

tality of the present-day Yugoslav or Italian. The fact that he has lived in this country for a fairly long period has not changed his outlook. When the Onion Board was formed in this State, it buried thousands of tons of onions grown by the decent fellows, while the other fellows, naturalised and unnaturalised, sold them outside.

Hon. W. J. MANN: We are having a show-down. Members would never dare to make the same speeches at a recruiting rally.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: To whom are you referring?

Hon. W. J. MANN: To Sir Hal Colebatch.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: Do you say I make speeches here which I would not dare to make anywhere else?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Yes.

Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch: That is absolutely false! I have never yet made a statement in this House that I was not prepared to make outside. I suggest that Mr. Mann ceases being personal, or I might be tempted to remind him of something he said.

Hon. C. B. Williams: Our soldiers are dealing with the Italians now; what are we doing to help them?

Hon. W. J. MANN: Many years ago Mr. Holmes made a similar attempt to this, but at that time conditions were altogether different. We were then living in normal times, and had no National Security Act.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 13th November, 1911.

	PAGE
Questions: Kalgoorlie Hospital, firewood supplies	1878
Industries Assistance Act, as to regulations	1878
Bills: Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation) (No. 2), 2R., Com. report	1878
Child Welfare Act Amendment, 2R.	1889
Broome Tramway Extension, 2R.	1802
State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment, 2R.	1893
Factories and Shops Act Amendment, 2R.	1900

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

QUESTION—KALGOORLIE HOSPITAL.

Firewood Supplies.

Mr. SEWARD asked the Premier: 1, What is the name of the contractor who supplies wood to the Kalgoorlie Hospital? 2, How much wood is he called upon under his contract to deliver weekly? 3, What distance has the wood to be carted? 4, Is it possible to use the railways at all in transporting the wood? 5, If so—(a) Are the railways so used? (b) What distances is the wood carted by rail? (c) Does the contractor receive concession rail freights? 6, On that part of the distance for which road transport is necessary is producer gas or petrol the propellant force? 7, What is the road vehicles' fuel cost per ton of wood delivered? 8, Does the contractor hold all other contracts for the supply of wood to Government activities? 9, If so, what are they?

The PREMIER replied: 1, T. Kosonich. 2, Approximately 42 tons per week. 3, Green wood obtained 16 miles south of Boulder. Dry wood obtained 30 miles east of Boulder. 4, No. 5, Answered by No. 4. 6, Neither. Diesel motor truck is used. 7, No information available. 8, No. 9, Answered by No. 8.

QUESTION—INDUSTRIES ASSISTANCE ACT.

As to Regulations.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM (without notice) asked the Premier: 1, Can the Premier inform the House whether it is proposed to promulgate regulations under the amendment to the Industries Assistance Act of last year? 2, If so, when are they likely to be gazetted?

The PREMIER replied: 1, Yes. 2, The regulations are awaiting the approval of Executive Council at its next meeting and will be gazetted at the first opportunity thereafter.

BILL—MAIN ROADS ACT (FUNDS APPROPRIATION) (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [4.36] in moving the second reading said: This is the Bill I am submitting to comply with

the Standing Order respecting duration. My only comment is that although it proposes to take 22½ per cent. of the traffic fees as from the 1st July, 1941, to the 30th June, 1942—that is the licensing period—it will not be possible for the Bill to end on that date because the payments are made after the 30th June of next year. The Bill will, therefore, cease to operate after the 31st December, 1942. As regards the actual operation of the measure, it will apply only for the one year's licensing period. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [4.38]: I am glad the Minister made an explanation in regard to the date appearing in the last clause of the Bill; otherwise it might have been thought to have some reference to the dates between which the fees are collectable. So far as effects and results go, the Government's case is no better, as I see it, and no more palatable to me than was that submitted in respect of the Bills introduced in 1939 and 1940. I admit that this Bill has been more diplomatically presented to the House, to such an extent indeed that there has been a noticeable slackening in the opposition to the measure by certain members on this side. That of course will be pleasing to the Minister but not perhaps to me. The Government was not slow to allege that it had been fined £65,000 because it failed to take certain traffic fees into revenue. I admit that was an easy decision to reach in the circumstances, but it is not a decision that appeals to me. The question whether the Government's tactics plus the Government's taxing methods are at fault in this matter, has not been adequately examined, nor whether the Government has been too gullible or has been too slow to learn lessons from past experience of the Grants Commission.

The Minister for Works: A very carefully prepared case was put up by the Government.

MR. DONEY: Of course there are some very good reasons for that which I will give a little later, reasons that might appeal even to the Minister himself. Past events in respect of this matter do not justify the Government in relying on the generosity of the Grants Commission. I would recall to the minds of members that in 1931-32—that is, when the Mitchell-Latham Government was

in office—the favourite defence of the Grants Commission against any charge that it was not allowing us a sufficiently large grant was that it could not be expected to be more generously inclined towards this State while our taxation was so very much lower than it was in other States. Both the Collier Government in its time and the Willcock Government during the last few years swallowed that bait very readily. I suppose they reasoned thus: By following the kindly advice of their friends, the members of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, they would get not only the larger grant which they had failed to receive previously, but would get in addition the heavier revenue from taxation. It is plain to us that our astute friends of the Grants Commission did not share the roseate expectations of the Ministry. Members will recall that in Western Australia, from being the second lowest taxed State in Australia—Tasmania having been slightly lower than we were—the Collier and Willcock Governments so pushed up taxation that today we are second-highest only to Queensland. This is to say, from a reasonable figure of £3 6s. per head of population in 1931-32, taxation in this State now stands at £8 6s. 3d. per head, an amount that is excessive to only a very slight degree by the State of Queensland.

MR. PATRICK: And we are getting less money.

MR. DONEY: Considerably less. There is no gainsaying the fact that on a per capita basis we are far less wealthy than are the non-claimant States in the East. The wishes of the Grants Commission having been complied with in the matter of taxation we naturally looked for better results, but, in effect the members of the commission now say in reply, "You have all this extra revenue from taxation now and consequently you do not require any increase in the grant from us." The House will appreciate that a precisely comparable position has once more arisen. A new bait is offered today, and I am surprised that the bait is being swallowed just as readily as was the earlier one. I think the State Government has been manoeuvred into an altogether false position. It certainly lost the £65,000 on the last occasion, but I do not think the reason given is the correct one. Anyhow, the Government has my sympathy and that is all.

I oppose the Bill because the principle underlying it is precisely the same as that which underlay Bills of the same nature that have been introduced during the last couple of years. I do not think anyone could deny that; certainly the Minister could not. The Minister has intimated that there is nothing in the Bill that need interest members representing country constituencies, but has said that the argument may properly be left to members representing the metropolitan area, and he added that the metropolitan local authorities had raised no objection. I feel that they are far less likely to raise objection than are country members. The question naturally arises, "What is the purpose of the Bill?" I do not mean the Bill as rather fancifully interpreted by the Minister, but the Bill in its bare state—in the nude, as it were.

Mr. Sampson: Did you say "crude?"

Mr. DONEY: I was adopting rather modern phraseology by describing it as a Bill in the nude. By putting it thus, I thought members would the better understand my meaning. The obvious purpose of the Bill is to borrow £29,000 from the metropolitan road fund subject to its being repaid. But repaid by whom? Not by the Government! We know that. Repayment is to be made from funds assigned by statute for use on roads in country areas.

The Minister for Works: Oh, no.

Mr. DONEY: Oh, yes.

The Minister for Works: You have misread the agreement. You had better read it.

Mr. DONEY: I have read the agreement and I cannot interpret it otherwise than as I have done.

The Minister for Works: Your interpretation is not right.

Mr. DONEY: I think I know the distinction that the Minister has in mind. I will come to that in a moment. Despite what the Minister may say, there plainly would be no sense in the Government's borrowing £29,000 from the metropolitan road funds and almost immediately liquidating the debt. Referring to the Minister's remarks, I am speaking approximately when I allude to that repayment. The actual basis of repayment would be 91 per cent. from the local authorities in the country and the small balance of 9 per cent. from the metropolitan funds. The net result would be

that the Government would be £29,000 better off; the metropolitan authorities would lose a sum of £2,610, and the rural authorities would lose £26,390.

I admit that the Minister does not put it in that way. He employs language which I suppose is quite correct, but which I think needs a great deal of straightening out before it will be intelligible to the ordinary individual. He says that 22½ per cent. of the metropolitan license fees now payable to the Commissioner of Main Roads shall be paid into Consolidated Revenue, and that an equivalent amount will be made available to the Commissioner from petrol tax funds for the purposes defined in Section 33 of the Main Roads Act. In ordinary parlance this surely means that the Government is borrowing £29,000 without making any repayment.

The Minister called attention to the fact that the operation of the measure is to be restricted to one year. That might mean much or little. If it meant what it says, he should not object to giving the House an assurance that a Bill for a similar purpose will not again be introduced. I do not know whether the Minister is listening to my invitation; apparently he is not. May I repeat, I would like an assurance that what is implied by the reference to a currency of one year only may be made the subject of a little amplification by the Minister when he replies to the debate. To restrict this particular measure to one year would be of little consequence one way or the other, but if this Bill is enacted it seems plain indeed that a measure along similar lines and containing similar principles may be expected to be introduced annually. If this is not so, I ask the Minister what becomes of the assertion of the Government and the Commonwealth Grants Commission that they require the servicing of loan funds—funds for road purposes—to be made a permanent charge on the traffic fees collected in the metropolitan area.

I have examined all the arguments submitted by the Minister. The only one that impresses me is that which concerns itself with the lecture given by the Commonwealth Grants Commission to the Government, wherein members of that Commission say they reduced our disabilities grant because we would not service our annual loan charges from traffic collections. These lectures are

hard to take, particularly by people who only a few years ago intimidated by a heavy majority the fact that they did not too readily tolerate undue interference on the part of the Eastern States in their domestic activities. If the Grants Commission could say that our road expenditures in this State were unwise, unnecessary or wasteful, I feel perhaps that it would be justified in taking the action it did. I submit, however, that it could not say such a thing. It will be plain to all members that our bitumenised and other roads are a definite credit to those who constructed and are controlling them.

There may have been a few errors and extravagances in the first year or two of the board's operations, but these have all been eliminated, and today the condition of our roads is such that I feel safe in challenging comparison between the quality and cost and the need for such main road works with anything done in the other States, and on that basis challenge comparison with the same type of work done in the other States. If Victoria and other States are temporarily easing off in work on their main roads, in order to leave a credit in their Federal Aid Roads Fund to meet interest and loan expenditure, they are doing so only because they have more funds available for roads than they require; in other words, they have more road funds available than they know what to do with. Members will realise that Victoria and the other States are in a more advanced stage of road development than are we. There is no pressure on their road funds. So far as Victoria is concerned, I cannot give it credit for any altruism in the matter of its attitude towards its Commonwealth commitments.

Mr. Cross: Their roads are worse than ours, I am informed.

Mr. DONEY: I do not know where the hon. member got his information, but I take it he does not know the position there.

Mr. Cross: I was given that information from a reliable source.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The hon. member is doing some more guessing.

Mr. DONEY: We can always get reliable information from any source on any subject, particularly from persons who are least qualified to give an opinion. I question very much whether the comparative position in regard to the road systems of States is as unfavourable to Western Australia as the Commonwealth Grants Commission or the Minister would imply. In the wealthy State

of Victoria, there is a roads debt in respect of loan expenditure of something over £10,000,000. With the interest and sinking fund charges on that sum, the total annual expenditure is something like £400,000, the whole of which I understand comes out of Victoria's traffic fees. In New South Wales and Queensland, from what I can gather in the pages of the last annual report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, the contributions to interest and sinking fund on this particular account are stated to be "appreciable." I usually find when the word "appreciable" is used it is used in an attempt to hide the fact that the amount in question is so small as to be hardly worth mentioning. It cannot be anything very substantial; otherwise the Commission would not have adopted a description such as is implied by the use of the word in question.

We are told that South Australia has passed legislation enabling it to pay these amounts from traffic fees, but so far as I can gather no actual payments have yet been made, so that this does not amount to a great deal. Tasmania's debt on account of roads, 5½ million pounds, is very much larger than is ours, but that State's annual payment in respect of interest and sinking fund appears to be nil. Our debt is the smallest of all, namely £3,406,000, and on that apparently we pay £7,396 annually, or at least if we do not pay it annually we have paid it during the year under review, namely, 1939-40. Taking the position by and large, it would appear that with the single exception of Victoria, our position compares favourably with that of any of the other States. In addition to what I have mentioned, South Australia is undergoing a boom period at the moment, whereas Western Australia is passing through parlous times. In the circumstances I do not see why we should be selected for this special discipline and actually be fined a sum of £65,000. Tasmania was not fined more than £28,000. Since its fault was more serious than ours, it is difficult to see the reason for the lower penalty.

Why was South Australia accorded the kindly treatment meted out to it? One might ask why pressure was not put upon the people of New South Wales and Queensland in order that they might pay not an "appreciable" amount but pay the lot, as apparently they are able to do. I recall that last year, and I believe again this year, South Australia was lectured severely on the

laxity of the control of its transport arrangements generally, but that State was not fined. South Australia asked the Grants Commission for an advance of £1,500,000 pounds, and in response to that request it received £1,400,000. We asked for the same amount, but did not receive even half of it. We were allotted £695,000 finally, but even that was reduced to £630,000. The Premier may be able to tell the House whether this is the first occasion—I believe it is—when a State has been fined so substantial an amount as we have been fined in this instance, namely £65,000. I want to quote some figures from the Eighth Report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, to show that the debt pressure upon the individual in this State can only be described as enormous. The Grants Commission has selected four tables, and no more, as being the best it can think of for the purpose of indicating the extent to which the per capita financial burden is being borne by the several Australian States.

Under the heading of "Public Debt per Head," at page 18, I find that Western Australia carries the heaviest burden of all, namely, £205 12s. 5d., while Victoria's debt per head is only £95 1s. The other States fluctuate roughly between those two points. In regard to net losses on loan expenditure per head, once again Western Australia is shown as having lost per head a sum of £4 13s., while the comparative Victorian figure is £2 1s. 7d. I mention these figures as they can be taken as a measure of our need for help from the Commonwealth. In regard to net loan expenditure per head, once more Western Australia is unfortunately the highest, our figure being £3 17s. 8d., against Victoria's relatively low figure of £1 13s. 3d. Then comes the last table, "State Taxation per Head." I am quoting the figures for the year 1939-40. Western Australia's figure is £7 19s. 11d., as against Victoria's, £6 14s. 6d. Those figures plainly indicate not that our grant should have been reduced, but rather that it should have been substantially increased.

As regards South Australia, the report has this to say at page 18, paragraph 27—

The year 1939-40 brought a decided improvement in the economic position of South Australia. The major primary industries recovered most of the ground lost in 1938-39. The volume of wheat production increased by 30 per cent., and the volume of wool production exceeded the heavy clip of 1938-39 by 2 per cent. With the stabilised price schemes in operation dur-

ing 1939-40, the value of wheat production increased by 78 per cent., and the value of the wool clip increased by 34 per cent. Other primary industries, particularly dairying, had another satisfactory year, and the total net value of primary production increased by 36 per cent. to the high figure of £22.8m. The value of exports was well maintained in most commodities, although some were adversely affected by the shipping priority arrangements for cargoes.

28. In South Australia, the policy of development of secondary industry is beginning to have its effect, as the figures below reveal. It is probably true that the original industrial programme has not been adhered to, but South Australia has gained considerably as a result of the establishment of war industries within the State.

Those references are particularly satisfactory, as I am sure the Minister will agree. Since the figures quoted affect not the current year, but last year, we realise that the position during that time has vastly improved. I wish, by way of comparison, to read a few lines from paragraph 31, at page 20, having reference to our own State—

The general economic situation showed some improvement during 1939-40, although there are certain adverse factors affecting the position. The recovery from severe drought conditions has been maintained, although the situation in the northern areas is still serious. The pastoral industry in Western Australia was investigated by a Royal Commission which presented a most comprehensive report to the State Government this year.

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that that report disclosed a parlous condition of affairs throughout the pastoral areas. The report continues—

32. Generally speaking, seasonal conditions were fairly satisfactory and there was some improvement in the production of the principal primary commodities.

At page 21, the report continues—

The expansion in the value of manufacturing production was relatively small compared with the large expansion in other States. Western Australia has not benefited to the same extent as some of the other States in the expansion of war industries and the loss of skilled labour is causing serious concern to the authorities of that State.

That presents a rather drab picture of the condition of affairs in this State; so, in order to compensate us, the Commission has heavily reduced our grant and in addition has heavily fined us. Later in the report reference will be found to Western Australia's figures appertaining to secondary industries. These details show that Western Australia's factory employment figures are a little be-

low those of the previous year. I might be permitted perhaps to read this further extract from page 82, referring to South Australia—

There is clear evidence of improving conditions in South Australia; and, with the growing economic stimulus created by war industries and war expenditure, it is likely that in the near future the finances of the State will further improve. Thus the grant indicated by our calculations may be in excess of actual needs in 1941-42.

South Australia's participation in secondary industries since the outbreak of the war is represented by 48.3 per cent. Tasmania has improved its position by 25 per cent.; but Western Australia lags far behind the others with a miserable 10.2 per cent. I am not intimating that this is any fault of the Minister for Industrial Development, because in another part of the report there will be found a rather complimentary reference to the work that his department has been doing in this regard.

The several quotations I have made from the report all indicate the need for a heavily increased grant to Western Australia. We know, of course, that the reverse has happened. I can only say that these disparities absolutely amaze me. I cannot help thinking that it must have been the Government's repeated attempts in past years to seize the traffic fees that attracted the attention of the Grants Commission to this particular field; and I think it was the Government's anxiety over the years to get its hands upon this easy money of the local authorities that aroused a like cupidity on the part of the Grants Commission. Whilst I recognise the unenviable position in which the Government has been placed, I nevertheless desire to intimate that I shall oppose the second reading. I shall do so because I consider that the threats of the Grants Commission are, in my opinion, not justified.

The Commission has not taken sufficiently into consideration the varying degrees of development, costs, etc., in the road programmes, of the several States. The Commission's action in fining this State was altogether improper, having regard to the comparable shortcoming of the other States. Again, the present time is certainly about the worst of all times for the Commission further to reduce the income of local governing bodies in country areas, and for that matter, in the metropolitan area. Members

will realise the degree to which such incomes have been reduced on account of petrol restrictions. They will also realise that the Federal Aid Roads grant, by the same token, is likely in due course to be heavily reduced. To my mind, the Government has permitted itself to be stampeded from the very strong position that it occupied two or three years ago. It seems to me that in these diamond-cut-diamond manoeuvres by the Grants Commission and the Government, the Government has been sadly outwitted.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.10]: I wish to say a few words in order to correct a misstatement I made on the second reading of the Bill. I said then that the Commission had not penalised the Tasmanian Government because it had not taken the traffic fees into Consolidated Revenue. That statement was incorrect, and I propose to show how I came to make it. I shall quote from the Eighth Report of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, page 84, paragraph 197—

Our calculations indicate a grant of £558,000, but we believe some reduction is necessary because Tasmania has not, in our opinion, taken adequate steps to provide for the very heavy annual charges on the budget in respect of road debt. We accordingly reduce the grant by £28,000 on this account.

Note the inconsistency of the Commission! Tasmania's road commitments, in comparison with ours, are much higher. Our annual commitments are £163,000, as shown by paragraph 187 of the report, page 80. Our loan liability for roads and bridges is there stated to be £3,406,000. Yet Western Australia's grant was reduced by £65,000, which is considerably more than Tasmania's reduction, and Tasmania has an annual debt charge of £220,000. As I say, the Commission is inconsistent in that respect. I wanted to make that perfectly clear. I was unfair to the Minister.

The Minister for Works: You were unfair to the Commission.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, and to the Commission as well. I do not think the Grants Commission took into consideration the fact that Western Australia has been selling, and is continuing to sell, Crown lands, and that the proceeds of the sales of these lands are taken into Consolidated Revenue. They are not set apart to meet any contingent indebtedness that may arise by

virtue of the State having provided facilities for the development of the lands sold. I have repeatedly said in this House that revenue from the sale of Crown lands should be used for the purpose of building roads and railways and providing water supplies. The Minister would be quite pleased because he would have, annually, a fairly substantial amount of money coming in. But it is now paid into Consolidated Revenue, so that if we take from Consolidated Revenue the interest for the capital expenditure on roads it is exactly the same as if we took it from license fees. I am disappointed to know that we allow the Grants Commission to control our finances. This State ought to protest against that. It is not the responsibility of an outside body such as the Grants Commission to dictate to the elect of the people, which is what it is attempting to do.

We cannot say too much in this House in protest against that action of the Grants Commission. It will probably say it has been asked to do so by the Federal Government, but the principle is wrong. This State Government is elected, or ought to be, by the majority of the people. It is not just at the moment, but it will be next year. The present Government, however, is still occupying the position because it has a majority of the seats in the House. To all intents and purposes it is representative of the people. It is the responsibility of the Government to say how it is going to finance the activities of this State. We are a terrifically heavily taxed State. It is only fair that the money coming from this fund should be used for the purpose for which it was intended. The motor owners are taxed for the purpose of building roads. That is unreasonable and unfair. Roads do not only serve motorists, but are necessary for opening up the country. The development of the country maintains the State's ports and the waterways between countries, shipping and everything else. I am sorry the Government has not protested against the Grants Commission's attitude relating to the financing of this State. It is our responsibility and we should carry it. If the Government had put up a bit of a fight against the Grants Commission—

Mr. Hughes: But does not this Bill trick it?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes, it is taking the money out of one fund and putting it

into another. The Consolidated Revenue gets the benefit of it. The city local authorities are pleased, I suppose. I warn the country people that there will be less money spent on country roads. The Government finds a hundred and one different objects on which to spend money from that source.

I have opposed this Bill for two reasons. One is that I object to an outside body—elected certainly by the Federal Government and responsible to that Government, but not to us in any way—being vested with such powers as it now possesses. Certainly we present our case to it, but it decides exactly as it likes. It has greater powers than has this Parliament. That is a wrong principle and ought not to be tolerated for one moment. I oppose this measure secondly, for the reason that whilst it takes money out of the petrol tax to give to the local authorities, it takes an equivalent amount from the authorities and puts it into Consolidated Revenue, which means that the petrol tax is deficient by that amount which, in the ordinary course of events, would be spent on country roads. Even if we cannot spend it today, I warn the Treasurer that he would probably be very glad to have an accumulation of money before, perhaps, very long, to create employment for men returning to this country. If it is not used on roads at least it could be utilised for other purposes. I oppose the Bill, as I did when it was last before the House.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.20]: I have listened with a great deal of interest to the observations of the Leader of the Opposition and to the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney). Whilst they took exception to an outside body, as it is called, making suggestions or giving a lead to the State Parliament, there is no question but that any suggestion it has made has been very sound. The Grants Commission has pointed out that nearly £1,000,000 from loan funds has been spent on roads in this country. It suggests that a small contribution be made by way of interest payments on that amount. This Bill will appropriate to Consolidated Revenue a small amount from the fund mentioned. The Leader of the Opposition is apprehensive that there may not be a sum of money available to find employment for men when the war ceases. If this fund accumulates he suggests it would help in that direction.

I am more concerned now, not with roads, but with looking after our younger folk. If this money is taken into Consolidated Revenue I can mention a number of places on which the whole amount could be spent; I refer to school grounds. The condition of school grounds, and that of the equipment inside the schools, is very poor. If this money were appropriated to Consolidated Revenue it could be spent in the manner I have indicated with great advantage.

Mr. Sampson: If you suggested teaching a trade you would get somewhere.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: We have excellent roads in this country and this money could be used for the purpose I have mentioned.

Mr. Marshall: I thought it was to be used for interest payments.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, interest payments have now to be met from Consolidated Revenue.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They are a first claim.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes, a prior claim. One member here is clamouring for improvements in the directions I have indicated, but before anything can be done interest has to be found, and that is approximately 41 per cent. of the revenue. If we can bring into revenue some other moneys for the purposes I have indicated, we will be doing a good job for the children and the future citizens of this State. This problem has to be tackled and must not be delayed any longer. The amount mentioned by the Minister, £25,000, is not a very large sum, but nevertheless it would do good in the directions I have indicated. I give full support to this measure. The interest charges in connection with loans have become excessive. As the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald), who is the Leader of the National Party, pointed out the other night, the Grants Commission makes an examination of the economic and financial position of this State, and compares it with that of other States. It at least gives to us a better insight and knowledge of what is happening in other parts of Australia and how Western Australia compares economically and financially with the other States.

It has been pointed out over a number of years that moneys have been spent from loan funds on roads in this country, and Consolidated Revenue has to meet the interest charges. It is suggested that if relief is given in this direction, and this money

is brought into revenue, the State will be advantaged to the extent of some thousands of pounds by way of an increased grant from the Grants Commission. The position today is not what it was a couple of years ago. We have spent millions of pounds on roads in this country. It is true the motorists are taxed for that purpose by way of petrol tax. I suggest that this money should go into Consolidated Revenue and be used for the purpose I have described. That phase of the administration is much more urgent than is the question of building roads. I support the Bill.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.27]: If the discussion, up to date, indicates nothing else, it shows to what measures Parliaments will go to obey instructions from those who control the finances of the country. The whole of the squabble which has been going on for two or three years is the outcome of loan expenditure upon roads. They have been constructed and paid for, and now we are scheming, planning and trying by every means at our disposal to raise money. It is a debt in perpetuity. No one ever seems to grasp the substance. The labour and material for these roads have all been paid for, and now we must go on in perpetuity and pay over and over again. Why do not members grasp at the substance and challenge this rotten and invidious system of debt finance? Every solitary shilling coming into the coffers of the State Treasury, if its origin could be traced, would be found to come from a bank as a debt against the nation. Every single penny of it! Our time must be devoted to taxing, taxing constantly, taxing the people into servitude, without ever a protest against such action! Schools, says the member for Middle Swan (Mr. J. Hegney), are needed. Water supplies, roads, railways, all are needed. But if those wants are supplied, the result is debts against the people. Only recently the Treasurer told us what it cost to service the debt—approximately £5,000,000 every year. Fifty per cent. of our total State revenue must be applied to servicing the State debt. The policeman who was brought into existence to watch the interests, not of bondholders—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is getting well away from the Bill. I have given him a deal of latitude, but he must keep somewhere near the Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Minister tells us that the Commonwealth Grants Commission wants interest paid on the cost of our roads.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not concerned with what the Minister told the hon. member. I ask the hon. member to keep to the Bill.

Mr. MARSHALL: The Commonwealth Grants Commission, of which much has been said and written, puts forward as a proposal for consideration that this money is required for the payment of interest, and that if we follow its suggestion it will increase the grant to this State. Interest is what the Grants Commissioners want! If by conforming to this Bill we pay that interest, the Grants Commissioners will give us an increased contribution. Interest all the time! No other basis for us! The Bill is based on the principle of payment of interest; there is no other reason for it. It is a question of interest all the time. I am heartily sick of it.

Mr. Doney: What are you going to do about it?

Mr. MARSHALL: The Leader of the Opposition made some observations to the effect that he protested against the dictatorial attitude adopted by the Commonwealth Grants Commissioners towards the Parliament of Western Australia. He has been a long time waking up. This dictatorial attitude has obtained since, I might almost say, time immemorial. Here we have a progressive Labour Party that does not stand for interest, but we hear no protest against interest. The Party is always ready to do anything required in relation to interest. There is never a protest. Thus we go on complaining and putting off the evil day.

This sort of thing must inevitably continue until members rise against it as a body. Should they fail to do that, the people themselves will not be too long in waking up, and then we shall have to wake up to our duty in regard to payment of interest. So far as I am concerned the Bill can go out. I do not worry even slightly about interest payments. When I observe an attitude of aggression against this iniquitous system, when I see a symptom of defiance, my assistance towards tiding over the evil days, so that we may look forward to more prosperous and happier times, will be available.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [5.34]: Just to make sure that the House is not misled regarding the agreement which exists in respect of Federal aid roads, let me mention a provision of that agreement that the money is to be expended for construction, reconstruction, and maintenance of roads. Then, as regards the halfpenny which we received in addition some years ago, that halfpenny can be expended on matters connected with transport. We have a discretion with regard to that.

It is suggested now that the country districts are going to suffer from the system of expenditure proposed in the Bill. The total expended on the construction of roads from loan funds is £3,400,000, and the annual interest charge is £163,000. Practically all those roads have been constructed in country districts, and therefore it is not asking too much that some of this money should be spent on payment of interest on that debt. So, even if we agree that the country districts will suffer in some way ingeniously suggested by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney)—

Mr. Doney: Do you agree with that?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. I wondered how the hon. member was going to connect that matter up with country road boards, seeing the question is one of an exchange relating to the Metropolitan Traffic Trust Fund. The country districts will not suffer this time. The hon. member has not been successful in getting country road boards organised in opposition to this Bill. They know that it does not affect them. As regards the argument about the Grants Commission, there appears to be a suspicion that the case for Western Australia has not been properly and effectively placed before the Commissioners. Such is the contention, I understand. The member for Guildford-Midland (Hon. W. D. Johnson) is of opinion that the case has been placed before the Commission in a slovenly way, and that many things have been omitted from it. The hon. member contends that the case has not been properly argued, and that various factors have been missed.

I was highly impressed with the way in which the member for Williams-Narrogin put up his case. He is not convinced that

the Commission adopts the right basis when considering Western Australia's needs. I issue an invitation to him now to go before the Grants Commission and put up Western Australia's case. It also holds good for the member for Guildford-Midland. On page 130 of the Commission's Report for 1941 appears a list of 14 witnesses who gave evidence on behalf of Western Australia, including Mr. H. L. Brisbane, president, Chamber of Manufactures, Perth; Mr. Norman Fernie, Industries and Works Production Engineer, Perth; Mr. W. V. Pyfe, Surveyor General for Western Australia; Mr. G. K. Baron Hay, Superintendent of Dairying, Department of Agriculture, Perth; Mr. John M. Hill, retired builder, Perth; Mr. S. L. Kessell, Conservator of Forests; Mr. C. P. Mathea, the economist, now an inspecting accountant of the Western Australian Treasury; Mr. A. J. Reid, Under Treasurer; Mr. C. Raymond, Finance Officer, Western Australian Railways; Mr. S. A. Taylor, Auditor General; Mr. E. Tindale, formerly Commissioner of Main Roads of Western Australia and Director of Public Works; and also my colleague the Hon. F. J. S. Wise, Minister for Lands and Agriculture, who presented a case dealing particularly with the North-West of this State, of which he has an intimate knowledge.

We have done our utmost to ensure that the case showing the disabilities and needs of Western Australia should be most carefully prepared and presented, but when it comes to the question whether the Grants Commission viewed the case from the basis desired by us, that is an entirely different matter.

Mr. Doney: That is my complaint, their attitude towards you; not your attitude towards them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is a definite charge that the Grants Commission dictates to this State its policy. Their might be grounds for that assertion were it not for the fact that the Federal Government and Federal Parliament have adopted the Commission's report. If you will permit me, Mr. Speaker, I will mention that Mr. Chifley, the Treasurer in the Federal Labour Government, when introducing the Bill to make available the £2,300,000 required for South Australia's, Western Australia's, and Tasmania's grants, stated—

The recommendations of the Commission for

the last seven years have been approved by the Commonwealth Government and adopted by Parliament.

Mr. Doney: Pretty well automatically!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know that the recommendation was adopted automatically. I cannot conceive that the Federal Parliament would grant £2,300,000 without examining the matter. The Labour Treasurer's closing sentences are notable. They show the viewpoint held by the Commonwealth, and that is what we have to change. Mr. Chifley concluded as follows:—

There is considerable evidence that the work of the Commission is thorough and impartial, and that all matters affecting the needs of the claimant States have been investigated. The Government therefore believes that the amounts recommended by the Commission will adequately meet the needs of the claimant States, and consequently, as in past years, the Government has decided to accept the recommendations of the Commission.

Mr. Doney: Naturally!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: From the formula adopted by the Commission, I suppose that would be true; but the case that we have to put up now, the case that the Commonwealth demands shall be put up, dealing with the financial and economic position of Western Australia, is entirely different from the case put up by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) when it was sought to show the disabilities which this State suffered owing to Federation. If that were permitted, we would have an entirely different basis on which to argue, and we would obtain entirely different results. There is not the slightest doubt that Western Australia suffers more than any other State by reason of the Tariff, which bears heavily upon a primary producing State as against a manufacturing State.

Mr. SPEAKER: I think the Minister is now getting away from the reply.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am glad that I have been allowed to make this explanation, which has been drawn from me by the continual suggestions that the Commonwealth Grants Commission dictates to this State. That Commission was appointed by the Federal Government, and the Federal Government and the Federal Parliament approved of its recommendations. Therefore, if we are to do any good we shall have to alter the basis of the inquiry.

Mr. SPEAKER: We cannot do that under this Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Now, I assume, we can discuss the Commonwealth Grants Commission's report itself. It seems to me that the Commissioners adopted a policy of setting up, first of all, what they term a standard State, and then insisting that the claimant States shall not be better treated than the contributory States. That is why in the first place they dealt severely with the incidence of taxation in Western Australia. They do not complain about that now. I understand we measure up to the standard in respect of taxation, so that grievance has gone by the board. It is true that the Commission, in addition to satisfying South Australia, Western Australia, and Tasmania, also has to satisfy those States which pay. It has to show, therefore, that the claimant States are being kept up to the standard, that their public accounts are carefully examined, and that the economic position and disabilities of the claimant States warrant the payments made to them. We have to realise the position. I assume that the Federal Government, which is representative largely of the three contributing States, views this question from a different aspect to that from which it is viewed in Western Australia.

Hon. N. Keenan: Why do you refer to the three contributing States? All the States contribute.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so, but we have to agree upon some method of describing the position. There are contributing States and what is known as claimant States. Some States contribute and certainly receive nothing, whereas we contribute and do receive something. We are recipients in this particular deal. I do not know of any other way to describe the position. True, the money is paid from the general fund, part of which is supplied even by the claimant States. When, however, there is to be a special concession to the three claimant States, naturally the Federal Government has to satisfy the Federal Parliament that it is justified. It has to satisfy the Parliament that the claimant States have in turn done their job in regard to financing themselves, and in regard to the manner in which they conduct their affairs. I agree that now a new member will take his place on the Commission, an attempt should be made to alter the basis of payment.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think the Minister can discuss the aspect of a new member being appointed to the Commission.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is a new subject.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am afraid I have been led away. The interesting part in respect to this measure is that it is an attempt to adopt something like uniformity of practice, the lack of which undeniably caused Western Australia to be prejudiced in the minds of members of the Commission. I refer to the general policy, apart from Western Australia and Tasmania, with regard to road license fees. It is on that account we have been penalised. The statement that action by this Government caused attention to be directed to the matter is incorrect. In the first place the Commonwealth Grants Commission directed attention to it, and we attempted unsuccessfully to rectify the position.

Mr. Doney: When was attention called to that matter?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Attention was called to it by the Commission about three years ago.

Hon. C. G. Latham: When it had exhausted all other excuses.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: After warning us, the Commission penalised us to the extent of £20,000 in one year.

Mr. Patrick: After we had rectified the position.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: And it penalised us again this year to the extent of £65,000. We can complain as much as we like about the attitude of the Commission. That has been approved by successive Federal Governments and successive Federal Parliaments. We are doing the best we can. Some people think we should devise ways and means of inducing the Commission to alter its policy and decisions. To those who think they can impress the Commission by giving evidence before it, I extend an invitation to do what they can to influence that body to alter its views in our direction. I agree that here is a case where Parliament might assist. We have done our best to present a case; but it might still be better presented. I agree that is something which might be done. If the Bill is passed and the Commission is genuine in what it says, the Treasurer will gain an estimated sum of £29,000. Having gone that far on the road requested of us by the Commission, if it is genuine—we will know that next year—we

should be relieved of the penalty to that extent by that time.

Mr. Doney: Who mentioned the sum of £29,000?

The Premier: That is the estimated amount of the 22½ per cent.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Commonwealth Government should certainly match that £29,000 with an additional £20,000. This simple measure will benefit the Treasurer, that is Consolidated Revenue, if the Commission is genuine to the extent of £58,000. That is worth while. It may also have an even better effect than that. It will show that this Government has done its utmost to endeavour to get into line with the contributing States by utilising traffic fees for the payment of interest on road loans.

Mr. J. Hegney: What amount did you mention? Was the sum £28,000?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I referred to £29,000, double of which amounts to £58,000, the sum that we should get as a result of the passing of this Bill. We are justified in saying that the Commission should to that extent increase its grant to Western Australia next year, or rather decrease the penalty of £65,000 next year. I think that is a fair estimate of the advantage to be derived from this simple Bill, if passed.

Question put, and a division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	25
Noes	15
Majority for	10

AYES.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Raphael
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hughes	Mr. F. C. L. Smith
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Triest
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Willcock
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Withers
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Needham	

(Teller.)

NOES.

Mr. Berry	Mr. Patrick
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Sampson
Mr. Hill	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Warner
Mr. Latham	Mr. Watts
Mr. Maoh	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Doney
Mr. North	

(Teller.)

PAIRS.

AYES.	NOES.
Mr. Collier	Mr. Stubbs
Mr. Holman	Mr. J. H. Smith

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Bill passed through Committee without debate, reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—CHILD WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.58] in moving the second reading said: There is nothing very revolutionary in the Bill, but it contains a number of amendments the acceptance of which by Parliament will enable the better administration of the Act and of the Child Welfare Department to be achieved. The first amendment to the Act aims at altering the existing definition of the term "child." The present definition covers boys and girls under the age of 16 years. The Bill aims to alter that definition by raising the age, and the alteration is designed to cover special cases that develop on different occasions.

Hon. N. Keenan: To what extent are you raising the age?

Hon. C. G. Latham: It is indefinite.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: There is an indefinite age, but the alteration is being made to cover children or young people who really come under certain sections of the Act but are not covered in the existing definition of "child." For instance, there are boys and girls who may be committed to an institution until they are 18 years of age and who may have their term within the institution extended until they reach 21 years of age. There are also instances where boys and girls over 16 years of age, when charged with certain offences, may be sent to an institution for the maximum period of two years. It is obvious that a boy or girl may be charged with such an offence when 17½ years of age. If the maximum term of committal of two years is imposed on such children, then they would be within an institution until they were 19½ years of age. An alteration in the definition of the term "child" is required to meet the particular cases I have explained.

An alteration is also proposed in the definition of the term "ward." The amendment is required to cover those children who become wards of the State because of action taken under the Education Act. Another

clause aims to give the Minister the right to appoint visitors to subsidised as well as to Government institutions. At present power exists to appoint visitors to inspect Government institutions and make recommendations concerning them and the children within them. No such power exists in relation to the appointment of visitors for the same purpose in connection with subsidised institutions, though in practice visitors do go to subsidised institutions and make reports concerning them.

Another part of the Bill sets out to give the court power to commit a child and at the same time recommend that the child be released whilst of good behaviour. There have been several cases in which committals would not have been enforced had this proposed power existed. Instances have arisen in which the court desired to commit but wished to release the child concerned in order that it should not have to go into an institution but could be restored to the care of its parents provided there was some power of supervision over it. Because this power to commit but at the same time to recommend release whilst of good behaviour has not existed in the past, the children concerned have had to be committed to an institution and placed within it, or else no committal order has been made, which means that no finding has been made by the court in most of those cases. The proposed amendment is designed to give greater discretion to the court when dealing with the children brought before it from time to time.

The Bill proposes to give to the special magistrate of the Children's Court the right to exercise the powers and authorities of a court of summary jurisdiction under Section 8 of the Guardianship of Infants Act. These powers and authorities were exercised by the special magistrate of the Children's Court until some weeks ago, when an appeal was made against the magistrate's decision, on the ground that he did not have the right to exercise the powers and authorities of a court of summary jurisdiction in connection with Section 8 of the Guardianship of Infants Act. The appeal was upheld and from that time no case under Section 8 of the Act I have mentioned has been dealt with in the Children's Court. Not only did the present special magistrate, prior to this appeal, deal with such cases, but the previous special magis-

trate of the court also dealt with them during all the years he occupied that position. It is considered that the cases that arise under Section 8 of that Act can be better dealt with by a special magistrate of the Children's Court than in any court of summary jurisdiction. The special magistrate of the Children's Court has better facilities available to him for the investigation of such cases as would be brought before him from time to time. He has special officers to make all the investigations required and thus provide the magistrate, together with such other evidence as might be placed before him, with a complete check-up, thus putting him in a position to give a decision. Another proposal aims to take power for the apprehension of uncontrollable and incorrigible children. At present the power to apprehend is restricted to neglected and destitute children, but it will be realised that incorrigible and uncontrollable children require more attention than do neglected or destitute children.

Section 26 of the Act enables the court to dismiss a complaint against a child even though the child is guilty of the offence with which it has been charged. It is often advisable, however, to have the department's probation officers supervise the future behaviour of such a child, and an amendment in the Bill enables the court to give such power of supervision without recording a conviction against a child. The amendment is somewhat similar to one I explained previously but it differs in that important respect. It is thought that if this particular power is placed in the Act, a number of children who would be convicted in the future if the power were not granted will not have convictions recorded against them. No blemish will be recorded against their names in the court, but the court will take the precaution of placing such children under supervision in order that they may be assisted to the maximum possible extent to avoid a repetition of the offence which led to their appearance before the Children's Court.

If children are brought before the court and for some reason or other the magistrate thinks it wise not to record a conviction, such children, unless supervised and assisted, may regard the matter lightly and continue committing one offence after another until some offence is committed leading to their being placed in an institution for a long

period. The power proposed in the amendment is one that will enable the magistrate to use his discretion. He need not record a conviction at all but may content himself with dismissing the charge, and at the same time place the child under some reasonable measure of control by one of the probation officers of the Child Welfare Department.

The Act does not permit the court to commit an uncontrollable or incorrigible child unless adequate arrangements are made for its maintenance. Where the court is unable to have adequate arrangements made by a near relative for the payment of maintenance in respect to such a child, the court cannot commit, even though there may be a very good reason to commit. It will be obvious to members that in some of these cases in which incorrigible or uncontrollable children are brought before the court, none of the near relatives is able to provide any security for future maintenance, because of lack of income or the small income of which they are in receipt. The amendment will provide that the court may still commit an incorrigible or uncontrollable child, even if no near relative is able to provide any security for the child's future maintenance.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Act gives power to order the father of an illegitimate child to pay confinement expenses. The Bill proposes to give similar power in respect of children that are legitimate. Over the years there have been a number of cases where the husbands have deserted their wives and, following that, children have been born legitimately to them, but the husbands have refused to shoulder any responsibility in connection with the maintenance of such legitimate children, and the Act has not given the court any power to make an order in respect of the confinement expenses.

Section 76 of the Act enables the department to attach certain moneys if, at the same time, a complaint is laid under Section 69 or Section 129. It is an offence, under Section 129, for a near relative unlawfully to desert or fail to provide adequate means of support for a child. The alterations contained in the Bill will facilitate the granting and enforcement of maintenance orders. Another part of the Bill provides for imposing a penalty on those who fail to pay

to the department money attached in favour of the department as a result of a court order.

Mr. Sampson: Illegitimate children receive the same good treatment as do legitimate children.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That would be a very good interjection if it was relevant.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The Bill also proposes to make it possible for a court of petty sessions to deal with maintenance orders if there is no children's court set up within reasonable distance of the centre where the action is to be taken. The idea is that the parties concerned will be saved quite a deal of expense if the case can be heard by a court of petty sessions as against the case having to be dragged away, perhaps 50, 60 or 100 miles, for the purpose of having it heard in a children's court.

Mr. Warner: Is not that the practice now?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: No. The practice now is that justices in some districts are appointed to constitute a children's court and are empowered to hear cases of this sort in their districts, but there are some districts where these arrangements have not been and cannot be made, and where cases arise in those districts the parties concerned have to undertake a good deal of travel and expense if they desire to put their side of the case before the court. The Bill seeks to provide greater convenience for the parties concerned in another type of case. The original order for maintenance may be made in the Children's Court in Perth. Subsequently one or both of the parties may transfer to Merredin, Kalgoorlie, Geraldton or some other place far distant from Perth. Under the Act any action to be taken for a variation of the maintenance order or for its annulment must be taken in the Perth court where the original order was made.

The Bill proposes to permit of any subsequent action in connection with such a case being heard in the court nearest to which any or all of the parties reside, provided that the court concerned considers that such action on its part would be fair and reasonable to all concerned. Another part of the measure deals with bonds given to the court. At present the court has power to order persons to enter into bonds in con-

nection with a number of matters, but the Act does not set out that such bonds may be estreated if the terms are not complied with. The Bill aims at empowering the court to estreat those bonds in the event of the terms not being complied with.

Under the Act a man who deserts his children and makes no provision for their maintenance is liable to arrest under Section 129. After being arrested he is brought before the court, but all the court can do is to order imprisonment or place him under a bond not to repeat the offence. The imprisoning of a man who deserts his children and refuses to provide for their maintenance does not help the children and is not very satisfactory to the man himself. If the man is placed under a bond not to repeat the offence of deserting or failing to maintain his children, he might not live up to the terms of the bond, and consequently the position is not improved in any degree. Therefore that provision, as now existing under the Act, is in many cases altogether unsatisfactory. The Bill aims to improve the position by leaving with the court the powers it already has to deal with that type of person, and by granting additional power to make a maintenance order against the father. That additional power will enable the court to issue a maintenance order and to have the necessary action taken to ensure compliance with the order. This proposal in the Bill, if accepted and made part of the law, will cover a large loophole now existing in the Act of which full advantage has been taken by several men of the type described. The Bill contains a number of other amendments, none of which is highly important though some of them may cause discussion when the Bill is being considered in Committee. I commend the measure to the House and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—BROOME TRAMWAY EXTENSION.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 11th November.

MR. DONEY (Williams - Narrogin) [7.42]: Having regard to the geographical factor here involved, not too many mem-

bers will have much reliable information at their disposal on the question dealt with in this Bill. Fortunately a number of North-West members is present, and I am personally convinced that they, and especially the member for Kimberley (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley), will be able to speak from first-hand knowledge of this railway-cum-freezing works enterprise and intimate their belief, or otherwise, in its future. The buildings, I take it, are already erected. I am not absolutely sure on the point, but believe that to be what the Minister desired to intimate. I also understood the hon. gentleman to say that products from the works are already on the market.

I would like those members who have more knowledge of the position than I possess to intimate to the House whether the position so far is satisfactory, and just what is the amount of the bank guarantee afforded to this venture by the Treasury. I have been given to understand from one source that it is approximately £6,000, but I would like more precise information. There ought, of course, in this case to be no doubt as to the supply of bullocks to the works for treatment. I recall a reference by the Minister to fish; he stated that it was intended to treat fish. Perhaps we can have some detailed information on that aspect, by way of an intimation that supplies of fish are as assured as are those of cattle.

The Minister for Mines: It is not a fish shop that is to be built, but a tramway line which has been built.

Mr. DONEY: I know just as much about that as does the Minister. I am merely quoting from the Minister for Works where he said, so far as I was able to follow him, that the intention was to treat both beef and fish at the works. Apparently the cost involved in the 42 chains of tramway together with the necessary rolling stock is about £2,500. This means that the Government will outlay that amount in order to safeguard its existing bank guarantee of £6,000. I would also like to be informed just exactly what amount, if any, assuming it is a substantial amount, has been invested by Farrell Brothers. All we are told by the Government regarding its own investment is that, following upon exhaustive investigations, the Treasury was prepared to back Farrell Brothers at their bank. It would, of course, help if the

Minister were to intimate the risk that Farrell Brothers are taking. Anyhow, it appears that the Government thinks the works have no future unless the light railway proposed is laid down, so that frozen meat may pass from the works to refrigerated trucks and then, by way of the new line, to the refrigerators already provided on the ships. I take it, too, that the railing and shipping arrangements are on a sound basis. Personally, I believe in assistance of this type, and indirectly the railway would be a form of financial assistance to the freezers. Therefore I am prepared to vote for the second reading of the Bill provided, as I have said, that information is forthcoming from the member for Kimberley and any other members touching the points to which I have made reference.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST (Hon. A. A. M. Coverley—Kimberley) [7.47]: It is with great pleasure I accept the invitation of the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney), who so wholeheartedly supported the second reading of the Bill. I am afraid the hon. member has put upon me a task I am not able to fulfil in desiring me to give information as to the amount of business that is expected to be done, or has already been done, by this enterprise. The only assurance I can give him on that point is that the Government has given a bank guarantee for £6,000, and that Farrell Brothers themselves have put in £4,000 for the erection of buildings, installation of plant, and all things necessary to operate a small meatworks.

Farrell Brothers own a cattle station within about 35 miles of the proposed works; so that they are assured of a certain number of cattle from that particular station. My personal view of their idea is that it is a wonderfully good suggestion, and will prove a solid investment not only for Farrell Brothers but also for other stock owners in the vicinity of the Broome jetty. Broome is situated in a portion of the Kimberleys that does not lend itself well to the fattening of cattle, though it is a particularly good cattle-breeding area. Being somewhat of a salty, coastal type, it is not well fitted for fattening cattle for the metropolitan market. It would be injudicious to travel stock intended for the metropolitan area through the Broome district.

This is merely a business proposition from the standpoint of this particular firm, which should be able to treat 850 head of cattle at the works. Further, there is a proposal that the works shall cater for fish as well as for cattle. Thus any person who has spare time and desires to go fishing will have a ready market. Tropical fish, when caught, must be dealt with quickly. The district so far has not had refrigerating facilities to deal with large-scale fishing. I am not in a position to say how many tons of fish have been or are likely to be treated at the local works, but the facilities are now there for that purpose. Like most other people interested in the district, I feel these facilities will prove of great benefit to Broome residents, who can now add fishing as a subsidiary to the pearling industry.

The line is a short spur which it is proposed to construct from the original tramway across to the meat works, the distance being about 40 chains. The meat works could not, of course, be erected immediately alongside the railway track. As the Minister for Works has said, the works will be built approximately 40 chains away from the main line. It is rather a tramline than a railway line. That is all the Bill proposes to do. In my opinion, it is the function of the Government to build the line in order that the manufactured meat and fish products may be got down to the jetty in the most economical way possible. I am unable to give the hon. member any further information. Farrell Bros. have spent a large sum of money on this project; and all that the Government did was to provide a bank guarantee.

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

BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 6th November.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [7.53]: This is one of those Bills which the Minister for Industrial Development occasionally introduces, and which, on the face of them, are completely harmless and apparently acceptable, but which, on closer research, are open to considerable inquiry. What the Minister proposes to do by the Bill is this: Without telling us whether or not we are going to have

any third-party risk insurance, and more particularly without telling us what kind of insurance we are going to have, he asks the Legislature to approve of the State Government Insurance Office as being acceptable for third-party and comprehensive insurance on the lines that, if we do not have compulsory third-party insurance, then the Bill shall be inoperative, even though in due course it becomes an Act. I think there are grounds for saying that the Minister has gone the wrong way round. It would have been better had he introduced a Bill disclosing the method he suggests by which we should have compulsory third-party insurance.

I well remember that a couple of years ago an amendment of the Traffic Act was introduced in this Chamber and passed. As far as I was concerned, it was not the most satisfactory measure, yet I was not prepared to offer any substantial opposition to it, because I realised that we wanted protection for the people who were under consideration in that measure. The Bill went to the Legislative Council. It contained in the middle of it—which I always thought was quite the wrong place in the circumstances—a proposal that the State office should be authorised to undertake the particular type of insurance contemplated by the Bill. The Legislative Council did not seem to like that and whittled the Bill down so that it applied—if I remember rightly—only to third-party risks. No other type of insurance would be admitted within the proposal, as the Council wanted it.

The Government finally abandoned the whole idea of third-party insurance, rather than give the public the protection it was entitled to on the system proposed, although it never struck me as being a particularly satisfactory one. It did, however, at least provide that form of protection for which it was clear there was a substantial demand. So a great number of the citizens of this State are, I think, wondering whether the Government in this regard is more concerned with the welfare of the State insurance office, as an instrument of insurance, than with the welfare of the people who are suffering from injury occasioned by negligent motorists. I am, of course, quite unable to answer that question. The Bill now before us does not give me any argument for denying the suggestion. I

say it seems to have been introduced in the wrong place.

In my view we should have been told, before the Bill received the consideration of this House, what sort of insurance in regard to third-party risks we are to expect and what methods are to be adopted to bring it into being. I say that primarily because, since the Traffic Act Amendment Bill to which I referred was before this House, another place appointed a select committee to inquire into this matter and make recommendations as to the best way of covering third-party risks. Had the report of that select committee been the report of a select committee of this House, I can safely assume that practically every member of this Chamber would have taken the opportunity to read it and would, in consequence, have known something or all about it. But, as it was a select committee of another place, there is a possibility that some members of this Chamber do not know much about the decisions arrived at and the recommendations made by it. I am of the opinion that most of those recommendations were desirable and practicable. They were arrived at in some respects unanimously by the five members of the committee. The Hon. H. Seddon disagreed with certain aspects, but the other four members were unanimous on all points.

Two members of the committee belonged—shall I say, had the honour to belong—to the political party which the Minister for Labour graces at present. Two other members belonged to the political party which lends dignity to the benches at which I now stand. In consequence one would have anticipated, and I did anticipate, that the Minister and I would be in entire agreement in a discussion on third party insurance and the best means of bringing it about and not in a discussion on legitimising the State Government Insurance Office for this particular business, subject to a proviso that until we get some form of third party risk insurance which requires the intervention of the office, the Bill shall be inoperative if it becomes an Act. The select committee came to certain conclusions that are well worth the study of members of this House if they have not previously taken the opportunity to study them. I propose to read one or two. The Committee stated—

The overwhelming evidence submitted has

convinced your committee that it is essential to introduce compulsory third-party personal protection to compensate the public for injury. We believe this is a social obligation long overdue.

The words "social obligation long overdue" take my mind back to another insurance matter that the Minister for Industrial Development and myself have on more than one occasion discussed across this Chamber and which, as I have pointed out, was discussed in the recommendations of the select committee of which both he and I were members. We were unanimously of the opinion that there were grounds for believing that that particular form of social insurance did not warrant the intervention of insurance companies and what is more, we said so. But unfortunately we do not find there has been any action to implement the recommendations of the committee in that particular matter. Now we come to this select committee of another place which, by an overwhelming majority—I am not too sure that it is not $4\frac{1}{2}$ or $4\frac{3}{4}$ out of five, as I read the minority report of the Hon. H. Seddon who appears to disagree with very little, but in any event at least with the agreement of the four gentlemen to whom I have referred out of the five who sat on the committee—declares that this is a social obligation long overdue. The report continues—

In order to ensure the required protection the licensing authorities should collect the premium for third party risk and should then issue the license which should have imprinted thereon the fact that a premium for third party personal risk has been paid for the period of the license. This method provides for economy in collection at practically no cost by the local authorities, eliminates all possibility of a motor vehicle being on the road without cover and ensures that any person injured by the vehicle will be compensated by the pool. Present conditions do not provide for the compensation of persons injured by hit-and-run, unauthorised or uninsured drivers and insurance companies have the right under existing legislation to refuse what they term bad or hazardous risks.

Then we find in the final paragraph of the report—

As third party compulsory insurance is deemed to be a social obligation and takes the form of a compulsory tax on the motor vehicle owner, your committee supported by the evidence submitted, maintains that no profit should be made by the State or insurance companies for the imposition of this form of taxation.

If no profit is to be made by the State

or the institutions mentioned, the advantages to be derived from having the insurance conducted through the State Government Insurance Office as one medium of insurance would be negligible. In fact it would be a reason for not authorising the State Government Insurance Office to conduct this particular form of insurance. It would be a reason why the office should refrain from having anything to do with it because it would not be making anything out of the business and might indeed incur some substantial loss in regard to it, which would not be at all satisfactory.

So we have to consider what was the alternative proposed by this select committee which alternative I have no guarantee, no idea whatever, whether it is going to be put into operation by the Government if and when the Government brings down a proposition in regard to third party insurance as the Minister in the course of his remarks on this Bill seemed to indicate it might. I have nothing whatever to guide me as to whether the State Government Insurance Office is going to be of any practicable use in this particular line of business when this legislation is brought down. If I am to assume that it is intended to use the State Government Insurance Office for this purpose, I am unfortunately led to the conclusion that these recommendations are to be ignored because the select committee said it did not want the State office or any other single office to make any profits out of this form of insurance. I am thus in some difficulty. It is hopeless for me to say whether I am prepared to support the Bill or not, because honestly I do not know on the one hand whether the Bill is required or on the other hand what sort of third party insurance we are going to have if and when the present Minister or some other Minister decides to introduce a Bill. However, I will read some more of the select committee's report—

We therefore recommend that legislation be brought in immediately to provide for a compulsory co-operative pool to be administered by an advisory body of three persons, one to be appointed by the Government, who shall act as chairman; one representing the motorists; one representing the public and experienced as an insurance underwriter.

The premium to be collected by the Traffic Department and local authorities on the issue of licenses and transmitted to the Licensing Trust Fund established for that purpose.

The board to appoint the manager and staff necessary to administer the fund and adjust claims.

Premiums to be adjusted from time to time by the board to ensure the necessary protection to the public at the lowest possible cost to the motorist.

Administrative costs not to exceed 10 per cent.

Provision to be made in the Act to enable the board to collaborate with the Traffic Department regarding the cancellation of negligent motor drivers' licenses.

That power be given to the board to recover from intoxicated persons responsible for accidents the amount of compensation paid by the board as a result of such accidents.

In order to minimise motor accidents and thus reduce claims for compensation from the pool your committee strongly recommends that more funds be made available for appointments to the Traffic Branch of the Police Department to enable it more effectively to police the regulations.

The reasons for the committee's recommendations are based on the following overwhelming evidence which has been submitted: That a pool as proposed by your committee should be established and should be administered at a maximum cost of ten per cent.

The committee goes on to set out reasons, quoting figures with which I do not propose to weary the House. It must be apparent, however, that this report which, although short, will be found to be quite comprehensive, has definitely set up a system which, whether it be found acceptable or not on further inquiry, is a distinct alternative to the somewhat cumbersome proposals submitted in an amendment to the Traffic Act brought before this House some two years ago. It will be apparent that if we are to have those cumbersome methods or the methods I regard as cumbersome, we shall probably then have some reason to appoint the State Government Insurance Office for the purpose contemplated by the Minister. But I do not think we ought to have these methods. It seems to me there is a system here which has been worked out after careful inquiry and almost unanimously agreed upon by the members of the committee as being practicable and worth while, and to which we should give more consideration than this Bill appears to indicate we will. There is no justification for this measure if we follow the recommendations of this select committee.

I leave it to the Minister to explain to me why he cannot, and why he does not, bring down legislation, or have it brought

down by his colleagues, for third-party insurance risk before he offers to this House a Bill to authorise the State Government Insurance Office to conduct this class of business. I feel inclined to hold back the authorisation of the State insurance office to conduct this class of business until Parliament has decided which of the two systems—that in the report, or that in the previous amendment to the Traffic Bill—is the one we ought to adopt. To say that we authorise the State insurance office as an office to conduct this type of business gives rise to the assumption that we prefer the system brought down two years ago by the Minister for Works. For that reason I ask the Minister for Labour, when he brings legislation forward, to let us know where we are before asking us to decide the issue.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [8.12]: After the comprehensive remarks made by the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) I do not propose to speak at any length on this measure, which is one that members will immediately recognise has only one object—to enable the State Government Insurance Office to carry out all classes of insurable risks in connection with the ownership and use of motor vehicles. As usual—and we are used to it now—there are unnecessary and irrelevant words included. The irrelevant matter on this occasion is the inclusion of the words “third-party risks.” If the State Government Insurance Office is given power to carry on the business of insuring all classes of insurable risks, it must include third-party risks. It would include the risk of destruction of the car by fire; the risk of theft of the car; the risk of the car, whilst being driven, being involved in a collision with some moving object on account of bad steering; and, in fact, all the risks attendant upon motor cars, including the third-party risk.

Generally, and in fact I might say always, the insurance companies dealing in risks in connection with motor vehicles issue what they call a “comprehensive” policy covering all the risks I have just mentioned together with the third-party risk. It is provided for in the Bill in the form of a proviso in this way, that it shall have effect only during such time as the effecting of insurance against third-party risks arising out of the

use of motor vehicles by or on behalf of owners of motor vehicles is by law made compulsory. It is clear, therefore, that the Bill rests on the basis of a law which makes insurance against third-party risk compulsory. The first thought which strikes one is that that is the Bill which should have come down first. That was the opinion of the Government in 1939, and of the very Minister which introduced this measure. In "Hansard" for the session of 1939, at page 911, I find that the present Minister, when introducing a Bill of exactly the same character, said, if I may read it—

It aims at making compulsory third-party insurance by owners of motor cars. This Bill amends Section 2 of the State Government Insurance Office Act, 1938, and is complementary to the Bill introduced by the Minister for Works.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You had better wait until that measure is passed.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: It is desired that both Bills should be in the hands of members at the same time, so that consideration may be given to both. It will be necessary to await the decision of the House on the Traffic Act Amendment Bill before members can give further consideration to this Bill.

I should like to know why the Government departed from that reasonable and logical conclusion. Before this Bill can be dealt with, we must know upon what basis it rests, and that basis is the passing of a measure to make provision for compulsory insurance by users of motor cars against third-party risk. There is very good reason for the Bills coming down in that order.

It has to be remembered that it is only in the case of owners of motor vehicles, and particularly of motor trucks, who are persons of moderate or no means, that the necessity arises for introducing legislation to protect the public against any damage suffered through the negligence of such owners. If the owner is a man of means or substance, no such legislation is necessary; a personal action lies and the injured person can recover damages. It happens in many cases in the courts—in the majority, I am afraid—that the owners of trucks are not men of substance or means, and when they inflict injury on some innocent member of the public, that innocent member of the public can recover damages, but can get no result from the judgment he receives.

In the case of these persons who must be compelled, as a social duty, to insure against

third-party risk, what is the first question we have to ask ourselves? It is this: Is the burden we are going to place on them one they are able to carry? Or is it a burden that will lead to their complete extinction? We could, tomorrow, easily pass a law compelling owners of motor vehicles to insure against third-party risks and obey such a law, which would lead to the complete extinction of the small and relatively poor man who possesses a truck and uses it to earn his living. That one question becomes peculiarly important at the present moment, because, by reason of petrol restrictions, it is very difficult for the owners I have described to earn a livelihood. Another measure which became law, and is now known as the State Transport Co-ordination Act, deprived that class of citizen of a large part of the work from which he earned his living. That law may have been justified, and I suppose it was, as Parliament accepted it. The fact remains, however, that it did take away from many a man the living he had been able to earn up to the time it was passed.

Everybody is desirous of discharging what the member for Katanning well termed the social duty of protecting innocent third persons from the injuries they may suffer from reckless drivers who have no means of answering a judgment recovered against them. But the matter of real importance is, how can we carry out that social duty? How do we propose to discharge it without inflicting unnecessary damage upon a class that in its own way performs a public service? I know personally members of the class I am referring to, men who have nothing but a truck, who carry firewood, sand, gravel, furniture or anything else they can get and who make a living out of that class of work. So we have to be careful that we do not, by means of a Bill that sets out to vindicate a social duty, impose on such a class irreparable damage.

There is another view from which I should like to see a Bill introduced dealing with an amendment of the Traffic Act before I assent to the measure now under consideration. I want to know whether it is proposed to give a monopoly to the State Government Insurance Office, or to any other group of insurance offices or perhaps to one particular insurance office. I want to know exactly what the proposal is before I am prepared to assent to this Bill.

The Premier: That is what the Legislative Council select committee recommended, is it not?

Hon. N. KEENAN: It might be useful to deal again with the matter discussed by the member for Katanning—the history of what transpired in 1939. In that year we first of all dealt with a Traffic Act Amendment Bill, which imposed a perfunctory duty on all owners of motor vehicles to insure against third-party risk, and after that we passed a Bill to amend the State Government Insurance Office Act. Both measures were sent to another place, which passed the Traffic Act Amendment Bill and, by a majority, also passed the State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment Bill, but it imposed a condition restricting the operations of the State office to third-party risks. When the Bill was returned to this House, the Government refused to accept the Council's amendment. The matter was sent to a conference, but the managers were unable to agree. The result was that both Bills were dropped.

What was the position at that time? The Traffic Act Amendment Bill had been passed, and although amendments had been made to it, I do not think this House would have disagreed to them. That measure imposed a duty on all owners of motor vehicles to insure against third-party risk, and power was given to the State Government Insurance Office to insure in respect of that risk. But both Bills were dropped because the State Government Insurance Office was refused the right of dealing in all classes of insurable risks connected with motor cars. Therefore it would appear, as was stated by the member for Katanning, that the Government was far more concerned about getting business for the State office than about the protection of the public from injury by motorists who, when they inflicted injury, were not in a position to answer the damages to which they had been a party. The member for Katanning also referred to the report that was made by a select committee of another place last session on this very amendment. The report, shortly put, recommended that a law be passed to make compulsory the insurance against third-party risk by every person owning and using a motor vehicle, and that this should be discharged by means of a co-operative pool.

The committee quoted the history of the co-operative pool in the northern island of New Zealand. There may be a difference of opinion on that because essentially the basis of the report was that the risk known as third-party should be separated entirely from all other risks, and that we should have an insurance in respect of that risk and, if we liked, an insurance in respect of other risks also. Consequently, the ordinary motorist who is covered by a comprehensive policy would find himself in somewhat of a quandary. He would be already insured against third-party risk and might possibly have to take out some other form of insurance. I rather believe that that was the reason why the Hon. H. Seddon dissented. Still, the fact remains that the report was presented and agreed to by all other members of the committee, including two members representing the political views of the present Government, but no notice whatever was taken of it. So far as we know, it has not even been given consideration.

In view of the far wider and more comprehensive remarks made by the member for Katanning, I shall not delay the House. I am not prepared to vote for this Bill on two grounds. The first is the ground I have indicated. I am not prepared to assent to any imposition on any class of the community of a burden that is beyond its capacity to bear, no matter whether it may be clothed with the name of social duty or any other name. My second ground is that this is a matter which obviously, from its history, cannot be classed as other than contentious. It led to a dispute amongst the conference managers, who failed to come to a conclusion. I have asked the Leader of the Opposition and he has assured me that no inquiry was made of him as to any objection on his part to the introduction of the measure. I repeat that the measure should not have been introduced in the present circumstances. For those two reasons, and particularly the first one, I am not prepared to vote for the second reading.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [8.30]: I do believe that third-party insurance should be made compulsory, but certainly I am not in favour of any intrusion by the State Government Insurance Office into this matter. It would appear that so soon as some re-

liable concern has taken up a job, the Government makes an attempt to introduce State trading. The Royal Automobile Club is a most exemplary institution. It might be termed a mutual organisation established for the assistance of motorists, and included in the very fine work carried out by that organisation is the insurance of motor cars. In my opinion there is no reason why the Government should not make third-party insurance mandatory. The Royal Automobile Club is established not to make profits but to give service to its members, and as a result of the club's work the cost of motor car insurance was greatly reduced. That, of course, is important; and I regret the long delay that has taken place by the Government insisting on third-party insurance.

I recall that the late member for North Perth, Mr. James MacCallum Smith, attempted to introduce a Bill making third-party insurance mandatory; but it proved impossible. He was a private member; and it was not competent for him, as such, to do what was desired. I have no wish to criticise the State Government Insurance Office, which no doubt does its work very well. There is no justification for criticising that office, and there is absolutely no justification for its intrusion upon work which is being done so well. If every effort made by various organisations is to suffer interference from the Government, that will prove a bad thing for the State as well as for those people who are endeavouring to improve the conditions and the position of the people of Western Australia.

The report of the select committee which investigated risks under the Traffic Act is most interesting. If what is set out in the committee's report were carried into effect by the Government, it would be doing a wise thing. The report states—

The overwhelming evidence submitted has convinced the committee that it is essential to introduce compulsory third party protection to compensation the public for injury. We believe this is a social obligation long overdue.

I do not intend to quote more of the report; but I do hope that a measure will be introduced to make third-party motor insurance mandatory, and that the organisation which is doing its work in this regard so well and to the satisfaction of motorists generally will be permitted to continue without opposition from the Government. There is no doubt that the Royal Automobile Club does

provide some taxation for the Government, and if there is always an effort to be made to deprive institutions which set out to do useful work of the results of their enterprise, what will be the final result? The Government will be left to carry out the work, and we know only too well that matters carried on by Governments are usually carried on very badly, and certainly not with the satisfaction that marks the carrying-on of this work by the Royal Automobile Club.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [8.36]: Most of the discussion that has taken place would have been quite interesting and effective if this Bill had been a measure to set up a scheme providing for compulsory third-party motor car insurance in the State. The Bill proposes to give to the State Government Insurance Office the right to transact comprehensive insurance in respect of the ownership and use of motor vehicles. If the Bill had been introduced in that form, without any provisos or restrictions, it would not have been a Bill that could be declared contentious within the assurance given by the Government as to non-introduction of contentious measures. And it could only have been declared contentious in that sense by those in this Chamber who feel and believe that owners of motor vehicles should be forced to pay for their insurance cover whatever price might be demanded of them by the private insurance companies operating in Western Australia.

Is it to be argued that no legislation is to be introduced during the war to compel or restrict in any way the activities of business firms and business combines which have at present a fairly free right to charge what they care to charge for the services they give? However, the Bill is not introduced without provisos. It has a proviso which states that the right asked on behalf of the State Government Insurance Office shall not be given until third-party motor car insurance is made compulsory by law in Western Australia. The member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) said he was inclined to think the Government was more concerned with the welfare of the State Government Insurance Office than with the welfare of that section of the public who would be given protection if third-party motor car

insurance was introduced and operated here. The Government is not more concerned with the welfare of the State Government Insurance Office than it is concerned with the welfare of that section of our people, and the Government is not as much concerned with the welfare of the State Government Insurance Office as it is with the welfare of the section of our people I have indicated.

The Government's main concern in this matter of third-party motor car insurance is that the owners of motor vehicles in Western Australia shall have a reasonable measure of protection in respect of the charges to be levied upon them for the third-party insurance cover with which they will have to provide themselves if third-party insurance becomes compulsory. The member for Nedlands was quite concerned about owners of motor vehicles who conduct carrying businesses. He said it was very doubtful whether any additional burden could be borne by those men. He was also concerned about people of no great financial strength who own and run motor cars. He said it was doubtful whether they could stand any additional burden.

Hon. N. Keenan: Any large additional burden.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: So the Government is concerned with those two sections of motor vehicle owners. It is also concerned with all the other owners of motor vehicles in this State. We are anxious that, in the event of third-party insurance being made compulsory by law, the two sections of motorists mentioned by the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan), as well as every other owner of a motor vehicle in the State, shall not be handed over to private insurance companies to be charged whatever amount of premium rate those companies shall decide. It may relieve the minds of the member for Nedlands and the member for Katanning (Mr. Watts) to know that it is not the intention of the Government to attempt to take this Bill through Committee until the other Bill, which is likely to be introduced, has been introduced and is understood by members. I find it impossible, in view of the speech of the member for Swan (Mr. Sampson), to offer him anything at all by way of explanation or comfort that might possibly be calculated to relieve his mind.

Mr. Sampson: You are taking a wrong view.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th October.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [8.42]: The Bill has for its object an amendment of the Factories and Shops Act and it contains many important amendments. One of its principal features deals with the employment of females in factories. The Bill makes provision for the working of two shifts in any one day. While supporting the second reading, I regret the necessity that has arisen for the amendment of the parent Act as far as female labour is concerned. I am not altogether an advocate of female labour, particularly if females have to work more than the ordinary hours in our factories. The exigencies of the present international situation, however, render a measure of this kind necessary.

In passing, I may say the Bill has features that are useful in times of peace as well as in times of war. Due regard has been paid to the hours that females will be called upon to work in the two shifts I have mentioned. It is stipulated that they shall not start their employment until a certain hour in the morning and shall not work later than a certain hour at night, the object being that they may return to their homes before the early hours of the morning. My own view of female labour is that females should have not only reasonable hours of work, but their conditions should be the best possible and their pay should be equal to that of men. I have always been in favour of equal pay for the sexes. At one time it was advocated that there should be equal pay for equal work. There might be some trouble in defining what "equal work" is. In my opinion, the best way to arrive at a decision is to say that females shall get the same wages if they do the same class of work.

The Bill is another illustration of the readiness of our Government to co-operate with the Commonwealth Government in doing everything possible to help in the struggle in which we are now engaged in order to bring it to a victorious end. Of course, that co-operation has been announced by every

Government, no matter what its colour or politics. The Bill is to remain in force only for the duration of the war and six months thereafter. I presume the Government had in view, when introducing it, the small arms factory which it is proposed to put in commission in a part of this State. It may or may not be in operation before the war ends; I do not know, but it has taken some considerable time to get it working. Presuming that it does get into action before the end of the war, this Bill will be the means of enabling it to work two shifts with female labour. That, I understand, is the predominant feature of the Bill.

Provision is also made for an allowance of 12s. weekly for those engaged on the two-shift basis. There are other provisions of the Bill worthy of favourable consideration. One is the inclusion in the definition of "factory" of the following:—

Any building . . . in which lead processes are carried on and/or paint is manufactured or paint is mixed or applied by the spraying method.

It is essential to safeguard the health of employees in a factory where lead paint is used. If the principal Act has not already fully provided that protection, then it should be afforded by this measure.

Another important feature of the Bill is the shortening of the working week from 48 to 44 hours. So far I have dealt with the main parts of the Bill. I now come to the criticism of it made a few days ago by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald). He certainly gave the House a most comprehensive review of the Bill. He made an interesting and able speech. There was scarcely a paragraph of the Bill which the hon. member did not review and criticise.

Mr. Watts: It was a most instructive speech.

Mr. NEEDHAM: But the opening words of his speech were somewhat frank. He said the Bill should go into cold storage for the duration of the war. His opinion of the Bill is summed up in those few words. Then he went on to give his reasons why it should go into cold storage. Despite any redeeming feature the measure might have he thought the time was not opportune to bring the amendments into operation. The only portion of the Bill the hon. member said he agreed with was that portion dealing with the employment of female labour. I can scarcely reconcile his speech with other

speeches he has made in this Chamber and out of it, in connection with the necessity for improving the conditions of our people. He amongst others has advocated a new order, but when any attempt is made to bring about an instalment of the new order he immediately meets it with the old cry that now is not the time. Later on, but not now!

Mr. Watts: After the war, he told you.

Mr. NEEDHAM: If the new order means anything, it means an improvement of the standard of living—shorter hours and better conditions for labour.

Mr. Marshall: And more security for labour.

Mr. NEEDHAM: Yes. While the hon. member agrees with all that, he thinks that now is not the time to do it. I do not believe in the procrastination he suggests. We can certainly improve our standard of living and even go so far as to shorten the hours of labour without interfering with or impairing our war effort. The hon. member contended that industries in this State could not bear the strain which he considers the Bill, if accepted, would impose on them.

Mr. Marshall: I have heard that argument from childhood!

Mr. NEEDHAM: And probably the hon. member's parents before him heard it! My reading of the measure suggests to me that it would bring factories into line with other industries operating under similar conditions. The first feature of the measure the hon. member criticised was that providing for inclusion of factories where people were engaged in paint-spraying. He was not too sure of the number of people employed in places where paint-spraying was in operation, and because he was not sure he did not think it worth while agreeing to this amendment. I ask the hon. member and every other member: Does it matter how many are employed in a factory, when health is at stake, when there is danger to life? It does not matter to me whether there is one person employed in such a factory or one hundred, for human life is valuable.

Mr. McDonald: I did not criticise that. I said that nobody knew what was the definition of "paint."

The Minister for Labour: You criticised everything except the title.

Mr. NEEDHAM: My interpretation of the hon. member's speech is that he did not know how many people were employed in

such factories and, because he did not know, he did not consider it worth while to have this feature of the Bill become law. I think every member will agree with me that when health is in danger the number of employees does not matter. We are here to legislate not for a hundred or a thousand, but for every individual, and in that regard this legislation should have our full support. Surely the hon. member would not deny to people engaged in any of our industries the proper safeguards to health! Knowing him as I do, I was somewhat surprised at the attitude he adopted towards this measure, and particularly that part of it.

He went on to say that this Parliament was usurping the powers of the Arbitration Court if it agreed to the proposal to reduce working hours to 44 per week. I cannot agree with the hon. member. I do not perceive any usurpation of the Arbitration Court's powers at all. The principal Act which this Bill is amending provides for 48 hours per week. That Act was passed in this Parliament in 1920, and the Arbitration Court was in full swing then. If, therefore, Parliament prescribed in the original Act that 48 hours should be the working week, is it not within the province of Parliament now to say that the working week shall be 44 hours? Does that in any way interfere with the powers, duties, or privileges of the Arbitration Court? I say "No." I could understand the argument of the hon. member if this Bill for the first time was prescribing the number of hours to be worked in a factory or an industry, but it is not. It is simply amending the original measure, and recognising the trend of today, not only in this State, not only in the Commonwealth of Australia, but in every part of the British Commonwealth of Nations—the trend towards a shorter working week.

It will be found on inquiry that very few industries in this State are not working on the 44-hour basis. The hon. member contended that if a reduction of hours were effected, industry in Western Australia would not be able to stand the strain, mentioning that we had to compete with industries in other States that worked longer hours. As I have already said, the tendency is not for a longer working week but for a shorter working week in all parts of Australia and the British Empire. In regard to the shortening of hours, my hon. friend's contention that industries could

not bear the strain is a very old gag. I heard that statement when I was a boy working in a coal mine in North England. When I was 12 there was an agitation to reduce the working hours from 60 per week. Workers in the shipyards of the Clyde later tried to have a reduction of their hours from 54 to 48. In each instance the cry was raised that industry could not stand the strain. Again in Australia when we try to secure a reduction in hours from 48 to 44 the same old story is told that industry cannot stand it.

But the other argument is used by the hon. member that industries could not bear the strain of the shorter working week; or that because there is a war on we should not provide a shorter working week. We can, and we should! We can do it without impairing our general war effort. The 12s. per week extra money for those engaged on the two shifts was also mentioned by the member for West Perth. He said that was given as a war loading. It is not! The extra money paid for working two shifts has been customary for a long time, and not only in Australia where industrial legislation is very advanced, but in other parts of the Empire where it is not so advanced. In my youthful days, in the Old Country, when I worked two shifts I was allowed a penny an hour more.

Mr. Marshall: They must have overpaid you.

Mr. Sampson: They had no labour-saving machinery in those days.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I worked two shifts in this way: I was on day shift one week and afternoon shift the next. That is where the inconvenience arises which is the reason for the extra compensating money. That extra penny made my hourly rate 6d.! I do not know whether the member for Nedlands (Hon. N. Keenan) has ever worked two shifts, but he would not find it an enjoyable business.

Hon. N. Keenan: How do you know I have not?

Mr. J. Hegney: He has burned the midnight oil occasionally.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I do not look upon this 12s. for working two shifts as being a war loading. The principle is adopted in times of peace because of the inconvenience caused by the irregular hours. The member for West Perth, in his criticism of the Bill, thought the percentage system would

be the better one. I do not think it would be equitable. Under that system workers would receive 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. in addition to their usual wages. An employee on a lower wage suffers just as much inconvenience because of irregular hours as does an employee on a higher wage. The flat rate of 12s. weekly is a proper arrangement. Another point dealt with by the hon. member was the question of preference to unionists. He said it came within the province of the Arbitration Court. We will not in any way usurp the authority of the court if we pass this measure. This House has already given a verdict on that question. That was done during a time of war.

Shortly after the outbreak of the world war in 1914-18, the Commonwealth Parliament had its first and only double dissolution. It was brought about on the question of preference to unionists. The Fisher Administration of 1910-13, introduced a system of preference to unionists in all Commonwealth Government departments. That Government went out of office in 1913 and the Cook-Irvine regime commenced. It brought down a measure to repeal preference to unionists in the Commonwealth Government employ, and that brought about a double dissolution. The result was that the Fisher Government went back with an overwhelming majority in both Houses of the Commonwealth Parliament. The question of preference is not one for the Arbitration Court only, or even for this State Parliament.

Again, the member for West Perth had a tilt at the earlier closing of shops. We have heard many objections to that. When I came to Australia 40 years ago the shops in this State were open until 11 o'clock at night. They were open from any hour in the morning and closed at any hour at night. As soon as the agitation was started for earlier closing, the same cry was made as has been made tonight by the member for West Perth: What about the worker? He will not be able to get this and that! Always we find this sudden solicitude for the worker. He has survived these earlier closing hours and is still surviving. If we want to consult any of our legal friends or medical friends—they are all very fine men, but they represent two professions from which I keep well away—

Mr. J. Hegney: What about the dentist?

Mr. NEEDHAM: —it is necessary to go at certain hours. If we are not there at the prescribed times we cannot receive attention. Early closing causes no inconvenience now, and this proposal to shorten hours would not inconvenience anybody. The burden of the speech of the member for West Perth was that while he was in favour of most of the reforms, if that term may be applied to them, in the Bill, he did not consider the present an opportune time for their introduction. Now is the time to plan for the days of peace! During the progress of the 1914-18 war many promises were made to the people.

Mr. Marshall: And we got them all.

Mr. NEEDHAM: That was the war to end war; the war to make the world safe for democracy.

Mr. Marshall: To provide work for everyone.

Mr. NEEDHAM: It was to banish unemployment, and to give the people security.

Mr. Marshall: It was the war to make the world fit for heroes.

Mr. NEEDHAM: On the contrary, during the post-war period the people experienced the greater hell of economic depression. The fact remains that all those promises were never fulfilled. For my part, so long as I live to have a voice in the affairs of State, I shall do my best to see that the people derive some benefit now, or at any rate to lay the foundation of what has been termed "The New Order." I know the Bill does not permit of a discussion on that phase, and so I shall not pursue that line of argument except to say that every time we endeavour to improve the standard of living, shorten the hours of labour, or improve conditions, on each and every such occasion we merely seek to achieve a practical instalment of the new order that is so much prated about but much of which talk is, I am afraid, so much cant. I shall always welcome legislation that will tend to provide an instalment of the so-called new order. There is nothing else I desire to say except that the Bill contains nothing that is revolutionary, but rather provisions that are obviously evolutionary. They deal with nothing that the greatest Conservative in this Chamber—

Hon. C. G. Latham: Who would that be?

Mr. NEEDHAM: I am not looking at the hon. member, but should there be a Conservative member of this Chamber, he need

not be afraid of the effects of the Bill should it become an Act. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Pilbara) [9.13]: I support the second reading and emphasise the point mentioned by the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) that it contains nothing of a revolutionary character.

Mr. Watts: It is what you might describe as a little niggling Bill.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It contains some amendments of a minor character to which reference was made by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald). Consideration can be given in Committee to any small amendments which may be deemed desirable. The major provision included in the Bill concerns the proposed reduction of the maximum working hours for adult male employees from 48 to 44 per week. As to the scope of the Bill, it simply seeks to extend the definition of "factory" to include any building where an unnaturalised person is engaged and also any place where paint is manufactured. It provides powers for inspectors, where they have reason to believe that the work is being carried on at night, to enter any such factory for the purpose of inspection.

The Bill also deals with shift work and I hope the necessity for that will be evident in this State. For that reason it is desirable to take time by the forelock and legislate to provide for conditions that will arise should factories be established here with the consequent necessity to work on a shift basis. That likelihood has been apparent for some time, and provision has been made for a penalty rate that will be applied in respect of workers who will be obliged to work on shifts, because of the inconvenience to which they are subjected through employment of that description. Provision is also made for boys and women on shift work. The House would be well advised to ensure that boys and girls of tender years are allowed to be employed only on day shifts. The Bill sets out that continuous process workers shall not be permitted, nor be expected, to work more than 4½ hours without a break for a period.

Another provision seeks to ensure that workers must take the holidays specified in the Act. There are times when, although a holiday is permitted by law, an employee is given a very strong hint that if he or she

should take advantage of that holiday, no employment might be available subsequently. Another desirable provision relates to the submission of evidence in cases where workers have occasion to sue their employers, such workers not being employed under the terms of any industrial agreement or award. The Factories and Shops Act provides that the minimum wage in any industry shall be paid to the worker. If any question of evidence regarding wages should arise, it is set out that the certificate of the clerk of the Arbitration Court shall be admitted as evidence in any appropriate proceedings.

I think it was some 139 years ago that the first Factories and Shops Act was passed in England. The introduction of machinery and the industrial revolution in England in the latter part of the 18th century drove workers from hand-made processes to that of production by mechanical means. Many disabilities immediately accrued as the result of vast numbers of workers being congregated in one factory. The background of the past legislation in this State is that, due to the unbearable conditions that factory workers in England had to submit to for many years, they were obliged, with the help of humanitarians of those days, to seek legislative protection. We find that in 1802 a measure that was known as "an Act to protect the health and morals of apprentices in factories" was passed. That measure simply legislated to the extent that children were not allowed to be employed for more than 12 hours per day, and night work was gradually to be abolished.

Manufacturers found a way of dodging the provisions of the Act and for nearly 20 years it proved to be a dead letter. In 1819, however, due to the agitation of Robert Owen and other humanitarians, a further Act was placed in the statute-book. Its main provisions were that no child under nine years of age was to be employed in the cotton factories; children of nine to 16 years of age were to be limited to 12 hours a day; ceilings and walls were to be whitewashed twice a year. In 1825 a further reform was introduced, Saturday work being limited to nine hours. Then, as now, opposition to the measure was not wanting.

Many reasons were advanced why the operation of the Act should be postponed and conditions left as they were. The main reasons submitted by those who were sweating the workers were that such a law was

an interference with the liberty of parents; it would interfere with the great principle of political economy that labour ought to be free; it would give foreign manufacturers a chance to flood the market with their sweated products; it was inhumane to the children because it would compel them to spend the first nine years of their lives in enforced idleness; it would increase the deterioration of morals owing to the quantity of unemployed time workers would have at their command; the measure would actually encourage vice; it would establish idleness by Act of Parliament.

In those days many men and women considered that England would be ruined if the measure was passed. It was passed, and industries still went on. In 1833 Lord Shaftesbury introduced a 10-hour a day Bill, and his main provision was that nine years was to be the minimum age for an employee in a factory. For children of 9 to 13 years, 48 hours a week was the limit, while for workers from 13 to 18 years, 69 hours was the prescribed working week. No mention was made of adults. In 1844 hours for women were reduced by Act of Parliament to 12 per day. The reasons submitted against the measure in 1833 were that work for children in the woollen mills was light and healthy; a 10-hour day would not be profitable as the profit of the manufacturer was made in the eleventh hour, and foreign competition and taxation would make the lot of the manufacturer unbearable. Another reason advanced in those days was that laziness and vice amongst the workers would increase.

In Australia the 8-hour day was inaugurated in Sydney in 1855—nearly 100 years ago. In this State it was inaugurated, I believe, in 1896. The eight-hour day was introduced in Victoria in 1856, in South Australia in 1873, and in Tasmania in 1874. Time was when there was no factories and shops legislation in any State. Some 70 or 80 years ago efforts were made to introduce an eight-hour day. It was in the session of 1869 when Mr. Casey, M.L.A., who later became a judge, introduced an 8-hour Bill, which was passed by the Legislative Assembly of Victoria but rejected by the Council. In the same session, but in the following year the member for Collingwood (Mr. Everard) moved a motion in the Assembly as follows:—

That in the opinion of this House immediate

steps should be taken for the legislation of the 8-hour system of labour; that this system be applied to all workshops and manufactories; that it should be made compulsory on all municipal bodies—corporations, borough councils, shire councils, road boards—mines and public bodies; that a Bill be brought in for this purpose.

It failed to pass the Legislative Council. Let us consider the conditions that prevailed in Victoria before there was a Labour movement to speak on behalf of the workers. I quote from the report of the Chief Inspector of Shops and Factories on the clothing trade in Victoria. The report bears the date the 21st July, 1890, and gives a good idea of the position—

Women and girls machining shirts receive 8s. 6d. for a 56-hour week; making coloured shirts, 8s. 4d. for 60 hours; caps, 5s. for 50 hours; shirt finishing, 10s. 6d. for 72 hours; men working in boot trade as blockers, 30s. for 80 hours; shirt-makers work 60 to 70 hours a week, paid 2s. 10d. per dozen, providing their own machines and cotton.

There was no legislation to prevent these appalling conditions and allied sweating processes; employers did just as they liked. In 1901 the Victorian Government appointed a Royal Commission to investigate the conditions and operation of Acts in the other States. The Commission took evidence in four other States. Vicious opposition was prevalent in those days, just as there is opposition at present. The president of the Shopkeepers' Association of Melbourne, in evidence before the Royal Commission on the 17th April, 1901, made the following monstrous statement—

No nation was ever built up by legislation of this character Unrestricted sweating has been allowed in England, and we have there a nation built up unparalleled in the history of the world A great deal of sweating goes on, but though it is unfortunate to the individual, I fancy it is beneficial to the nation. You cannot get the extreme benefit out of a man without breaking some up. You cannot win a battle without killing a lot of men.

Mr. Marshall: A wonderful idea!

Mr. J. Hegney: Wonderful Christianity!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: William Angliss, master butcher of Melbourne—if he knew what this Bill contained, he would turn in his grave—in the course of evidence given on the 30th May, 1901, said—

Our association is unanimous that 58 hours is a fair week's work. We were cut down from 63 to 52, and it has acted most disastrously to our trade I consider it is a great mistake to fix the time for drivers at 52 hours per

week. I think 60 hours per week would be a fair thing. Drivers get 30s. per week. In Sydney the wages are lower and the hours longer, and we have to contend against Sydney in the shipping trade.

Those are a few of the matters which called for attention at the time, and I do not doubt that opposition was as strong then against any reform whatever as it is now. Always some reason is advanced as to why reforms should not be made. I propose now to deal with one or two statements made by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) when speaking on the second reading of the Bill. He referred incidentally to the soap workers' case. The soap-making industry is carried on in the Fremantle district. The hon. member said that when the matter was before the Arbitration Court recently the question of interstate competition swayed the judge, who granted a 48-hour week. I remind the hon. member and this House that that case was heard in 1930. What the member for West Perth forgot to mention was that in 1937, on the 18th August, the court arranged for a consent award on a 44-hour week basis in the industry. The particulars will be found in the "Western Australian Industrial Gazette," volume 17, page 272.

I desire to deal with the question of alleged interstate competition. The member for West Perth undoubtedly was sincere in his remarks—he is always sincere—but they were on all fours with remarks made 139 years ago, when the first Shops and Factories Act was being placed on the statute book of England. Another industry in this State, the superphosphate industry, was open to Eastern States' competition. The union submitted a case to the Arbitration Court in 1930. As previously in the soapworkers' case, the judge referred to that element of competition, and he awarded a 48-hour week. I propose to quote the judgment of Mr. President Dwyer when delivering the award in the 1935 case. The judgment will be found in the "Western Australian Industrial Gazette," volume 15, page 162. The President said—

This industry was very fully dealt with in the judgment of the court delivered in September, 1930, and appearing in full in 10 W.A.I.G. No. 3, page 124. Mr. Brady, the advocate for the workers, in his painstaking assiduity has left no award in this or in any other industry unexplored in his efforts to secure better terms and conditions for the workers, but the industry was dealt with very thoroughly in the pre-

vious case and, except in one particular, and that a very important one, it will be found that the minutes contain very little departure from the prescribed wages and conditions in the existing award. The condition I refer to is that relating to hours of work. When dealing with this industry previously, I stated that in my opinion it was one in which, because of the circumstances, a 44-hour week ought to apply were it not for certain circumstances referred to in the judgment. The principle that determined the granting of the 48-hour week at the time was the fact that the same companies carry on the same business in Adelaide and Melbourne and were in fact, and still are, carrying on under a 48-hour week. The award in this State was delivered in September, 1930, and since then there have been agreements made in the industry under the jurisdiction of the Federal Court with the workers in the South Australian and Victorian factories continuing the 48-hour week. It seems, therefore, that my firm conviction of what should be the hours in this industry may be indefinitely postponed, if action in this direction were to be deferred until a Federal wage-fixing authority gave a ruling for a 44-hour week. In view of this, I feel that to delay the conferring of the shorter working week on the workers in the industry would be to deny justice to them. Consequently the 44-hour week has been provided for in the award.

I proceed now to deal with another case which is comparable to that of the soapworkers, the asbestos manufacturing industry at Rivervale. I happened to be the union advocate at the time the Arbitration Court delivered its award. The men were working a 48-hour week, and the employers submitted evidence to the effect that the factory would have to close if a 44-hour week were granted. After taking all the circumstances into account, the President spoke as I now quote from the "Western Australian Industrial Gazette" of the 20th August, 1924, volume 14, page 138—

The first question to be decided here is that of hours of work for the industry. The industry is one of those carried on by the same employer in various parts of the Commonwealth. In the present instance the employer, Jas. Hardie & Co., carries on business similarly in Victoria and New South Wales. The industry has been established about eight years in Victoria and 17 in New South Wales. In Victoria the 48-hour week is in operation, and in New South Wales the 44-hour week. As in other industries carried on under factory conditions, the workers would be, generally speaking, entitled to a week of 44 hours, unless there are such countervailing objections to the establishment of that principle as would jeopardise the economic welfare of the industry. It has been pointed out here that in one department of the company's activities it is exposed to competition from Victoria, and that the reduc-

tion in output with the other consequences following a 44-hour week would make it difficult to contend against the Victorian competitors on level terms. If this is so serious, it seems to me that the Victorian competitor would, even under existing conditions, have successfully striven against the local industry for the reason alone that the Victorian industry is carried on on a three-shift basis, so that the machines are working the whole of the 24 hours. But, in addition to this, there is the fact that this company and its competitors carry on business both in New South Wales and Victoria, and in each of these States the industry is worked on a three-shift basis. If the 44-hour week would affect business so adversely, one would expect to find the industry confined to Victoria after its eight years' operation there, considering the short distance by sea carriage or land carriage which the goods would have to be carried from that State to its neighbours. However, no such result has occurred. The Victorian factories of this company alone employ 120 workers in the industry, and the New South Wales factory employs 200 workers.

As a result of the evidence tendered in that case, the court awarded a 44-hour week; and the 44-hour week still operates in the asbestos works.

I now wish to refer to an interesting document, the list of awards and agreements contained in the "Western Australian Industrial Gazette" dated the 31st December, 1927. There is a survey of the hours of work fixed under all industrial agreements and awards in this State, and overtime provisions are also set out. I think the list was drawn up, under the direction of the Minister at the time, by the previous Registrar of the Arbitration Court. It is amazing to see there the number of agreements and awards which provide a 44-hour week. It is also remarkable that several engineering trades are included in the 48-hour week category. A few manufacturing concerns also worked the 48-hour week. But I am referring now to the position 14 years ago, when a number of industries, including the engineering industry, were working 48 hours per week. Those industries included catering employees, hotel employees (barmaids and barmen), shop assistants and a few others.

I have taken the trouble to examine awards and agreements made since and find that the brewing industry on the Eastern Goldfields was then working 48 hours; it is now working 44 hours. The fibrous plaster and cement workers were then working 48 hours; they have since had their working week reduced to 44 hours. The pottery and

porcelain workers are now working 44 hours, as are the wine and spirit employees. Today, practically all the engineering trades, including the boiler-making trade, are working 44 hours. They were then working, as I said, 48 hours. I make bold to say that in this State—apart from workers not working under awards or agreements—practically 90 per cent. to 95 per cent. of our workers are enjoying the 44-hour week. These, of course, work under agreements or awards made in pursuance of the Industrial Arbitration Act.

A remark was made by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) to the effect that the question of the reduction of hours from 48 to 44 per week should be left to the determination of the court. I have a vivid recollection that before I entered Parliament an effort was made to bring domestic workers under the Industrial Arbitration Act, but the measure was defeated. I believe a similar provision has been also defeated recently. Elected representatives of the people who subscribe to that policy, as does the member for West Perth, did not give domestic workers even a chance to get before the Arbitration Court, so that the court might determine whether they should work 48, 60 or 44 hours a week. I also recommend members to peruse Section 92 of the Industrial Arbitration Act, which defines the powers and functions of the court. Among other things, the court may limit the hours of piece-workers in any industry, with the exception of the agricultural industry. I have looked up the records and find that a successful attempt was made to prevent the Arbitration Court from fixing the hours and wages of the workers I have mentioned. I do not propose to go into details as to the reasons why the 44-hour week should be granted in some industries; but it is remarkable that, after nearly 100 years since the first eight-hour day was inaugurated in this fair land of ours, we find representative men prepared to endeavour to stultify the attempts of workers to enjoy a universal eight-hour day.

But the point is this! Even if the Bill passes both Houses, workers in these factories enjoying the 44-hour week may have their hours increased by the Arbitration Court if the employers submit a case to the court and prove to the hilt that the 44-hour week is economically unsound for the particular industry. I repeat, the time has arrived when the 44-hour week is the rule rather

than the exception, and Parliament would be well-advised, in my opinion, to pass legislation providing for a maximum working week of 44 hours. It could be still left open to any manufacturer or intending manufacturer to submit a case to the court for increased hours. The question of interstate competition has arisen; we generally find that some reason is advanced why things should be left as they are, and that is one. One must, however, take into account many factors in the establishment of factories—for instance, transport, access to markets and raw materials and a hundred and one other matters. I suppose, if a 52-hour week still prevailed in some industries in this State, we would find that not one extra man would be employed in a factory.

As regards the closing of butchers' shops I pass this remark, that I am sorry provision has not been made in the Bill for the closing of all shops on Saturday at 12 noon at the latest, and on other days—at least in the winter—at 5 or 5.30 p.m. We have had the spectacle of girls of tender years travelling from Perth to Cottesloe, Fremantle and Midland Junction and arriving home after seven o'clock at night. Now that the 44-hour week is practically universal, 95 per cent. of employees work only five days a week and have all Saturday morning in which to do their shopping. They should be able to do all their shopping by 12 noon. If the shops remained opened till midnight on Saturday I venture the opinion that some people would still come along at the last minute to purchase something they had forgotten to buy earlier. I understand that both the master butchers and their employees are agreeable to the proposal, and I see no reason why it should not be put into effect.

I desire briefly to support the provision for preference to unionists. These are the days when workers in all branches of industry and employers should be organised. The day of the individualist is gone. The Industrial Arbitration Act presupposes that there will appear under its provisions groups of workers organised into unions and groups of employers. I speak with conviction and sincerity, having been a unionist for over a quarter of a century. One of my proudest possessions is the continuity of my union ticket. Despite the sniggering of some persons who have always been opposed to unions, I have found that they have done an incalculable amount of good. They have been instrumental in smashing some of the

conditions which I have pointed out this evening. They have been instrumental in the fixing in this State of a reasonable standard of living. They have been responsible for ridding the country of the sweating conditions that were prevalent in past years. There was a time in Australia when men were gaoled for attempting such things. One man in 1822 was flogged for endeavouring to form a union of his mates.

The time has now come—I suppose it is a matter of progress—when a representative of the people can stand up in a Parliament in this country and say he is proud to belong to a union and advocate preference to unionists. The unions fight for better conditions and expend money in obtaining awards and agreements from the court. I have found in my experience that the man who is prepared to accept the full benefit of award rates and conditions, and who refuses to pay in with his mates to protect and maintain those rates and conditions, is a very poor type from more points of view than one. I hope, therefore, that preference to unionists from a universal point of view will be placed on the statute-books of this country and in the meantime I trust the Bill as outlined by the Minister will be passed, and that we shall travel a milestone further along the road of economic progress in regard to a shorter working week.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [9.51]: The member for Perth (Mr. Needham) recalled his industrial days with a good deal of instructive matter.

Mr. Marshall: He had to tax his memory to go so far back.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I assure the member for Perth that I also have had industrial days that I can recall. If the members of this Chamber had no work to do—but of course they have, though of a limited character—they might take a journey up to Coolgardie and to a place called Londonderry. They would find still in existence a shaft which I materially assisted to sink. I am sorry to say I can recall the fact that the other man working with me refused to allow me to use the hammer or the drill and insisted on my holding the drill.

Mr. Needham: He knew what he was doing.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Nevertheless, I have often been assured that it was a very pretty piece of work. It was performed with the intention of striking very rich ore, a speci-

men of which had been found on the surface. But nature played a trick, which it so often does. When we sunk the shaft there was no ore where the ore should have been, and as everyone knows the mine was subsequently abandoned. So I, too, have an industrial history although it is not one that compares for a moment with that of the member for Perth. I would not have taken any part in this debate except to express agreement with the speech of the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) who very fully explained the views which commend themselves to us in regard to this measure. It is not to be supposed for one moment that the hon. member did not find himself in accord with many of the provisions of the measure.

Mr. Needham: We all admit that.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Whether we admit it or not, it is a fact. But his main criticism—and it is one I entirely share—is that we have constituted in this State a special tribunal to determine conditions of labour and wages that are to be paid and the hours that are to be worked, and, if necessary and it is thought fit, that preference should be given to certain employees. That system was built up long before the Labour Party existed in this country. It was embodied in a measure inaugurated by Sir John Forrest in 1899, I think, although I am not sure of the date.

Mr. Marshall: It was in 1902.

Hon. N. KEENAN: That was another one. This was sponsored by Sir John Forrest and the man who was Attorney General at the time. I can recollect it well because I was on the goldfields and we took a large interest in matters of that kind. It was a statute sponsored by Sir John Forrest, and he took it from a New Zealand measure which I think was submitted by a man named Seddon, who was Prime Minister of New Zealand. So this principle of arbitration was not the discovery of the Labour Party. It was placed on the statute-book before the Labour Party existed.

The Minister for Mines: We cannot find that statute.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I will find it for the Minister.

The Minister for Mines: I wish you would. I would like to see it. We have hunted for it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I will be pleased to show it to the Minister for Mines.

The Minister for Mines: I shall be pleased to have it.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister for Mines has sometimes contributed to my education and I should like to show him the like measure. But we need not worry now as to which was the first party to bring into existence arbitration in industrial matters. Undoubtedly that system received the blessing and support of every Labourite in Australia and particularly in Western Australia. Not only has every State in the Commonwealth established an Arbitration Court, but the Federal Parliament has also constituted a Federal Arbitration Court. The aim in constituting those courts was to remove from Parliamentary debates the wrangling over hours, wages and labour conditions, and to hand over matters of that kind to a properly constituted tribunal trained to deal with them and with the opportunity to do so, sitting from day to day and available at all hours to consider the subject. Now we find, unfortunately, that from time to time Parliament is not content to leave to that tribunal the discharge of the functions entrusted to it. The Bill contains examples of attempts to interfere with that tribunal's functions. It contains examples of an attempt to take advantage of the power of Parliament to place on the statute-book conditions which possibly the Arbitration Court might not award.

Mr. Needham: We are simply doing what we did before when a 48-hour week was provided.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The member for Perth is correct in saying that this improper interference occurred before, and unfortunately, though perhaps he does not remember this, that improper interference was confirmed by the Collier Government in 1926 or 1927 when it passed another Factories and Shops Act. All it comes to is this: That because at some time an improper interference by the Legislature with the functions and duties of the Arbitration Court took place, we are expected to follow along those improper lines. Let us ask ourselves in our calm moments: What is the use of having this Court of Arbitration if this course is to be pursued, if it is to be made a subject of discussion and differences on the floor of the House, if it is to be made above all a plank of a political platform? Anyone can stand for Parlia-

ment and say, "If I get in I will be the proposer of a Bill to reduce your hours from 6 to 4 or 7 to 4" or whatever it may be.

The Minister for Labour: Your odds are shortening!

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister immediately took advantage of my error. A man may be successful in contesting an election by promising that Parliament will be asked by him to interfere with the functions of the Arbitration Court. To suggest altering industrial conditions would be more pleasing to his adherents; in other words, make use of this matter for bribery. The justification for the creation of the Arbitration Court was that it would prevent such a thing as this. A tribunal would be created with special skill and knowledge, and above all it would be entirely remote from influences of that character. We created the Arbitration Court, and although we have that tribunal, as the member for West Perth pointed out, we are attempting if not directly to dictate to it, at any rate by fixing certain provisions, to intimate plainly that that is what it is to do if any matter of that kind comes before it.

That is one part of the comment made by the member for West Perth, and the other is this, and it is the most important part, that at present during this terrible disaster from which the world is suffering, the one big consolation is the development of industry in Australia. In consequence of the world war and the loss of shipping resulting from it, and for other reasons—because the manpower of Great Britain has been entirely absorbed in military work—Australia has been thrown on her own resources for many things which would otherwise have been imported. Phenomenal industrial development has been made possible in this country during the last two years, how phenomenal none of us can really grasp at this moment. We are but slowly getting into the stream of new industry; we are on the very edge of it.

It is true that with munitions factories and other works of a like character, we may get our share of military work which is within the powers of the Commonwealth authorities to allot. Outside of military work altogether industries in the Eastern States have grown to a colossal extent; industries about which we never dreamt. We now have our chance in this State. In many small ways we have availed ourselves of that chance. The

plea of the member for West Perth is this: Do not destroy, by rigidity of industrial conditions, the chance that the present moment offers. Not for one moment did he have any desire to inflict a hardship on workers, or to refuse them any remedial measures possible. He simply wanted the Government to appreciate the fact that, if rigid conditions are laid down now, it may well be that this State will lose the only opportunity offered it to start new secondary industries. That is the principal argument advanced by the hon. member, and not the matter dealt with at some length by both the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) and the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney). The member for Pilbara recalled the old days in England. One might go a bit further back and find still worse days.

The Minister for Mines. The arguments are just the same.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The world unfortunately was not a good world 100 or 200 years ago.

The Minister for Mines: It is not too good now!

Hon. N. KEENAN: If one looks into those times scandalous cases can be found, not only in respect of industrial matters, but all matters. For instance, the matter of penalties for offences against the law with which the member for Subiaco (Mrs. Cardell-Oliver) entertained this House! The member for West Perth shares with every other member a desire to give the best possible conditions to workers in every industry, and his comments had no bearing whatever on the remarks of the members to whom I have just referred.

I want to comment on only two matters; otherwise I share the views of the member for West Perth. I find it difficult to understand why, when one part of the Bill provides special loading for working two shifts, a definite figure should be fixed, and why it should not be left to the Arbitration Court to decide what is the proper amount having regard to the wages earned by the individual workers. In some small industries—knitting industries, for instance—it may be that the workers have not the experience to claim high wages. Girls are receiving 18s. or 20s. a week for operating small machines, somewhat similar to typewriters, in the process of knitting socks. They do heeling and toeing. All that has to be done, under modern machinery conditions, is to lift a lever,

throw it over, and the machine then jerks out the manufactured article. Compare that with the position of the head of a department who has every responsibility! He or she is responsible for the character and class of goods used, the class of materials used, and the standard of goods produced. Under this measure he or she would receive exactly the same reward because of this rigidity. In one case it means a colossal increase in remuneration, and in the other case it is a mere bagatelle. There is no reason for it; the matter should be left to the Arbitration Court.

I must say also that I strongly object to the attempt to get this House to make provision for the collecting of union fees. I quite agree with the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney) that, if a worker is enjoying the benefits of an award, it is reasonable to look to him to pay his share of the cost of obtaining that award and of maintaining the union in order to see that the conditions of the award are observed. That, however, is quite a different matter from Parliament being asked to make provision whereby the industry concerned is charged with the duty of seeing that the workers' fees are paid. Preference is not to be given to unionists but to financial members of unions. Employers are to be made bailiffs for the collection of fees for unions. I have no doubt that the unions themselves can quite effectively collect fees from their own members.

Mr. J. Hegney: The big ones can, but the small ones cannot.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Of course they can.

Mr. Raphael: You have to pay a fee as a barrister!

Hon. N. KEENAN: That may be so, but there is no Act of Parliament which says the Barristers Board has to see that I am a financial member.

Mr. Raphael: The Dental Board does, and if a registered dentist does not pay his fees he is wiped out.

Hon. N. KEENAN: These are small, almost trivial, matters compared with the major issues I have alluded to. Another small matter to agreement with which I cannot reconcile myself, is that an application for membership of a union, which becomes compulsory in order to obtain employment, may be rejected for good cause. The Bill contains no provision to declare what is a good cause, nor for any review of what may be said to be a good cause. It

is simply a worthless phrase—"for good cause." There is no provision for an examination of the good cause by any tribunal—by the Arbitration Court or by any other body. Of course, that provision is highly objectionable.

The Minister for Works: But that was what inspired the Crusaders of old! It was the good cause!

Hon. N. KEENAN: Every single person who has done anything at all has always alleged that he did it for a good cause—but that has no bearing on my argument. I do not wish to detain the House, and would not have risen in the first instance but for what I regard as the very unfair criticism levelled against the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald), and because I think the two main points he stressed were not properly understood by the House or, if understood, were not properly received. I emphasise those points, which I regard as vital. If we neglect to take heed of them, we shall do the State a grave disservice.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [10.13]: This evening's contributions to the debate prompt me to make reference to butchers' shops. I find that butchers usually indulge in window-dressing for the Christmas season. I am wondering what effect this legislation will have on that phase of the butchering business. I hope it will not have the same effect as it has had on the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney). When that hon. member indulged in comparisons with what happened 139 years ago, I must say I listened to him with a great deal of attention. It reminded me of the period when—I shall not say how many years ago it was—I was interested in the study of the same problem that he brought under the notice of the House this evening. I really fail to see how he can, with justification, make a comparison between conditions as they existed then in regard to factories and shops and those in regard to the same industries that operate in the State today. We know perfectly well that the statements he made regarding conditions more than a century ago were perfectly true.

The Minister for Mines: I think he was rather dealing with the arguments used.

Mr. WATTS: We stand as much aghast as does he regarding certain views entertained by a substantial proportion of the people of the times to which he referred, but today, and for many years past, there have been

means provided whereby the wrongs of the workers can be corrected, means which are not within the control of employers nor are they, except in so far as they have the right of application so that their wrongs can be explained and, if necessary, righted for them, under the control of the workers? Rather is that control vested by Parliament in independent authorities or, alternatively, when it comes to questions regarding the buildings in which the workers labour or of the conditions under which they are employed or of similar matters, is it contained in such Acts as we are now discussing, to wit, the Factories and Shops Act and other measures of a kindred nature.

It seems just as reasonable today to offer a comparison between conditions in 1802 and those obtaining during the last decade as it would be to compare this substantial building in which we are debating tonight with some miserable hovel to be found perhaps in some portion of the State. I think the member for Pilbara had little, if any, justification for the comparison he made. Conditions in recent years have been such that we know if there is a wrong it can be righted by the constitutional means provided by this and other Parliaments. There was no one to right such wrongs 139 years ago. The best the worker and the poor women and children of the day could hope for was that some humanitarian person like Lord Shaftesbury would be prepared to attempt to do something for them.

It is a curious thing that in those days we find that the persons who wished most to right the evils they saw around them were members of the so-called aristocracy. I am not sure that at the present period the people really most interested in seeing that wrongs that are really wrongs are righted are not people who are possibly classed by the member for Pilbara as the Conservatives of this world. Therefore I trust that in future when he discusses matters of this description he will reflect for a few moments on the fact that because there have been decent people in the world, including men of all shades of political opinion since the period to which he has referred, there have been such enormous changes that a comparison should not be made with conditions that obtained 139 years ago, and that, if he must indulge in comparisons, he should make them with similar conditions that exist elsewhere in the British Dominions today.

I propose to bring under the notice of the Minister one or two matters to which I think he might give consideration by way of amendments. The Bill proposes that a factory shall include any place where paint is applied by the spraying method. A factory at present is defined as a place where four or more persons are employed. If the amendment embodied in the Bill be agreed to, we will have factories where less than four persons are employed. I particularly want to make reference to one type of business which may easily be brought within the scope of the definition of "factory," and to which I think the application of the provisions governing factories, which otherwise would not apply, would impose a hardship. In the country districts there are small garages which have possibly one or two employees at the most and occasionally, in the course of doing repairs or because they get a casual customer who demands to have his vehicle partially or wholly duced, are obliged to use the spraying system. As the amendment stands, it appears that its effect might be interpreted to mean that small places doing that work casually and infrequently might come within the ambit of the Factories and Shops Act, which I am certain was not intended and which hitherto has not been the case. So I ask the Minister to consider amending the clause to permit of such places carrying on as they have done in the past.

I subscribe also to the view that it would be better and more proper to leave many of the proposals in the Bill to the Arbitration Court which has been established and has worked, I think, remarkably well in such matters. If it is found that the Industrial Arbitration Act does not enable the court to deal with certain matters and if those matters are pointed out and explained, I am sure very few, if any, members of this House would object to making the necessary provision. I believe the view of members is that the Arbitration Court should be clothed with all the power requisite to enable it to do justice, and I do not think we should tinker with the Factories and Shops Act along lines which properly should be within the control of the court itself. If we leave to the Arbitration Court the determination of working conditions, hours, wages and other things which are to apply in particular industries, there is an opportunity for the persons concerned to put up their point of view, for

there we have a court with a judicial head and a representative of each side on the bench and the court, after hearing the points of view expressed by the workers and the employers, can come to a conclusion as to what is just and reasonable. On the other hand, I, as a member of this House, am not in a position to do any such thing.

It has been represented to me—and I submit this matter for the consideration of the Minister—that in regard to certain factories and shops—I am speaking now only of the country districts—there is considerable difficulty at present in obtaining labour to carry out the work they have to do. It is quite likely, therefore, that, in order to get the work done, they will need to have some overtime worked, and they have informed me that they are quite prepared to comply with conditions and pay which the Arbitration Court may prescribe after the circumstances have been disclosed to the court and a determination has been obtained. But they do not think it reasonable that they should be required by the Act to work the employees who can be obtained for four hours less per week, which means, they contend, that in order to get the same amount of work done they must have more employees, who are difficult if not impossible to find. Alternatively, they will have to pay overtime rates for work which at present is being done in ordinary time because of the existing provision for a maximum working week of 48 hours. I consider they are justified in presenting that point of view.

In the course of his remarks, the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) made some reference to the new order. A number of members of this House have made reference to the new order; up to date I think I have been one of a number who have not done so. I have always understood that the new order mentioned by other members has reference to a new order after the war. The member for Perth, in building up his case, pointed out that the Bill was an instalment of the new order, and made particular reference to that part of the Bill which is limited in its effect to the duration of the war and one year thereafter. If that particular part of the Bill is of such an evolutionary nature that it should form part of the new order after the war, which I submit is the only new order that has been discussed, the member for Perth is quite on the wrong trail. It will not constitute any part of a new order

after the war as it comes to an end 12 months after hostilities cease, and that is the very time when, if it can be justified, it ought to come into operation.

I do not think the criticism along the lines submitted by the member for Perth can be justified. It seems to me he knew perfectly well that whatever references had been made to a new order applied after the war. The principal matter—the payment of 12s. a week to which he referred in that regard—will come to an end at the close of the war, and so his argument is like the flowers that bloom in the Spring. Generally speaking, I have no objection to the proposals in the Bill other than the one or two I have mentioned. All the same, I think it would be a great deal better if the Government would leave to the properly constituted authority the right to deal with many of these matters, provided that it has power to do so speedily and effectively.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [10.29]: I am sure that every member of this House must have listened with increasing sorrow as the Leader of the National Party, the member for West Perth, Mr. McDonald, proceeded with his speech.

Hon. N. Keenan: It is out of order to refer to an hon. member by name.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I have said it. It is obvious that the member for Nedlands has, since the speech was delivered, felt greatly concerned regarding it. In the speech delivered by the member for Nedlands tonight, he has been at some pains to apologise for the reactionary tone of the speech delivered by his colleague. He has been at some pains also to explain away the more reactionary features of that utterance. If we follow to their proper conclusion the statements of the member for Nedlands, we shall find that the type of logic in which he indulged was extremely peculiar. He told us that we should not take advantage of the powers of Parliament to grant wages and working conditions to working people which the Arbitration Court itself, if it were deciding the matter, would not grant. In effect he told us that this Parliament should make itself an inferior body to the Arbitration Court. He said that irrespective of what the circumstances might be, this Parliament should never exercise the powers it pos-

sesses, under its Constitution, to do anything that might possibly, in some small or large degree, do something which the Arbitration Court would do if it had the opportunity.

Hon. N. Keenan: Then why keep a Court of Arbitration?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Why have a Parliament?

Mr. McDonald: Why have both?

Hon. N. Keenan: Let us have one.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: It is a weird kind of logic which suggests that Parliament should never do anything about the wages and working conditions of anyone, because what it might do might not be done by the Arbitration Court if it were deciding the particular matter.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is not exactly it.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: It is exactly it, all right.

Hon. N. Keenan: No. You ought not to interfere.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for Nedlands considers that any action on our part now to alter the Factories and Shops Act would constitute an improper interference with the functions of the Arbitration Court. The hon. member even went so far as to tell us that action taken by previous Parliaments by way of improving the Factories and Shops Act was an improper interference with the Arbitration Court and the functions which that tribunal carries out. Does he realise that there are in the metropolitan area alone 1,400 workers in factories who are not covered, in any shape or form, by the Arbitration Court, and who depend for protection in regard to their wages and working conditions upon what is contained in the Factories and Shops Act? Is the position of those 1,400 people of no concern to him?

Hon. N. Keenan: Are they outside the unions?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Those who would care or dare to support this peculiar kind of logic which the member for Nedlands has developed assert that it would be a most improper interference by Parliament with the Arbitration Court to give some advantage, by way of increased wages or better working conditions, to those 1,400 people who have not at present the right of access to the Arbitration Court. Surely if Parliament considers the wages and conditions

of those 1,400 people are not what they ought to be, members of Parliament are not only entitled to do something in connection with that matter but are in duty bound to do something in connection with it. Is not that the right and proper attitude to adopt? Is not that the fair and just thing to attempt to do? The contention of the member for Nedlands, if followed to its logical conclusion, is that we ought to abolish the Factories and Shops Act altogether. That, I maintain, is the logical conclusion to the reasoning he and his colleague, the member for West Perth, have indulged in with regard to this Bill.

Mr. McDonald: I have not.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am prepared to exonerate the member for West Perth from that charge and to concentrate it wholly upon the member for Nedlands. That is the logical conclusion to his argument.

Hon. N. Keenan: The logical conclusion is that you ought to endow the Arbitration Court with all necessary powers.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: We have endowed the court with all necessary powers, but 1,400 workers employed in factories in the metropolitan area are not yet under the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court.

Hon. N. Keenan: Then you have not given the court the proper powers.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If the member for Nedlands declares that it is improper interference by Parliament to do anything in connection with the wages and the working conditions of those 1,400 people, I say again, and I emphasise, that the logical conclusion to his reasoning is the total abolition of the Factories and Shops Act, for that Act as at present worded gives those 1,400 people protection in respect of minimum wages and weekly working hours, and protection in regard to certain other of the conditions under which they work. This talk about improper interference by Parliament with the Arbitration Court is without real foundation. If it is not an excuse invented for the purpose of defeating this Bill, it is a development of reasoning that we ought to be very concerned about. I say that these 1,400 people to whom I have alluded are entitled to a fair deal from Parliament, in view of the fact that they are not, at the moment, under the protection of an award or industrial agreement.

And who are these 1,400 people in the main? They are small groups of workers employed in the smaller factories. Because they are small groups of workers it is not easy to organise them for the purpose of obtaining for them approach to the Arbitration Court. The argument of the member for Nedlands, and to some extent at any rate that of the member for West Perth, is that because they are small groups of workers and because they are not properly organised they should be left to receive whatever their employers are prepared to give them.

Mrs. Cardell-Oliver: Rubbish! Be fair!

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: If that is not so, what is the position of those two members?

Hon. N. Keenan: You have made it very clear, and you have also made it very clear to me that you do not want to know.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: What is the position? Obviously, if these small groups of workers in the smaller factories are not able to get to the Arbitration Court, and do not get there, and are not to receive any protection under the Factories and Shops Act—

Mr. Hughes: It takes only 15 persons to form a union.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I know that as well as the hon. member interjecting knows it. I am not saying that the number is too large or that it is too small. I am saying that 1,400 workers in factories in the metropolitan area are not at present, and have not been in the past, enjoying the protection or benefits of any award or industrial agreement. Unless they enjoy that protection or get reasonable protection under the Factories and Shops Act they are, beyond any shadow of doubt, left to receive what they can get from their individual employers. That is the logic of it. I submit that these workers have a claim upon Parliament until such time as they can receive the protection of the Arbitration Court. Immediately they are covered by an award or an industrial agreement, this legislation would have no effect whatever in respect of their wages and working conditions, except in the case of females and boys, and only then as to the overtime that women and boys may be allowed to work in factories.

If we refuse to improve the parent Act we deliberately refuse to give any measure

of improvement, by way of wages and working conditions, to the 1,400 workers to whom I have referred. They are not the only ones. I am referring to 1,400 workers engaged in factories in the metropolitan area. In addition, there are workers employed in factories and shops in the country. I ask members to have a thought for all these workers. They are the least protected in the State by reason of the fact that they have not yet been able, for some reason or other, to obtain an award or an industrial agreement from the Court of Arbitration. This Bill is not unseasonable, neither is it unreasonable. There is a tendency to raise a general objection to all measures which propose to confer some benefits upon workers. The contention put forward is that the proposal is before its time.

Mr. McDonald: Would you extend this to agricultural workers?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I would be quite prepared to take some action to deal with the wages and conditions of agricultural workers.

Mr. McDonald: But I think we ought to amend this Bill.

Mr. Styants: God knows, they need it!

Hon. C. G. Latham: I agree.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I suggest that any attempt to amend this Bill to cover farm workers would prove abortive, because the Speaker or the Deputy Speaker, or the Chairman of Committees, whoever might be in charge at the time, would not look kindly upon such an amendment from the point of view of the standing orders.

Mr. Hughes: And he would not have much regard for the workers.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for West Perth indulged in comprehensive and specific criticism of the Bill. He opposed almost every clause. The one clause that I remember him offering some support for was the clause which proposes to allow the working period per day to be increased from eight hours 45 minutes to eight hours 48 minutes. As far as I remember, that is the only clause which received his support and his blessing.

Mr. McDonald: Oh, no! I blessed a great many others.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: The member for West Perth blessed in one breath and cursed in the next, by bringing

down upon the clauses this curse of improper interference with the Court of Arbitration. I am aware the hon. member did not have sufficient time properly to study the effect of some of these amendments. I am also aware that his case was prepared hurriedly. Many of his facts were indeed not facts at all. The information he had, or which was supplied to him, with respect to the soap industry in this State is an example of just how wide of the mark the criticism was. He gave us to understand that the soap industry in Western Australia is working 48 hours per week and is to continue working 48 hours until such time as the soap industry in South Australia is granted a 44-hour working week. The fact is that the workers in the soap industry in Western Australia have been enjoying the 44-hour working week for several years.

Mr. McDonald: Might it not have been that the industry was working 48 hours in South Australia and then had the working week put back to 44?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: That may have been so, but it was not the claim of the member for West Perth when speaking to the Bill. He said that the soap industry here was and is working a 48-hour week; but if the Bill was passed granting the 44-hour week generally to workers employed in factories and not covered by the Arbitration Court, we would over-ride a decision of the court and put the soap manufacturing industry in this State in an unfair position as regards its competition with the soap manufacturing industry in South Australia.

Mr. McDonald: I do not think that is quite the way I used the illustration. I said the court would exercise its discretion to meet the circumstances of the case.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Both the member for Nedlands and the member for West Perth suggested that the establishment of a maximum working week of 44 hours under the Factories and Shops Act would prejudice Western Australia in its desire to obtain new industries. Can any member of this House conceive of a new industry likely to establish itself here that would not work a maximum 44-hour week?

Hon. N. Keenan: I did not mention it in relation to any specific industry.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I am asking the member for Nedlands if he will be specific.

Hon. N. Keenan: How can I be?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Nedlands cannot answer the question now.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I admit he could not be specific now. That is the sort of argument which gets us nowhere. I say that the establishment of a 44-hour working week in this State would not, in any shape or form, prejudice the coming to Western Australia of a new industry, for the reason that the 44-hour working week is generally established.

If any new industry were to come to Western Australia, and if it were of any size at all, it would know that the workers engaged in it would soon be brought under an award or an industrial agreement providing for a maximum working week of 44 hours. I would advise the member for Nedlands and the member for West Perth to study the awards and industrial agreements of the Arbitration Court that provide for a working week in excess of 44 hours. If they do, they will find them to be few in number and to apply to special occupations. The nurses' award is an instance of where the Arbitration Court has provided for a working week longer than 44 hours. There are special reasons for that, as there are special reasons behind every other award or industrial agreement providing for a working week longer than 44 hours. In respect of every industry of a general character and of every new industry likely to come to Western Australia, 44 hours is certainly the maximum period allowed by way of working hours in each week.

The main objection to this Bill cannot be sustained, that objection being that any action by Parliament to improve the Factories and Shops Act is an interference by Parliament with the Court of Arbitration. I have already pointed out that where the Court of Arbitration has issued an award or an industrial agreement or has power to issue such, the Factories and Shops Act has no effect except in one particular. I have pointed out that there are at least 1,400 employees in factories in the metropolitan area whose only protection in connection with wages and working conditions is to be found in the Factories and Shops Act, but there are in country districts, in factories and in shops many hundreds of workers whose only

protection is that which this Act gives to them. They are the people with whom we are concerned when we bring this amending Bill before the House.

I hope members will view the Bill from that angle. If they do, they will be convinced that they have a duty to these particular people and accordingly will do their best to see the Bill passed through the House in a form reasonably acceptable to Parliament, and in a way that will improve the conditions of those who have had no legislative improvement granted to them of any worth-while character since 1925.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 10.53 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 18th November, 1941.

	PAGE
Questions: Yampi Sound iron ore, as to treatment	1917
Pastoral industry, wool appraised at Albany	1917
Leave of absence	1918
Motion: Taxation, volunteer militiamen's sustenance	1918
Bills: Main Roads Act (Funds Appropriation) (No. 2), 1R.	1920
Financial Emergency Act Amendment, 3R., passed	1920
Mortgages' Rights Restriction Act. Continuance, 2R., passed	1920
Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, reports	1920
Potato Growers Licensing. Com.	1920
Workers' Compensation Act Amendment, Assembly's Message	1928
Increase of Rent (War Restrictions) Act Amendment, Assembly's request for conference	1928
Public Trustee, Assembly's Message	1929
Lotteries (Control) Act Amendment, 2R.	1929
Land Drainage Act Amendment, 2R.	1943

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

QUESTION—YAMPI SOUND IRON ORE.

As to Treatment.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary: In connection with the grant of £1,000 towards the preliminary investigations concerning the establishment of the

iron and steel industry in Western Australia: 1, Have any investigations been made by the Government or other parties into the proposition that the Yampi iron ore deposits could be treated electrically? 2, In connection with the generation of electricity for the above purpose, has any proposition been considered to—(a) harness tidal waters, or (b) dam the Walcott Inlet in order to conserve the water flowing into that inlet from the Isdell, Calder and Charuley rivers? 3, (a) Is it a fact that estimates have shown that, after allowing 50 per cent. for seepage and evaporation, the conservation of water mentioned in 2 (b) would amount to three hundred thousand million gallons? (b) Will the Government check these figures by estimating the area of the watershed of the three rivers mentioned?

The HONORARY MINISTER (for the Chief Secretary) replied: 1, Yes. 2, Consideration has been given to the generation of electricity for smelting purposes by the harnessing of tidal waters and the damming of inlets. Such procedure would involve a very high capital expenditure which could only be justified by a very large production involving a serious marketing problem. 3, In the initial stages it is intended to concentrate on the establishment of the industry on a scale commensurate with the markets available. It is not intended at this stage to incur expenditure on the preparation of detailed estimates for the production of electric power from water storage.

QUESTION—PASTORAL INDUSTRY.

Wool Appraised at Albany.

Hon. H. V. PIESSE asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Has the Government's attention been drawn to a letter in the "West Australian" of the 7th November, signed by C. H. Merry, secretary of the Wool Brokers' Association? 2, Is the statement made by Mr. Merry that wool appraised at Albany must be railed to Fremantle within 21 days correct, or does the 21 days' period refer to the time when the wool should be cleared from the Albany stores, and not necessarily railed to Fremantle? 3, Is the Government aware that sufficient storage space is available at Albany for an indefinite period for all wool that has to be appraised there this season? 4, If the wool