sick in the district, and the doctor attending a patient can follow that patient into the hospital, and payment is made there for the treatment. Then the country hospital is for the people in the particular district where it is established and the communities in the country usually display a great deal more interest in the institution than the people in the metropolitan area show towards the Perth Hospital. The Perth Hospital is for the accommodation of the indigent sick only. Before a person can secure admission, he has to undergo interrogation at the hands of an officer at the institution and make a declaration that what he has stated is true. Then the medical officers there act in an honorary capacity. There are 93 medical men associated with the institution, all working without fee or reward, and it is obvious that they are not going to carry out a huge job in an honorary capacity if patients can afford to pay. There were no fewer than 5,000 major operations at the Perth Hospital last year. The Perth Hospital does not even take workers' compensation cases.

Mr. Watts: Accidents are admitted.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. Unfortunately, motor accidents average 44 a week, and in most cases the hospital gets little or no payment for the treatment. Every person that is an in-patient is debited with a charge of 9s. a day, but notwithstanding the fact that there are three collectors engaged by the board of management, the average collections during the last five years have totalled 2s. 3d. a day. That may be the reason for the lack of interest shown in the Perth Hospital—the fact that only a small section of the community is treated at that institution. It is particularly difficult to arouse anything in the shape of enthusiasm where the Perth Hospital is concerned. The position in the country districts is very different.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Considerably more interest is shown in the Children's Hospital.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, and the reason is apparent. The committee of the Children's Hospital is composed of influential people and the chairman of that committee has made the hospital his baby. He has every right to be proud of it.

Where such a committee controls an institution of that type, good results are bound to follow. There is always something to be got for the kiddies. That is to say, it is easier to obtain donations for the Children's Hospital than it is for an institution for adults. The difficulty we find in Perth I found to exist in the other States, except Queensland and New South Wales. Queensland is in the happy position of being able to fall back upon the Golden Casket. All the money from that lottery goes to hospitals; consequently the State possesses many fine institutions. What appertains to Queensland is now beginning to make itself evident in New South Wales, where large sums of money are also raised by means of State lotteries. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that people in the metropolitan area should take a greater interest in the principal State hospital. When the question of a new Perth Hospital first arose, I devoted many hours of thought to it, and discussed the proposal with various people. My idea was to awaken some enthusiasm in the metropolitan area, but it was very difficult to reach a starting-point. When we set out to obtain money for the cancer clinic, despite the fact that cancer is looked upon by the public as such a dread disease, we experienced great difficulty. Finally we employed a paid canvasser, and were able to raise a considerable sum of money by means that could not be employed today in view of the strictness of the law.

The member for Subiaco has suddenly discovered there is no kitchen at the new King Edward Memorial Hospital.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: That has been known for a long time.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I am glad the hon. member should think that the Chief Architect was so unsophisticated as to build a hospital without a kitchen. Of course he did nothing of the kind. If the hon. member had made further inquiries she would have found out a great deal more about the King Edward Memorial Hospital. The Motherhood Appeal Fund made a grant of £15,000 towards extensions at this institution, and the Lotteries Commission gave a like amount. The Government also contributed a sum of money towards this object. The decision was arrived at not to build merely a unit or two but a comprehensive hospital. The additions at

present being made comprise only three wards, but ultimately the building will be of five storeys, and just double the length it is today.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: In the meantime, there is no kitchen.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: It was first decided to erect two wards. When I investigated the position I found that, as only a certain sum of money was available, it had been decided to put the roof on after two wards had been completed. I then had the plans explained to me, there being present at the time two of the honorary doctors, the matron, and the Chief Architect. I was informed that the cost of the third ward would mean an additional outlay of £25,000. At present it is necessary to convey food less than 200 yards from the kitchen, but it would have been necessary to convey new babies with their mothers 136 yards from the old ward to the new one. My idea was to obviate that. I discussed the matter with the Premier, who saw the difficulty as well as I did. From the Lotteries Commission we were successful in obtaining that £25,000 to provide for the completion of the labour ward, and that unit will be finished. The matron is satisfied only with the best. She requested immediately that a sum of £10,000 should be spent on a kitchen. We could provide that too if hospitals in the country were prepared to do without those needs that are so essential for them. At present there is no necessity for a kitchen in the new unit. The member for Subiaco said it would be impossible to convey the food to the ward in a reasonable condition. I tell her it will not be impossible. Thanks to Mr. P. A. Connolly, the institution has been presented with an electric heater on ball-bearings. Not only will it keep meat, vegetables and other foods hot, but in another compartment it will keep jellies and ice-creams cold. The cost of the heater was £108. It would be possible to secure another for the same sum, and that would provide all the service that is necessary. Instead of spending £10,000 on a kitchen, we are going to spend the money on wards, so that three times as many patients may be accommodated. If I have anything to do with it, no £10,000 will be spent on a kitchen just now.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I thought you said a little while ago there was a kitchen.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I did not say so. I said it was not intended to provide a kitchen in the new units. The present kitchen has been used for a long time, and will remain in use. If disability is suffered by anyone, it will be suffered by the staff and not by the patients.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You will never be a patient, so you will not know.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I can say the same of the hon. member. I do know something about the institution, and the disabilities under which it is being worked.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: You do not know anything about women.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If they are like the hon. member, I do not wish to.

The CHAIRMAN: I hope the Minister is not reflecting upon the hon. member.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, I am paying her a compliment.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: It certainly is a compliment.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I knew this matter was coming up, and have been waiting for it. The world knew that the hon. member would bring it up. We have only a limited amount of money to spend on hospitals for some time to come. I have seen many of the country hospitals, and know they are suffering from many disabilities. I for one will not spend £10,000 on a flashly-equipped kitchen for 90 patients who may be entering the hospital, whilst places such as Merredin, which is crying out for children's wards, and other towns stand in need of maternity wards. The only way a £10,000 kitchen can be erected at the King Edward Memorial Hospital is by other centres forgoing their claims.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Do you know that this is a training centre?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Is it? It is so much a training centre, that the women who go there pay very little for the services rendered to them.

Mr. Patrick: They have to pay in the country.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The King Edward Memorial Hospital is doing wonderful work, and it will do greater and still better work in the future. The institution, however, cannot get everything it requires all at once. It is ridiculous to suggest that a kitchen such as would be erected for the complete hospital at a cost of £10,000 should be built for only one-third of

the structure. We are not going to do it. The hon. member said an iron roof had been put on top of a glorious building. That is so. There are yet two storeys to be added, and the iron roof has been put on temporarily so that it may easily be removed when the time comes.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: I hope you will build the kitchen before you attend to the roof.

Mr. Rodoreda: The institution is lucky to have a roof at all. It is more than some country places have.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The member for Claremont referred to the eradication of mosquitoes. The matter is under consideration almost daily. The hon. member would be surprised to see the marvellous cures and methods that are brought under the notice of the department for the extermination of this pest. Numbers of men come forward with suggestions for getting rid of mosquitoes, but unfortunately very few of the suggestions are as valuable as people imagine. A continual interchange of ideas is going on between the Commonwealth Government and the principal medical officer, and everything possible is being done in this direction. Up to the present, no adequate cure for the mosquito pest has been discovered.

Reference has also been made to the lazaret at Wooroloo. The medical advice is that there is no danger of infection for other people, and that the establishment of the lazaret cannot possibly spread this dread disease. The hon. member should not have stated that leprosy is greatly on the increase, because that is contrary to the facts.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We were told a little while ago there had been an increase of 100 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: A comprehensive survey was made in the North-West amongst the aborigines, and those that were suffering from the disease were located.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But you do not bring them down here.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: No, One white man was found, but the authorities were not prepared to leave him amongst the aborigines. He was, therefore, brought to the metropolitan area. I think we were justified in taking that course. That one case provides the only increase. Probably it would not have been discovered but for the comprehensive survey that was made.

The disease is certainly not rampant amongst aborigines in the North-West.

Mr. Stubbs: Is there any cure for it?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is doubtful. The member for Williams-Narrogin spoke about patients going into hospitals in districts other than those from which they come. That might easily happen. The State is divided into medical districts, and these districts would not necessarily be the road board districts.

Mr. Doney: Numbers of patients do go from one district to a hospital located in another.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: That is possible. The member for Wagin took me to Lake Grace. Settlers a hundred miles away can get no medical attention, and they have to go to the Lake Grace hospital for treatment. Thus they come from another district.

Mr. Watts: Many people from the city go into country hospitals.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: About 8,000 men are working in country districts, and most of them probably started from the metropolitan area. That provides no great disability to the country hospitals concerned. These are mostly indigent cases, and the hospital fund pays for their upkeep. Debits are sent in by the hospital concerned, and these are paid. Nurses and doctors thus obtain a good deal more practice than they otherwise would.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: With reference to the remarks by the member for Forrest (Miss Holman), consideration has been given to the hospital requirements of Donnybrook. That district comprises a small but busy community but nevertheless the estimates for the complete work for the hospital there represented something like £9,000. That was regarded as rather high and the later proposal was to devote between £4,000 and £5,000 to new premises. It is hoped that something will be done regarding that matter.

The member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) spoke about assistance to infant health centres, and I hope he has not assumed that the increased amount provided on the Estimates is to be devoted towards the assistance of existing centres. The increased vote is for the establishment of ad-

ditional health centres, particularly in the country districts. Dr. Stang has just returned from Morawa, where we hope to establish a new centre very soon. In common with the member for North-East Fremantle and the member for Middle Swan (Mr. Hegney), I also pay a tribute to the good work accomplished at the various health centres. I appreciate the benefits that accrue to mothers and also to children as the latter grow up. A tendency that I hope will not spread unduly is for the Government to be asked to take over these centres. If that were done, the extra cost would be upwards of £11,000. I am a great believer in committees having control of these centres, even though money may have to be raised at times. Since I have been Minister for Health, I have inspected many of the infant health centres and I am convinced that when a committee operates in a centre, better buildings, equipment and work are to be noted than is the case elsewhere. That applies particularly to the centres at Cottesloe and Nedlands.

Mr. Marshall: You have not seen Wiluna yet.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The hon. member is one of the few who have not invited me to their electorates.

Mr. Marshall: You have an open invitation from to-night onwards.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Where a committee has accepted the responsibility of raising funds, it has the advantage of a subsidy from the Health Vote, assistance from the local governing body and from the Lotteries Commission, and I generally find where that obtains much better work is carried out by the committee than where four or five health centres are controlled by one executive. I trust there will be no extension of the idea that the Government should take over all the infant health centres, because if that were done I am afraid the interested enthusiasm of local committees would wane rapidly. I had hoped that an increased vote would be provided this year by the addition of another £50, but when I suggested the adoption of that course, the Treasurer asked me to allow the matter to stand in abeyance for the time being in view of the situation in the agricultural districts. Members generally appreciate the fact that additional expenditure will be required for assistance to farmers in the drought-stricken areas and, in the circumstances, the Treasurer did not

feel justified in increasing the vote this year. I hope that extra funds will be available during the next financial year. The Government is anxious to render all possible assistance to the infant health centres, because the excellent work carried out in the interests of mothers and children is fully recognised, as well as that so generously rendered by various committees.

The member for Middle Swan referred to the nutrition committee and I wish to inform him that the department is working in conjunction with the Commonwealth authorities. The Principal Medical Officer visits the Eastern States periodically in order to attend conferences at which various cognate subjects are discussed thoroughly. By that means this State derives much benefit. References were made to the dental clinic and, as hon. members are aware, the new dental van is in commission. I can give the member for South Fremantle (Mr. Fox) my assurance that we would like to render greater assistance to the Perth and Fremantle Dental Hospitals, but the hon. member will recognise that the undertaking is particularly extensive. Every endeavour is being made to expand the work but a tremendous number of calls are made upon the resources of the Health Department and any financial assistance must be secured from the Health Vote and not from the hospital fund. If money is taken from the latter source, the hospitals must suffer correspondingly. If members have not inspected the Perth Dental Hospital, I advise them to do so, because a visit is quite worth while. Many indigent cases are being dealt with by a limited number of operators and cadets. The work is restricted only because of lack of finance, otherwise extended operations would be made possible.

I visited the Old Women's Home at Fremantle nearly 20 years ago and again since I have occupied my present Ministerial position. When I inspected the home recently, I was agreeably surprised at the marked change that had taken place. I agree with the member for South Fremantle that the wall could be demolished with advantage. The building itself is excellent, being one of the old-time structures intended to stand for many decades. The rooms are large, lofty and airy. The construction of a similar building in these days would involve heavy expenditure. I should certainly like to see

the wall demolished and an ornamental fence erected in its place. I do not agree with the suggestion that gardens cannot be developed there, because I noted a particularly attractive bed. I worked in that district years ago and know that when the pinnacles of limestone are removed, the soil is most suitable for the cultivation of flowers. If the wall were demolished, the surroundings could be made particularly attractive. I cannot agree with the contention of some medical men and the matron that some of the ladies at the home can be kept in the institution only by means of the present high wall. The 73 women who were in the institution when I paid my visit seemed to be a very happy family. If extensive gardens were developed and the wall taken down, the institution could be made a glorious place, regarding which there would be nothing to complain. I hope I have been able to satisfy members with the information I have placed at their disposal.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Public Health, £42,110;

Item, Infant Welfare Centres, £3,100.

Mr. DONEY: I intended to appeal to the Minister for more generous treatment of these centres, but fortunately for them the Minister already has indicated that at an opportune time the Premier will be prepared to render the additional help for which I was about to ask. The amount for this year exceeds last year's expenditure by £380. I take that additional amount to be intended for assistance to new centres which may be opened this year.

The Minister for Health: Three new centres are being opened.

Mr. DONEY: They will absorb that small amount. The Country Women's Association and other women's organisations have pleaded that the Health Department should take over the entire running costs of these centres throughout the State. This struck me as asking rather too much. In any case, the Minister has informed us that assistance is not given to too great an extent. At Narrogin recently the Minister, in addition to looking over the hospital, made inquiries regarding the infant health centre. The president of that centre then suggested to him that if his department could not assume responsibility for the entire cost of running such centres, the annual

Government contribution might be raised from £100 to £150. I shall be glad to inform the president that both the Premier and the Minister for Health have the matter under favourable consideration, and that the £150 may be expected at no distant date.

The Minister for Health: Not during this financial year.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister desires that the committees should still continue to raise funds for the centres. That work is a never-ending job. At Narragin hardly a week passes without an effort being made for this purpose. The enthusiasm of these very fine women, and men too, is likely to run out at any time. Unless assisted, centres must go to the wall sooner or later. That should not be permitted to happen, as the work is of national importance.

Mr. WITHERS: I hope the Minister will not be so generous as to make the extra £50 to be granted to centres a general principle. New centres will be needed, and any additional money found by the Government should be expended in that direction. It could also be used to assist centres having a difficult time. The committee of the Bunbury centre once or twice had to threaten to close down the institution. Only by that means was the public induced to contribute sufficient to keep the centre open. Further, if the Government went to the assistance of centres with an additional £50 annually, public generosity might decrease. A committee will work harder if it has some responsibility, even if the institution under its care is treated as a Government institution. Some years ago the Government grant was reinstated at £100. It had been cut down to £80. In our district we have been endeavouring to mother, or perhaps I should say father, sub-centres. Places too far from Bunbury to receive all the consideration desirable, say Donnybrook and Busselton and possibly Harvey, should have sub-centres of their own. I would suggest that any extra Government money available should be applied in that direction also. Any centre finding the £100 insufficient might be specially subsidised. The Bunbury centre was eventually aided by the municipality. We are proud of our centre, which is the result of hard work. The Bunbury committee makes only one appeal per year. Small appeals at short intervals made people complain, "You are always coming to us for

contributions." Our desire is to make the appeal during Baby Week. Out of the contribution box at the Bunbury centre the committee often tips out as much as £1 contributed by grateful mothers. I desire to compliment the department on the excellent work it is doing in connection with infant health centres.

Vote put and passed.

Public Utilities:

Votes—Goldfields Water Supply Undertaking, £137,014; Kalgoorlie Abattoirs, £1,460—agreed to.

Vote—Metropolitan Abattoirs and Saleyards, £31,650:

Mr. THORN: Will the Minister consider a reduction in the price charged for fertiliser? The Government makes a tremendous profit from the sale of it. Undoubtedly, producers should be able to secure this fertiliser at the lowest possible price.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is a very complete fertiliser.

Mr. THORN: But it is rather low in value.

The Minister for Agriculture: On a unit basis, it is a cheap fertiliser.

Mr. THORN: It is valuable as a soil-builder on account of its organic contents. Chemical fertilisers act on the plant while it is growing in the soil, but bleach and weaken the soil after the plant has derived the value from them. Blood and bone fertiliser definitely builds up the soil, but is not so valuable as a chemical fertiliser.

The Minister for Agriculture: It is not much lower in value on a unit basis.

Mr. THORN: I stand corrected. However, as I said, it is necessary that this fertiliser should be made available to our producers at a cheaper price. Our market-gardeners are passing through a difficult time, and this fertiliser is of particular value to them. The Government has a monopoly of it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Does it reach the farmer direct from the abattoirs?

Mr. THORN: No, it is sold through agents, who receive a commission on sales. The fertiliser is always sold for cash; it cannot be purchased on terms. A tremendous increase in the price has taken place during the past eight or ten years. Twelve years ago the fertiliser was obtainable at £6 5s. per ton. To-day three

lines are sold at £9 15s., £10 5s., and £10 15s. per ton. The manure is also essential to the vineyards in the Swan Valley. This is an instance where the producers could very well be assisted by some reduction in the price.

Hon. P. D. FERGUSON: Will the Minister tell the Committee whether, in view of the profit derived from the Midland Junction Abattoirs and sale yards, there is a likelihood of a reduction in the fees charged to farmers for the use of the sale yards as a weekly market?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Both matters are under consideration. The question of the price of fertiliser is being considered, and will be adjusted on the basis of comparative unit values. Not only is it a good fertiliser, but it is worth all that is being asked for it. The matter of reducing the price will be given consideration. With regard to the sale yards, we are reviewing the costs so as to make further extensions and give added facilities.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department, £102,455:

Mr. TONKIN: Will the Minister inform the Committee whether it is possible for the department to connect to the sewerage system premises belonging to old-age pensioners? Owners have been notified by the local authorities in a number of districts that the pan service is to be discontinued. Old-age pensioners cannot possibly pay for the installation of sewerage, and so are placed in an awkward position. To serve old-age pensioners with notices to connect their premises to the sewerage system is ridiculous. That, however, is not the only trouble with which they are faced. Immediately notice is served on them to connect their premises to the system, they are obliged to pay not only the sanitary rate to the local authority, but also a sewerage rate. They will be called upon to pay for a service that they cannot utilise. The department ought to be sensible over this matter, and realise that blood cannot be drawn from a stone. The cost of installing the sewerage would be a charge on the property, and so could eventually be recovered. I hope some arrangement can be made by the department with local authorities to get those old-age pensioners out of their difficulties.

Mr. NORTH: I support the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle. There are similar cases in my district. The position is becoming impossible. Will the Minister inform the Committee what period of time is allowed before the department disconnects water from premises in sewered areas on account of non-payment of rates? I have had two or three instances brought under my notice in which water has been cut off on account of unpaid rates, but as members will realise, it is impossible to maintain a sewerage system in a house without a certain amount of water. This is an instance in which the Health Department should override the Water Supply Department. If the Minister for Health were aware of what was going on I do not think he would allow another department to cut off the water from houses the occupants of which owe money for rates, and who, because of the discontinuance of the water supply, have to live under conditions to which I would not care to refer at length.

Mr. CROSS: I support and will amplify the remarks of the previous speakers. I know of people previously assisted by the Child Welfare Department, who have either inherited or have been able to buy their own homes, but who have not been able to meet the payments required in respect of sewerage. I suggest the Minister should take a humane view of this matter and introduce a Bill to exempt pensioners and people cared for by the Child Welfare Department from paying the double rate. At present when an area is connected with the sewerage system, those people are compelled to pay a new rate for the sewerage service and still have to pay the old rate to the municipal council. Consequently they are paying for two services and receiving only one.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: With respect to the remarks of the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) concerning old age pensioners, I thought we were treating them very well. They do not pay rates. The rates are deferred and accumulate on the property. When we can secure a guarantee from some relative likely to inherit a holding we arrange to instal the sewerage system. I remind members, however, that we have had very great difficulty in providing funds to assist people who are compelled to connect with the system but have not the money to

pay for that connection. We have been assisting them to the extent of 20 or 30 a week. Members will understand that with the extension of the sewerage system in the metropolitan area we have got ahead of the plumbers, who are working at top speed. Consequently we are experiencing the utmost difficulty in connecting the sewerage system with our mains. The old age pensioners, however, have been treated quite well. I cannot understand the suggestion that they have to pay a double rate. The rates might accumulate on the holding, but there is no question of pensioners being ill-treated or receiving ungenerous treatment. No instance has come under my notice of premises in a sewered area having been disconnected for two or three months. I generally hear of inconveniences of that kind. A complaint comes from somewhere. I cannot conceive that in any sewered area where the system is actually connected with premises those premises would be disconnected for two or three months without my hearing of it. I think it would be reported to me.

Hon. P. D. Ferguson: It would report itself.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: It is one of those things that would be very obvious. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) is not too reliable. He asked me on one occasion whether I was aware that a certain widow—by the way, she was not a widow—had had her premises, in a sewered area, disconnected. That would lead anyone to believe that the place was sewered. The area was sewered but the dwelling was not connected with the system. Consequently, the hon. member gave the House a wrong impression. I let him off on that occasion, and I hope his information is a little more reliable this time. But if a house were connected with the sewerage system and the water supply were cut off, the house would be uninhabitable.

Mr. North: I suppose a septic tank would be much the same? Water would be just as necessary?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Yes, but I should say that in those circumstances the septic tank would be out of use. There is no doubt about that. Other arrangements would have to be made. In regard to those places where the pan system is still in vogue, we have arranged with the local authorities to pick up the pans and

deal with the sewage at the treatment works. This, of course, will relieve the local authorities of considerable expense. That is an arrangement that will have to be made in the carry-over period during which some areas will be incompletely covered by the sewerage system. I have had representations from old-age pensioners, but so far sufficient money has not been available to assist them. We have no lien over war service homes and if they are connected with the system we undertake that work at our own risk. The Commonwealth Government refuses to take any responsibility.

Mr. Cross: The Commonwealth is financing some of the work.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The places they finance are all right, but I repeat that we have insufficient plumbers in this State to cope with the demand.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is another fault of the apprenticeship system.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: There is no difficulty in respect to apprentices for plumbers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Yes, there is.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Each plumber is allowed an apprentice, and I am not aware of any restriction having been imposed; that is not the difficulty. A plumber is entitled to an apprentice, and we are not preventing plumbers from taking apprentices. I have had no complaint of that kind. We are encouraging plumbers to their utmost. The Leader of the Opposition will have to choose a trade other than plumbing if he desires to submit a case that will bear investigation. We are encouraging young men to enter the plumbing trade. In future there will be an enormous amount of work, not only in respect to normal water supply and sewerage requirements, but also in connection with new buildings. I believe the estimated cost of the plumbing at the Perth Hospital is £120,000. Because of the many new buildings that are going up, equipped with modern conveniences and hot and cold water services that are regarded as essential nowadays, the work of plumbers has increased enormously.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is a job for the specialist. Not many people in this State can deal with it.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: We have in the State registered

plumbers, all of whom are certified as competent to do that type of work.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We have a lot of trouble with our own water supply services.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: These plumbers are specialists, and are going ahead with the work. In other parts of Australia a shortage of plumbers has been experienced because of modern developments in building construction, and because of the hot and cold water installations and other modern practices. There is also an increasing number of sewerage connections. The services required for these new buildings are almost akin to supplying water and sewerage to a town. The department is keeping pace with the requirements as far as possible, despite the shortage of plumbers and of money. We insist that those who can instal their own system without Government help shall do so. Only where people can prove they are unable to raise the money for the installation does the Government supply the funds. The applications are carefully considered, and some of them come from old-age pensioners. I will inquire into the complaints made by the member for Claremont, and also into the question of exemptions raised by the member for Canning. I think it will be found that old-age pensioners are not being worried.

Item, Under Secretary, £1,020.

Mr. NORTH: I received a complaint from the Cottesloe Council with regard to the point raised by the member for North-East Fremantle. I have no desire to mislead the Minister with respect to the other point. I merely brought the matter forward for the information of his department. In the other instance to which I referred, there is a septic tank at the house. The water difficulty still applies; in fact, I am supplying the water myself so that the establishment may be kept going.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Other Hydraulic Undertakings, £64,269:

Mr. MARSHALL: The subject of water charges imposed in some towns on the Murchison has been placed before the Minister by correspondence. Wiluna is not included, because a water board has been created to control the reticulation system there. In the other towns of the Murchison operations are controlled by the Government. There

seems recently to have been a desire on the part of the Government to increase charges for services rendered. In doing this, the Government appears to have specialised on the goldfields, though I do not know whether the high water charges appertain to other goldfields towns. Meekatharra has been in existence for many years and a huge quantity of water has been consumed there, but, remarkable to relate, the capital charge still remains as a cost against the system. I had an interview with the Minister, who was hard-pressed to justify some of the rapid increases. I came to the conclusion that the Treasurer, being short of money, and having further obligations placed upon him through the increase in the basic wage and the national insurance scheme—better known as “share your poverty, comrades”—and one or two other incidental charges which have made a drain upon the funds of the State, then turned his attention in this other direction. Charges for services rendered have apparently been increased so that the Treasury might be recouped for this additional expenditure, and the towns in my electorate have been brought into the fold. Apart from the increase in the value placed upon the properties concerned, a tremendous increase has been made in the charge for excess water. Some of the increases have been so rapid as to be almost astounding. I know of one man who has only a son and daughter living with him in his own home. He was paying water charges at the rate of £2 or £3 per annum, but suddenly found himself obliged to pay £53 per annum.

Mr. Thorn: Did the meter jump?

Mr. MARSHALL: Like the hon. member, it did not function very well.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. MARSHALL: That was a rapid increase to make over a period of 12 months. When the matter was brought before the Minister by deputation, he asked me whether the man had a market garden. I was not surprised at the question. As a fact, this man had still the same number of people living with him as had been with him for many years, and he was using no more water than he had used before. Another man had used 7,000 or 8,000 gallons of excess water annually. To his astonishment he was charged for 68,000 gallons, an increase of approximately 60,000 gallons in 12 months. The Minister was not present when I spoke to the Under Secretary about

the matter, but the only satisfaction I could get was that the engineer had informed the Under Secretary that all the meters had recently been overhauled. I do not dispute that assertion. They have been overhauled—to the advantage of the department. The instances I refer to are not isolated. There was no gradual increase about the extra consumption; it took place suddenly. The remarkable thing about such matters is that the officers in charge can always find ample justification for the increased draw. They look around and if they see a tree or a flower or a cabbage or even an indication that such vegetation has been grown, they can point to that as justifying the rapid increase during the 12 months. I do not stand for that sort of thing. The meters were second-hand when they were installed at Meekatharra, and they were there when I went to that town 28 years ago. To advance such an argument as that of the engineers is useless. The users could not possibly have increased their consumption to the extent indicated by the readings and therefore either the meters were not correctly read or the readings were deliberately falsified. The difference between departmental control and local control of water supplies is most marked. No better comparison in support of that contention can be secured than the conditions operating at Meekatharra and Wiluna respectively. The system at Meekatharra has been functioning for about 45 years and when I first went there seven mines and about 8,000 people were drawing upon the supply. Nevertheless the capitalisation of the scheme is as heavy to-day as it was 25 or 30 years ago. A visit to the township to-day is almost heartbreaking. The people dare not grow a vegetable or a flowering plant for fear of excess water charges. I have no opportunity to peruse the departmental files in order to ascertain what has happened and therefore can speak only from personal observation. Whatever the explanation may be, the position at Meekatharra reflects no credit on the officers concerned. If the over-capitalisation is due to inefficiency, the ratepayers are obliged to pay the piper. I am most concerned about the recorded huge increase in water consumption.

Mr. Withers: Something similar happened at Cue 25 years ago.

Mr. MARSHALL: If one were to visit Wiluna, what a different spectacle would be [73]

seen. Once a man becomes established in his position there, invariably his home is made beautiful by means of lawns, gardens and shrubs. No complaints whatever are heard there. The water supply is controlled locally. On the other hand, under departmental control people residing in Meekatharra dare not use a gallon of water to establish a garden and make their homes attractive. I protest against such a situation. If the departmental officers are inefficient then the Government and the department should bear the consequences, not the ratepayers who have no say whatever in the control of the reticulation system. Apparently the departmental officers consider it does not matter how inefficient they may be, because the ratepayers will foot the bill. Correspondence is now before the Minister regarding water charges, and I do not know what his decision will be. Then again at Reedy the water charges are exorbitant, but I understand there is an agreement with the company that warrants closer investigation before I criticise the position there. However, my general complaint is against the hugely increased consumption charged up against Meekatharra residents. Year in year out they have carried on with domestic and other supplies that necessitated the payment of about £3 or £4 annually and then suddenly, without any increased consumption of water on their part, bills for £53 are presented. That happened to one man.

Mr. Styants: Did he have to pay the account?

Mr. MARSHALL: No, I make that admission to the credit of the Minister. No one could justify such an account. Nevertheless, that ratepayer had to pay an extortionate amount compared with the charges levied in earlier years. The reticulation system at Cue has long since shown signs of needing replacement.

Mr. Patrick: Is that the old scheme revived?

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes. A few wooden plugs are put in the pipes here and there in the hope that they will last a few years longer. I do not blame the department for that because the town appeared to be on the down grade and the old system was repaired in the hope that it would last long enough to cope with the demand. Fortunately the town has experienced a revival, with a consequent large increase in the demand for water in and around Cue. The old, obsolete

system cannot meet that increased demand. I hope the Minister will provide funds for a thorough overhaul of the system, either here or on the Loan Estimates. People who go to live in an isolated little town, sacrificing all the amenities of city life and facing extreme heat during eight months of the year, are entitled to an ample supply of good, fresh water. This is essential from the health point of view. I trust that excessive charges for water will be reduced.

Item, Operating and General Expenses, including cost of work to be reimbursed; Water Supply for Towns, etc.; Stock Routes maintenance, £57,000.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Just above this item there is a transfer from the Public Works Department Estimates of £23,529, and a recoup to Government Stores for services rendered of £350. Does the amount of £57,000 for the item under discussion mean that salaries are paid by the Public Works Department and then charged to Hydraulic Undertakings chargeable to revenue?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The total estimated expenditure for the year 1938-39 is £64,269, as against actual expenditure in 1937-38 of £61,090, an increase of £3,179. Regarding the item of salaries, after making allowance for the amount of salaries chargeable to Loan Funds, the estimated expenditure under this heading for the year 1938-39 is £7,073, as against actual expenditure for the year 1937-38 of £3,311, an increase of £3,762. The increased amount required is due to increases due to officers for annual increments and to basic wage adjustments, also to an amendment of allocation of salaries between revenue and loan. Revenue is now bearing its correct proportion, based on expenditure, of the two funds. As regards the item for operating and general expenses, including cost of works to be reimbursed, water supply for towns, etc., and stock route maintenance, the estimate for the current financial year is £57,000, as against actual expenditure for 1937-38 of £57,584, showing a decrease of £584. I have here a statement showing how the estimated expenditure is made up as compared with the actual expenditure for the year 1937-38. Then as regards the item for interest and sinking fund on debentures, the estimate for the year 1938-39 is £196, and the actual expenditure

for 1937-38 was £195. The estimated revenue to be collected for the year 1938-39 is £62,000. Actual revenue received for 1937-38 was £61,104, showing an anticipated increase of £896 for the current year. With two or three exceptions, the many undertakings provided for on this vote do not return sufficient to meet interest and sinking fund charges. This applies particularly to the large drainage and irrigation schemes that are controlled by the department. There is a total of 50 of these schemes throughout the State. I can supply the Leader of the Opposition with a copy of the statement if he so desires.

With reference to Meekatharra, I agree that the water supply there is partly business and partly philanthropy. The State is constantly being called upon to undertake some responsibility in connection with country water supplies. I agree with the member for Murchison that a very large capital expenditure is shown against the Meekatharra undertaking. It would be impossible for those served by the scheme to pay working expenses in addition to interest and sinking fund on the capital involved. Therefore they are only charged sufficient to pay working expenses. I was under the impression that I had convinced the member for Murchison on that point.

Mr. Marshall: But that is only for this year.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: That is all they can pay.

Mr. Marshall: That is all the supply is worth.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: It is all we have a possibility of getting from the ratepayers.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I suppose they found interest and sufficient sinking fund to redeem the loan long ago.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The position is similar as regards many country water schemes. The department is limited to a rate of 3s. in the pound, and after striking that rate it is impossible, in many cases, to collect sufficient to cover working expenses, quite apart from interest and sinking fund. However, where water is required and the local people cannot establish a scheme for themselves, they invariably come upon the Government. Wiluna is a notable instance of managing to get along independently of the Government, though I

think the State gave a guarantee. Is it not a responsibility of the local people to supply themselves with water where it is possible to do so? People come to me from out-back districts and say, "We would like to come under the same scheme as the metropolitan area."

Hon. C. G. Latham: Why should they not?

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: They quote the price of water in the metropolitan area, and I tell them I would be well satisfied to agree to their request because the metropolitan water supply scheme is one of the few that pay all expenses incurred in connection with them. If a deficit is likely here, we raise the rates. The water rate in the metropolitan area has been increased; the sewerage rate has been raised from 10d. to 1s. 1d., and the drainage rate from 4d. to 5d. The metropolitan scheme has paid from its inception. There is a general impression that the goldfields water scheme has been paid for, but it still stands on the Treasury books with a deficit of £1,800,000 odd.

Mr. Doney: It has paid during the last five years.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Not interest on that sum. I inquired the other day.

Mr. Doney: I was doubtful on the point.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: Many of these schemes are a fine thing for the State, indirectly. One of the things the Government is asked to do is to take into account the indirect benefit. There is no way of assessing its value, but the value is undeniably there.

Mr. Styants: It should have been treated as a national scheme at the outset, in the same way as were the railways.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The amount expended on our water schemes throughout the State is over £10,000,000. The Government is responsible for looking after stock routes and many water supplies which are of public benefit, but from which the Government derives no revenue. In regard to meters, I have never yet discovered any person satisfied with his water meter. Complaints are made about old meters, but when these are replaced by meters of a new make that work correctly, the owner finds that more water is registered than was registered by the old meter. I visited Goomalling on one

occasion, and Mr. Farrelly, the local engineer, was present at a function I attended. The local residents were complaining about the water meters. Mr. Farrelly was asked whether he would guarantee that the meters registered the correct quantity of water used. He replied, "I cannot guarantee that; what I will guarantee is that the meters will not register less than the quantity used."

Mr. Marshall: You should send Mr. Farrelly to Meekatharra.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: I have not received complaints about meters that register less than the quantity used. Glaring cases of incorrect registration are put right.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The user has to pay a deposit before that is done.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: It is very rarely that we find the meter is wrong.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Because you send the same man along to investigate. It is an appeal from Caesar to Caesar.

The MINISTER FOR WATER SUPPLIES: The Government is called upon to accept much responsibility and face big losses for country water supplies. I cannot touch upon the question of new supplies, or upon those supplies that are being examined at present. The water supplies now in existence are dealt with under this vote. We have the utmost difficulty in making the various schemes pay and in many cases we experience difficulty in giving the service we would like. I shall certainly inquire into the complaints about the meters.

Mr. DONEY: I desire to refer to the report on the big hydraulic survey that has just been completed. The report was handed to the Minister some two or three months ago. Twice already this session I have brought the matter up in the House. I do so again to-night without any apology, so truly urgent has the matter of water supplies in the Great Southern districts become. That is due to the remarkably low rainfall this year, following upon three years of very meagre rainfall.

Mr. Cross: The only water supplies provided in the Great Southern districts were established by the Labour Government.

Mr. Seward: They are no credit to the Government.

Mr. Watts: It is rather awful work.

Several members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. DONEY: As I have no desire to annoy the Minister, I shall not tell the whole truth about the water supplies in the Great Southern districts. The water supplies were bad enough, in all conscience, at the time the hydraulic survey was first mooted. To-day the position is much worse. It is no exaggeration to say that a water famine is imminent. In Narrogin itself, we have at present only about 10,000,000 gallons in the reservoir, which is capable of holding 70,000,000 gallons. At the comparable period of last year we had 30,000,000 gallons. Heavy restrictions are a natural consequence. Last year householders were allowed only 1½ hours every two days to draw on the water supply. A simple sum in arithmetic will show that this year householders will be allowed only 1½ hours per week. That will be rationing with a vengeance.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Is there a sewerage system at Narrogin?

Mr. DONEY: In the present state of the water supply, to talk about sewerage systems is idle. This year, when our needs are greater than they were last year, we have had a record low rainfall. Rain that has fallen has been of little benefit. We have had the gentle, soaking agricultural rains suitable for crops, not the rains that fill dams and reservoirs. The Narrogin reservoir catchment area was reconditioned last year. I am not complaining of the Minister's attitude, which has been helpful. I agree that he is seized of the urgency of the position and is doing his best to effect some improvement. My principal reason for speaking to the vote was, if possible, to obtain some pronouncement from the Minister on the scheme under discussion. The Minister has promised to expedite the discussion of this scheme. I do not want to harass him unduly. I realise that it is likely to be a fairly long job and that a speedy decision is almost impossible to reach. If, however, the Minister could give us some information, we might be encouraged to carry on with some little satisfaction through the hot months that are ahead of us. I would like the Minister for Railways to understand that if the scheme is brought to fruition, his department will benefit considerably. The railways are experiencing great difficulty in

obtaining water supplies along the Great Southern. The Minister will know that the water in the big dam at Yilliminning, close to Narrogin, upon which the department has relied in years past when other supplies have failed, has turned salty, as the result of a salt patch developing in the catchment area. Fortunately, it has been possible to drain off the water from the affected portion of the catchment area, but the dam had to be emptied. Such a position may very easily recur.

There can be little doubt that some assistance from the Federal Government will be necessary probably in the way of subsidising interest and sinking fund over the earlier years. The member for Pingelly (Mr. Seward) and the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) and I on two or three occasions interviewed Sir George Pearce, when he was in the Federal Ministry, and also Senator Cameron. They considered the question of Federal assistance to be one of practical politics, and each promised to submit our request to the authorities accompanied by the necessary support. I do not know whether the Minister recalls that last year, when we were discussing these same Estimates, I asked him a question concerning the cost of hituminising catchment area. The reason why that method of assisting in the conservation of water has not been adopted is because of the high cost. I suggested that he might be able to obtain information as to costs and new methods in other countries situated similarly to ourselves in regard to water supplies. If that information is available, I hope the Minister will let the Committee have it.

The Minister for Water Supplies: That could be more appropriately discussed when the Loan Estimates are before us.

Mr. DONEY: Yes, but it is not inappropriate for discussion at this stage, seeing that we are considering town water supplies. I should also like the Minister to give us some information regarding the taking of a referendum of those people concerned in the provision of a water supply. The Minister made a reference to this some time ago which I would like him to amplify. Districts, such as the Williams district, are very well supplied with water and would not care to participate in the scheme. I should like to be informed of the exact machinery the Minister is likely to adopt to enable these various areas to

determine whether or not they will participate. I draw the attention of the Premier to the fact that, as Treasurer, he secures a substantial portion of his revenue from the string of progressive towns along the Great Southern, and that neither he nor his Government nor any other Government can afford to endanger the continuance of the prosperity of that part of the State. The Minister knows from the reports he has received that the continuance of the present position regarding water supply will have a damaging effect on the prosperity of those places. A week or two ago the Minister, in referring to the hydraulic survey, said that the only people who had supported the idea of this big scheme were those connected with the "West Australian." I do not think the Minister could have meant that. He will remember that my colleagues from the Great Southern electorates, and the Leader of the Opposition, and I have this session asked a number of questions, all indicative of our very keen desire to have the scheme inaugurated, and each of us has been responsible for a number of deputations to him regarding the matter. I do not want the Minister to under-estimate the interest we feel in the scheme or the keenness with which we are looking forward to its coming to fruition.

Mr. SAMPSON: Some time ago I had the pleasure of introducing a deputation to the Minister for Works about water supply meters and other hydraulic matters. Apart from the very courteous treatment it received, the deputation achieved no result. It is remarkable that Darlington, Glen Forrest, Parkerville, and smaller adjoining centres, have to pay more for water than do people in Perth. The Minister explains that it is cheaper to supply Perth with water. I remind him that the hills provide the water.

The Minister for Agriculture: No. The good Lord provides the water.

Mr. SAMPSON: There is a disinclination to do anything to increase the population of the hills districts. The Government obtains revenue from sources other than from water rates. Passenger and freight charges on the railways and land taxes are also paid.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot discuss that question on this vote.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Government does not live by water alone. The provision of water leads to the receipt of other revenue. People who live in the western end of my electorate have to pay more for water than

do those who live in Perth. They also have to pay a meter rent. The Minister explained that these devices have to be maintained. I retort that the residents in these areas would gladly give up every meter in the district. Residential centres in the metropolis do not carry any charge for meters, whereas people possessing enterprise and the pioneering spirit to settle outside the metropolitan area do have to meet that charge. That is not in the best interests of the State. Residents of Darlington, Glen Forrest, Parkerville and other centres should not be called upon to pay more for their water than is asked of the people of Perth and Fremantle. It is unfair to charge 2s. 6d. per thousand gallons to those who dwell in the hills. The department claims that it is more costly to provide water to those places than to distribute it elsewhere. Officials state that the water must be pumped before it can be reticulated. One would need an actuary to determine what the cost per thousand gallons would be to pump water to those centres. The Minister depends entirely upon the country to enable him to regard the Treasurer with any degree of equanimity, but nevertheless he favours the imposition of a burden upon people who dwell in the outer suburbs. We have heard about the localities that are supplied with water, but are not declared as separate undertakings. Whilst there is a loss of £2 19s. 3d. in connection with Big Bell there is a surplus on account of the Barbalin water supply of £2,393.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is only a paper profit.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Do not tell the Committee that.

Mr. SAMPSON: A surplus of £263 is shown at Brookton and £576 at Bruce Rock. At Brunswick there is a surplus of £133. Taking into consideration those centres at which there has been a deficiency, I find the general result shows a surplus of £9,989 for the year ended 30th June last. From one point of view that is satisfactory. I wonder under which heading the eastern hills supply comes. I presume it comes under the heading of "separate undertakings," though possibly it comes under the heading of "Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage."

The Minister for Water Supplies: No, the goldfields.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Goldfields Water Supply showed a profit last year of £18,044.

The CHAIRMAN: We have passed that vote.

Mr. SAMPSON: I am endeavouring to show that centres in the hills are really helping to provide that profit. In return for this, these localities are charged an enormous sum for the water they get. This is very discouraging for the districts concerned. If these towns were treated on lines of equity, I would have nothing but praise to offer the Minister, but, when such differentiation is shown, I have every justification for making a complaint. The statement has been made that it costs more to pump water to Parkerville than to the metropolitan area. How can that be so when the water runs by gravitation from Mt. Helena? I know the water must be pumped to Mundarng, but it is usual to pump it to some high place from which it may gravitate to lower localities. A charge of 2s. 6d. a thousand gallons is excessive and amazing, when it is considered that in some instances the rate in the metropolitan area is 1s. 3d. per thousand. That differentiation is out of all reason. Residents of Greenmount and Darlington have to pay 2s. 6d. a thousand, whereas for the most part the people in the metropolitan area pay 1s. 3d. a thousand, and the lowest charge is 1s. a thousand. The higher metropolitan rate represents 50 per cent. less than the people in the outer suburban districts have to pay. I hope further consideration will be given to this matter, and practical encouragement extended to people to live in the outer suburban areas by the imposition of reasonable water rates and abolition of meter rents.

Mr. RODOREDA: The items cover the maintenance of stock routes, and the estimate has been reduced, roughly, by £500 as compared with the expenditure for the previous financial year. I hope that £500 will not be taken from the stock routes maintenance grant. Regularly have I complained about the lack of attention to stock routes, which are vital factors in the economic and commercial life of the whole of the outback portions of the State. Twenty years ago, the Government used to look after the stock routes, which were then kept in a reasonable state of repair. A gang, with the necessary plant, was kept travelling up and down the stock routes as a full-time job. Subsequently a new scheme was evolved affecting not only the North-West but

the Murchison as well, under which the maintenance was handed over to the various road boards concerned, which were provided with an annual grant for each well. If the secretary of a road board had time to attend to the work, reasonably satisfactory results followed. In some instances the secretaries had neither the time nor the knowledge enabling them to see that the wells were kept in a proper state of repair. Very often the distances to be travelled were too great to enable proper inspections to be carried out. The consequence was that the wells were neglected. The timbering was eaten by white ants, and fell in, with the result that the wells collapsed. Every time I made contact with a drover, I received complaints about the condition of wells. Later on various road boards gave permission to station-owners to equip wells with mills and tanks, provided they made available necessary facilities for travelling stock. That proved satisfactory at times, but frequently the squatters concerned had no stock for which the water supplies were required over periods of two years or so, and therefore they did not worry about the work. Although under an obligation to maintain the wells in accordance with the terms of their agreements with the road boards, they have not attended to that requirement, which resulted in a lot of inconvenience to travelling stock. I have also been informed that some station-owners have built their shearing sheds on the stock route and erected fences, thus causing stock to travel off the route. I do not ask the Government to revert to the old system, which cost an enormous amount of money annually. I suggest the Minister should send a qualified inspector along the route annually to report on the condition of each well and to ascertain whether the road boards were doing their work properly. If that were done, the position would be much more satisfactory. I trust the Minister will take some notice of my remarks, because I am getting sick and tired of drawing the attention of the Committee each year to this matter, with no remedial measures resulting. The Minister is acquainted with the position in the North-West, and he must realise the vital importance of the stock route.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The trouble is that you have a safe seat.

Mr. RODOREDA: This difficulty affects more than my district. It affects the cattle and sheep men from the Kimberleys down through the Murchison, Meekatharra and Mullewa. While the safety of my seat may prevent me from securing the satisfaction I desire, the Government should certainly adopt my suggestion, or some similar scheme. I have heard the member for Murchison complain strongly about the condition of the stock route wells, but little improvement has been effected for some years past.

Mr. MARSHALL: I endorse the remarks of the member for Roebourne. The contract that existed between the department and the local authorities has not operated for some considerable time. Under that scheme, the department subsidised the road boards to the extent of £10 per well per year, for which the boards had to attend to the maintenance of the wells within their respective districts. Unfortunately, the department conceived the idea that a profit was being made out of the grant, and reduced it by 50 per cent. The Meekatharra Road Board dissociated itself from the contract, and the department now maintains the wells. One feature of present-day conditions is that very few head of stock have been travelled over the route to the railheads at Meekatharra, Nannine and Cue. That explains why few, if any, complaints have been received regarding the maintenance of the wells. There has been no demand for work to be undertaken there, because there has been no transportation of stock. Recently, however, several drovers have been along the route.

The Minister for Water Supplies: Perhaps you are not aware that we have now agreed to recondition all the wells from Broome to Meekatharra.

Mr. MARSHALL: Then I shall immediately sit down.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 15th November, 1938.

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

QUESTION—UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF.

Metropolitan Area and Country Districts.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: On page 70 of the Auditor General's Report under the heading "Unemployment Relief" the following disbursements for the year 1937-38 are shown:—Bed tickets £217 15s., Meal tickets £350 13s., Board and lodging £477 8s., Ration orders (34) £979 18s. 1d., Cash relief (12) £429 1s., Firewood and freight £711 4s. 1d. What portions of these amounts were expended—(a) in the metropolitan area; (b) in country districts?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: £441 6s. 7d. of the above amounts was expended in centres outside the metropolitan area and adjoining districts. As most of the Government works are being carried out in country districts, approved unemployed men living in the country have almost invariably been advantaged by being given work instead of sustenance.

QUESTION—BUNBURY HARBOUR BOARD.

Interest, Siltage, Dredging.

Hon. E. H. H. HALL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, What was the amount of accrued unpaid interest owing to the Treasury by the Bunbury Harbour Board on (a) the 30th June, 1924, and (b) the 30th June, 1938? 2, What is the amount of expenditure on the work designed to prevent siltage at Bunbury? 3, What was the average annual expenditure on dredging for the five years prior to the commencement of the above