

joint property-holder, for the purpose of a vote for this House. I cannot see how it can be said that those who vote would be supporters of one party or the other. By and large it would have very little effect. We believe, however, in equal rights for the women, and we believe they should have equal voting power with their husbands for this Chamber.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I think there are as many women on the metropolitan rolls as there are males.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: There may be more—I would not know—but the percentage of females as against males on the Council rolls has been less in the country areas. I have not studied the others.

Hon. H. K. Watson: I think they break even throughout the State.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is fair and reasonable. We contend that marriage is a partnership; it is no doubt the greatest partnership in life.

Hon. H. Hearn: There must be a chairman of directors.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: We have no right to set ourselves up as the chairman of directors. In my opinion, the wives should record their votes as partners with their husbands. The time to broaden the franchise for this Chamber is long overdue. I believe that the wife of a property-holder, or a householder, should be eligible to vote if she so desires. It is not a compulsory vote, nor is the enrolment compulsory. Those who are interested would certainly enrol and see that they voted. The uninterested people could be enrolled, but they could not be forced to vote. It would be entirely optional, just as every voter today has the right to exercise his option as to whether he will vote for this Chamber or not.

In supporting this Bill, I would remark that the proposal contained in it has been here before on more than one occasion during my few years in this House. There have, however, also been several other amendments in the same Bill. If I remember rightly, the main objection raised at the time was voiced against the other amendments which were in the measure, and not to any great extent against the wife having a vote.

On this occasion, the Bill is submitted with just one amendment, which is to give a woman the right to exercise a vote for this Chamber if her husband possesses property, or if he is a householder. Accordingly, I think it is a fair and reasonable proposition and I trust the House will give the measure its earnest consideration and support.

On motion by Hon. W. R. Hall, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 5.22 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 17th November, 1955.

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

QUESTIONS.

WHEAT.

Quantity in Store.

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) How much wheat is held in store at present in each State?

(2) What are the comparable figures for 1953 and 1954?

(3) What was the wheat production in each State in 1952, 1953 and 1954?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Stocks, including mills:—

N.S.W.	Vic.	S.A.	W.A.	Qld.	Total.
m. bushels. 18·99	m. bushels. 30·53	m. bushels. 19·15	m. bushels. 27·93	m. bushels. 4·53	m. bushels. 101·13

(2)

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Total.
	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.
1953	9·89	11·5	2·25	7·6	6·3	·2	37·75
1954	26·45	26·93	2·48	15·41	23·50	·12	94·91

(3) Production in each State:—

	N.S.W.	Vic.	Qld.	S.A.	W.A.	Tas.	Total.
	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.	m. bushels.
1952-53	56·67	50·33	18·66	33·92	35·46	·16	195·21
1953-54	63·68	53·70	10·18	30·41	39·70	·26	197·96
1954-55 (a)	37·5	48·0	16·0	31·0	34·0	·1	166·61

(a) Estimate.

"TWO-UP" SCHOOL, KALGOORLIE.

Closure by Police.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Was he correctly reported in "The West Australian" of Monday, the 14th November, as saying that "the Parkeston two-up school had been closed by the police during the term of the previous Government. Had he been Minister for Police at the time, he would have seen that the 'school' was re-opened because of goldfields conditions, but he could not do so when he was elected to office six months or so later. There would have been such an outcry from churches and other organisations that it would have been deeply prejudicial to the party"?

(2) If he was correctly reported, is he aware that, in the opinion of the Commissioner of Police, the "school" was—

- frequented by professional gamblers of ill-repute, and
- that it was in the interest of the men and women of Kalgoorlie that the "school" should be closed?

(3) Would he, as Minister for Police, have instructed the commissioner that he was to permit the "school" to be opened, even if the commissioner considered that it should remain closed and the law observed?

(4) Was it only the fact that the Government would have been criticised by churches and other organisations if he permitted the "school" to be opened that prevented him from compelling the commissioner, against his considered opinion, to open the "school" and permit a breach of the law?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Reasonably correct.

(2) (a) and (b) No. I was not the Minister for Police at that time and did not know what the opinion of the Commissioner of Police was.

(3) and (4) In my opinion, there was no more need to close the Parkeston "two-up" school then than there had been for the 45 years the game had been played openly on the Goldfields. It is pointed out that about 5½ years of this time was while the member for Mt. Lawley was Minister for Police. During this time illegal s.p. betting was permitted openly in many places, also "two-up schools", without protest from the member for Mt. Lawley as Minister for Police. Illegal betting on racecourses was also allowed to operate during the whole of the six years that he was Minister for Police.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: The same old tale! Push it on to the other man!

STATE SAW MILLS.

Alteration to Sawdust Bin.

Mr. ANDREW asked the Minister for Forests:

Some time ago he stated that certain alterations were to be made to the bin at the State Saw Mills in an endeavour to eliminate the dust nuisance:

- (1) Could he state the action already taken?
- (2) What is the nature of the alterations?
- (3) To what degree is it estimated that these alterations will eliminate the nuisance?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The main dust collecting bin at Carlisle yard has been a source of complaint over a period of years and considerable expenditure prior to the 30th June this year has not been successful in abating the nuisance. Inquiries throughout Australia show that similar complaints arise in other large woodworking establishments and complete elimination of dust discharge cannot be obtained using primary cyclones only, as is standard practice in Australia. Work is now proceeding on installation of a secondary filter system on the main bin.

(2) In the secondary system referred to, air and fine dust is filtered through a set of bags after passing through the main cyclone somewhat similar to filtering in a gas producer unit but on a large scale. This work is nearing completion and a change-over will be made within a few weeks. In addition, the main bin is being re-lined and altered in design to prevent leakage and minimise dust on discharge. Estimated cost of these alterations is approximately £4,000.

(3) It is expected that the alterations will completely eliminate dust discharge from the top of the cyclone but there will still be some discharge from the bin itself until re-lining can be completed. This will be done during the Christmas close-down. Depending on conditions, there will still be some dust when bins are discharged to motor trucks.

WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TROTTING ASSOCIATION.

Country Clubs Benefit Fund.

Mr. MANNING asked the Minister representing the Chief Secretary:

(1) Who are the persons that constitute the country clubs benefit funds committee under the Western Australian Trotting Association Act?

(2) What number of trotting meetings did the W.A.T.A. hold for the purpose of raising funds for the country clubs benefit fund during the 1954-55 trotting season, and what amount of money was raised?

(3) To which district trotting councils or country clubs were payments made and what were the individual amounts?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING replied:

(1) Mr. J. P. Stratton, president of Western Australian Trotting Association.

Mr. B. Ball, delegate from Great Southern District Trotting Council.

Mr. A. H. Jefferies, delegate from South-West District Trotting Council.

Mr. T. H. Stratton, delegate from North-Eastern District Trotting Council.

(2) Three meetings held; £1,500 raised.

(3) £500 each to Great Southern, South-West and North-Eastern District Councils, who, in turn, distribute to the clubs in their respective councils.

LOAN EXPENDITURE.

(a) Country Towns Sewerage.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Treasurer:

Item No. 14 of the First Schedule of the Loan Bill makes provision for £60,000 to be spent on sewerage for country towns:

- (1) In what towns is this amount to be spent?
- (2) What are the individual amounts to be spent in each town?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) Collie, Geraldton and Albany.

(2) Collie, £40,000; Geraldton, £1,000; and Albany, £900. It is thought only £50,000 will be spent during this financial year.

(b) Bunbury Power Station.

Mr. ROBERTS asked the Treasurer:

What provision has been made for loan funds to be set aside for works connected with the Bunbury power station project?

The TREASURER replied:

The amount is £1,940,000 in this financial year.

WAR SERVICE HOMES SCHEME.

Building Tenders Accepted by Applicants.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it correct that approximately 40 applicants for war service homes have accepted tenders from builders to build homes under the war service homes scheme only to find subsequently that there is an indefinite delay in the availability of funds for this purpose?

(2) What is the position at law of these applicants for war service homes who have accepted tenders from contractors so far as claims by contractors are concerned?

(3) What is the position at law so far as the State Housing Commission is concerned?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. However, 27 applicants recommended acceptance of tenders. No contracts yet signed by the State Housing Commission.

(2) and (3) Answered by No. (1).

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

Building on Deferred Payment System.

Mr. WILD asked the Treasurer:

(1) Does he agree with the system of deferred payments for housing?

(2) What amount of next year's allocation of money is he going to allow the State Housing Commission to mortgage?

(3) Is this not a contravention of the spirit of the determinations of the Loan Council which regulates the amount of money to be borrowed in any one financial year?

(4) Will he ensure that this practice ceases; and if not, why not?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) Yes, during a period when more housing is urgently required.

(2) This will depend on circumstances.

(3) No.

(4) No, because of the vital importance of providing housing accommodation.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

The PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam): I move—

That on and after Wednesday, the 23rd November, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays as on all other days.

I would point out that the amount of private members' business still on the notice paper is very small. There is no intention of depriving any member of a reasonable opportunity of having his business fully debated and voted upon, or of not giving the business, when finalised in this House, a reasonable chance, if it is to go to another House for consideration, of being discussed and voted upon there.

It may happen that the Government will bring up private members' Bills, which have not already been dealt with by the House, either late tonight or early on Tuesday, so that those Bills can, if the members sponsoring them wish it, be finalised in this House at the latest next

Tuesday, thereby giving them an opportunity, if they survive this place, of receiving reasonable consideration in another place.

Hon. D. BRAND (Greenough): I should not think there would be any opposition to this motion. We are anxious that private members shall have an opportunity of having their legislation put through, if they so desire. Their business has been on the notice paper for a long time. Following the assurance of the Premier that there will be an opportunity to discuss it, there can be no opposition to the motion.

Question put and passed.

MOTION—STATE FORESTS.

To Revoke Dedication.

The MINISTER FOR FORESTS (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [2.28]: I move—

That the proposal for the partial revocation of State forests Nos. 28, 29, 51 and 53, laid on the Table of the Legislative Assembly by command of His Excellency the Governor on the 10th November, 1955, be carried out.

This is one of the motions that appear regularly towards the end of every parliamentary session. The papers in connection with the four areas which are to be excised from State forests for the purpose of being made available for selection generally to adjoining holders, are very simple, and no doubt have been studied by those members who have any interest in the affected areas.

However, it should not be thought that it is the policy of the Forests Department to irresponsibly revoke or to seek to revoke portions of State forests, thereby sacrificing a very valuable public asset. It might be mentioned that, during the past 12 months, something in excess of 370,000 acres of additional land has been dedicated as State forest, and it will be seen that these are very small areas indeed.

The first area is situated about a quarter of a mile north-west of the township of Nannup and consists of approximately 15 acres of non-timbered country, which extends into private property and has been applied for by an adjoining landholder. The second area is about two miles north-east of Greenbushes and consists of 25 acres of open forest country, which forms a triangular salient into private property. This area has been applied for by an adjoining landholder as an extension to his property.

Area No. 3 is situated about three miles north-east of Mooterdine siding on the Pinjarra-Narrogin railway line and consists of 243 acres almost surrounded by private property. This land is not required

for the growth of mallet, for which purpose it was placed under the care of the Forests Department. An adjoining landholder has applied for the land as an extension to his property.

The fourth and final area is about five miles south-west of Yornaning and comprises two parts. There is a total area of 39 acres of good agricultural land, which has been applied for by a neighbouring settler in exchange for an almost equal area of his location. This latter area is inconvenient for the settler to farm because a main road cuts it off from the major portion of his property.

From the foregoing, members will see that there is little land involved in the revocations and that the motion does not warrant much debate.

MR. WILD (Dale) [2.32]: As the Minister has indicated, these are only small revocations similar to those made year by year. Members on both sides of the House will know how difficult it is to get the department to surrender a piece of land when application is made for it on behalf of a constituent, and consequently when these proposals are placed before us, we know that they have received the approval of the Conservator and subsequently of the Minister, that the proposals have been thoroughly examined, and that the land will not be of any use to the department in future.

I am not acquainted with the areas in question, but I have perused the papers that have been tabled and doubtless those members in whose constituencies these areas are located will have availed themselves of the same opportunity. Therefore I have no objection to offer to the motion.

Question put and passed.

On motion by the Minister for Forests, resolution transmitted to the Council and its concurrence desired therein.

BILL—RETAILING OF MOTOR SPIRITS.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—LICENSING ACT AMENDMENT (No. 4).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [2.35] in moving the second reading said: This Bill proposes to amend the section in the principal Act dealing with the renewal of existing licences. The section sets out the grounds on which an application for renewal may

be refused. It then goes on to deal specifically with an application for the renewal of a wayside house licence.

In the first place, the principal Act provides that no licence for a wayside house shall be granted or renewed for any house or premises situated within a distance of 10 miles from any municipal district or townsite in which the population exceeds 100 persons. The provision in the principal Act with which this Bill deals states that, if on application for renewal of a wayside house licence, such renewal is refused on the grounds I have just mentioned, the court may, without requiring the applicant to make any further or other application, grant to the applicant a certificate for a publican's general licence for the same house.

The Bill seeks to provide that the reverse procedure may apply in a suitable case. It is proposed to insert an amendment to the effect that, notwithstanding anything contained in the principal Act, where a certificate for a publican's general licence has been granted in lieu of a certificate for the renewal of a wayside house licence, the court, having regard to the relevant conditions and circumstances of the district may, when considering the renewal of the licence for the house, on application being made at the hearing by the holder of the licence, grant to the applicant a certificate of renewal for the house as a wayside house licence in lieu of the publican's general licence. Members will note that the decision is to be left to the discretion of the court.

In a number of places in the State such as Laverton, and probably in the agricultural areas, publicans' general licences have been held. If the holder of one of these licences applied for a wayside house licence, it could be granted, but if it were a wayside house licence, an application for a publican's general licence could not, under the existing provision, be granted. There are places where the population is scanty and a wayside licence cannot be obtained under Section 31 of the Act, but this will be permitted under the Bill. There may not be sufficient population to warrant a publican's general licence and probably an expenditure of £20,000 or £30,000 would be necessary before the premises were deemed by the court to be satisfactory, whereas an expenditure of £10,000 or £12,000 might cover requirements for a wayside house.

The whole matter is to be left to the discretion of the court. If a publican's general licence is deemed to be unwarranted in a certain place, the court may exercise its discretion and grant a wayside house licence. I feel this is something that was probably omitted in the first place, and we should now give it serious consideration. I hope the amendment will be agreed to. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [2.41]: I am largely in agreement with the Bill, but I point out that certain requirements are laid down before a wayside licence can be granted. Section 31 of the Act provides—

A wayside-house licence shall, subject to the provisions of this Act, authorise the licensee to sell and dispose of any liquor in any quantity on the premises therein specified; but no licence for a wayside-house shall be granted or renewed for any house or premises situated within a distance of 10 miles from any municipal district or townsite in which the population exceeds one hundred persons.

In other words, if there is a population exceeding 100 persons within 10 miles of the proposed site for the wayside licence, it may not be granted.

The Minister for Justice: If this amendment is agreed to, it can be granted.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If the amendment goes through, it may not be granted when an application is made for a wayside licence. The curious thing about the Bill is that if a person holding a publican's general licence has had a wayside licence, he can get a wayside licence without this stipulation being attached to it. I do not know whether the Minister intended that, but that is the way I read the Bill. I think the original stipulation ought to apply to a situation where a publican is asking that his licence be reduced to a wayside licence in the same way as it would have applied to him originally.

Mr. Lawrence: Is he bound under Section 31?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, that is the curious point about it. The Bill states, "notwithstanding anything contained in Section thirty-one."

The Minister for Justice: I have discussed this with the Licensing Court.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: When a publican's general licence is renewed, does the Minister want to have a wayside licence granted under conditions that would not have applied originally? Is he prepared to grant a renewal of a publican's general licence so that it becomes a wayside licence where it is within 10 miles of a population of 100 people?

Mr. Lawrence: Yes, but he would still have to apply under Section 31.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No; he would if it were an application for a new licence.

The Minister for Justice: You will spoil the effect of it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not know whether the Bill is designed for a particular hotel, but it looks as if it is.

The Minister for Justice: We want to avoid the 101.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Why did not the Minister amend Section 31 at the same time? I think like conditions should apply, when it comes back to a wayside licence, as would apply in an original application.

The Minister for Justice: I do not want that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I know; that is perfectly plain. I do not want legislation which is designed for one person.

Mr. Lawrence: Which one would you suggest?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not know, but the Minister might. It does suggest that. Whereas I am perfectly prepared to grant a publican the right to go back to a wayside licence, where the conditions exist under which he could apply for a wayside licence, I do not like this. A man, in order to apply for a wayside licence, must not be within 10 miles of a population of 100 persons.

Mr. Lawrence: This must go before the court.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, but if these conditions did not exist, the court could not grant a licence in the first place. Under the proposed amendment a man, having had a wayside licence and now having a publican's general licence, could get a wayside licence again although he was within 10 miles of a municipality of over 100 people. It is a funny situation where a man cannot have a wayside licence in the first instance but later, at the discretion of the court, he can. This is not good drafting, and it is not good law.

The Minister for Justice: Supposing there were only 101 there?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Could he get a wayside licence in the first instance if that were the case?

The Minister for Justice: No.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Why does not the Minister alter that?

The Minister for Justice: There might have been 300 or 400 people there, and it might have been reduced.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, and he could not have got a wayside licence.

The Minister for Justice: Would you trust the court?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I might trust the court's discretion if the conditions applied equally to an application for a new licence as to an application to go back from a publican's general licence to a wayside licence. I think there is a bit of a nigger in the woodpile here.

Mr. Lawrence: The question is, do you trust the court, or not?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, but I think the court should have the same power in both cases; but this does not provide for that. The court cannot, in the first instance, grant a wayside licence within a distance of 10 miles of any municipal district or townsite in which the population exceeds 100.

The Minister for Justice: If you will amend the section so that it can, I will agree.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It is a pretty difficult proposition to do it now.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not within the scope of the Bill. I am perfectly prepared to move to report progress at the appropriate stage, so that an amendment may be framed. I am agreeable to having the numbers altered, but I do not like this as it appears here. It looks silly, and it would arouse confusion. One man might say to another, "How did you get a wayside licence? You are within 10 miles of a townsite of more than 100 people." The reply would be, "The court gave it to me." The man would then say, "I applied for a wayside licence but the court said it had no authority to grant it." We do not want that position to exist.

The Minister for Justice: I have had the experience of a little town with a small hotel—

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I would consider some relaxation. If the Minister had altered Section 31 to a reasonable extent he would, so far as I am personally concerned, have my support, but I do not like the distinction proposed to be created by the Bill. Why that distinction?

The Minister for Justice: Would you say that because a hotel had a general licence in Laverton it should not be able to make application for a wayside licence after the town went down?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I agree with that principle but not with the principle that if there was a small new mining town or district where the population was 101 it could not apply for a licence, and yet if a hotel already existed it could get one.

The Minister for Justice: You want the Bill amended in that direction?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes. I suggest to the Minister that after the second reading we report progress to see whether the difficulty can be overcome.

The Minister for Justice: I am agreeable to that.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Subject to the comments I have made, I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—GOVERNMENT RAILWAYS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. H. Styant—Kalgoorlie) [2.52] in moving the second reading said: The amendments put forward in this Bill deal with four separate sections of the Government Railways Act and I venture the opinion that none of them will be found to be very contentious—or at least I am hoping so.

Section 39 of the Act sets a figure of £2,000 as the limit of liability for personal injuries which shall be recoverable in any action against the commission and this will apply whether the person happens to be a passenger or not. Attention has been drawn to the fact that this amount has remained unaltered for over 50 years and is entirely inadequate, having regard to the vast change in monetary values today as compared with 50 years ago. This amendment proposes to increase this maximum liability to £6,000 where the cause of action arose on or after the coming into operation of this amending measure.

Section 63 of the Act has reference to the period of leases. The present term for leases as provided in Section 63 of the Act sets a limit of 21 years. The Railways Commission considers that a leasing period of 21 years is adequate but agrees that in special cases this should be extended to 50 years. Such a special case has arisen in a request received from Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for a longer lease term for the erection of a new grain silo.

This company has decided to experiment with a set of vertical concrete grain silos at Trayning siding, which will enable the faster loading of railway wagons, the more efficient control of weevils and the easier handling of more than one sort of grain. The life of this type of silo is estimated to be at least 100 years and could be the forerunner of others to be erected as required at different sidings.

Before commencing on the erection of this more expensive type of silo at Trayning, Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. is anxious to secure a longer lease than the existing 21 years. The request made by the firm was for the right, under certain conditions, to secure a lease extending over 100 years, which, as I have said, is the estimated life of this new type of grain silo, but the commission—I think members will agree, rightly so—believes that 21 years is quite a long time and that it would be a very rash person indeed who would attempt to forecast what type of transport will be in use 100 years hence. Cabinet, after due consideration of the question, decided on an amendment to provide, under certain conditions, for the granting of a lease with a maximum period

of 50 years. The amendment provides that any leases beyond 21 years, up to the maximum of 50 years, shall only be granted on the written authorisation of the Minister.

I believe that under present-day conditions it is unlikely that a lease with a term longer than 21 years would be granted in the metropolitan area or any other place where there is likely to be very rapid development, and we consider that under normal circumstances a lease of 21 years is long enough. There are places, however, such as Trayning, where as far as it is possible to forecast, the land required by Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd.—there and at some other country sidings—will not in the foreseeable future be required for railway purposes. Bearing in mind that this firm uses the railways extensively for the transport of its goods, Cabinet is recommending that, subject to the discretion of the Minister, a lease may in particular cases be granted for up to a maximum of 50 years.

The amendment to Section 73 is put forward at the request of the Railways Commissioners, who have for some time expressed doubt as to the legal right of the commission to delegate its powers or authority to servants of the commission. It has been the practice for more than 50 years to delegate powers or authorities by various media such as letters of authority, minutes of instruction, expenditure authority forms, etc. In respect of the powers under the present Section 73 to appoint, suspend, dismiss, fine or reduce in grade officers or servants of the department, it has been the practice to restrict the delegation to heads of branches, also subject to a fortnightly return to be submitted to the commission for ratification or any other action considered necessary.

Although the delegation of powers to dismiss appeared to be authorised under Section 77, Subsection (3) of the Act, doubt has been expressed regarding the other components of Section 73, that is, to appoint, suspend, fine or reduce in grade. The commission has requested that the Act be amended to clarify the position and to ensure that it has the legal right to delegate such of its powers or authority as may be considered necessary to carry out the functions prescribed in the Act. Crown Law officers are of the opinion that a reasonable doubt exists as to whether the commission has power to sub-delegate to subordinates authority to punish employees otherwise than by dismissal and consider it would be safer to clarify the position by this amendment.

It might also be mentioned that the Commonwealth Railways Act confers an express power upon the Commonwealth Commissioner of Railways to delegate to an employee any of the commissioner's powers under the Act. The relevant railways Acts of several other States also confer an express power upon heads of

branches to dismiss, suspend, fine or reduce. I might add in passing that I have discussed this proposal with the railway unions and they have no objection to it.

As a matter of fact, it will be only a continuation of a practice that has existed for 50 years. But in a recent appeal case the question was raised as to whether under these particular sections of the Railways Act the commission had, in fact, the right to delegate its powers for these particular purposes to its subordinate officers. The magistrate hearing this particular appeal decided to adjourn the case and he gave his decision afterwards. He said that, in his opinion, the commission had the authority to delegate its powers for these specific purposes. But as some doubt had arisen, the papers were referred to the Crown Law Department and the Solicitor General expressed the opinion that there was a reasonable doubt as to whether the commission had this power and because of this doubt we propose to clarify the position.

The last amendment contained in the Bill concerns Section 77 of the Act, which deals with the rights of employees to appeal against punishment inflicted on them. As the Act stands at present, this right of appeal applies only to permanent employees and it is defined in Section 77 that no person shall be deemed to be "permanently employed" within the meaning of the section unless he has been continuously employed for one year. This then means that any employee with less than the prescribed service has no right of appeal against punishment inflicted upon him, regardless of any doubts that there may be or any mitigating factors which have not been given full consideration.

It is conceivable that an employee could be victimised by being dismissed from the service for some minor breach of the regulations or for some trivial misdemeanour and would have no right of appeal against the undue punishment. It may be thought that the granting of this right would induce many employees with less than 12 months service to appeal against punishment without any reason or chance of success. Section 83 of the Railways Act provides that where the grounds of appeal are considered frivolous, costs shall be awarded against the appellant and this would, I believe, be sufficient deterrent to prevent any employee appealing if he did not have a good case with sufficient grounds to expect a favourable decision from the appeal board.

This, I think, is simply a question of principle and I believe that on principle an employee of any Government department—whether it be the Railways, the Police Force or the Public Service—irrespective of the term of initial service, should have a right of appeal to a punishments appeal board if a penalty had been inflicted on him.

The Railways Commission does not agree with this proposed amendment but I think the justice of it, and the principle, will appeal to nearly all members of this House. It must be remembered that most men who join the railway service join with the idea of making it a life occupation. If, during the first 12 months, some treatment which they consider to be harsh or unjust is meted out to them, they have not what we look upon as the unalienable right of any British subject—to appeal against punishment inflicted—and they are thus deprived of that right, which will not make them contented servants for the remainder of their term of employment.

Most of the men who join are under 35 years of age and they have a number of years ahead of them if they continue to be permanent employees. As I have already explained, the main objection of the Railways Commission was the fear that if the right of appeal was given to an employee with less than 12 months' service, it would be an inducement for him to enter a frivolous appeal and would involve the department in a good deal of expense in the hearing of such appeals. But I cannot see that employees with less than 12 months' service would be more likely to enter frivolous appeals than those with over 12 months' service, bearing in mind that Section 83 provides that where the board considers the grounds for entering the appeal have not been reasonable the appellant shall—it does not say "may"—pay the costs.

I think that is sufficient deterrent against the entering of frivolous appeals. On principle, it does not matter whether a man has had six to nine months' service or whether he has had six to nine years' service; if he is punished for a misdemeanour and he considers the punishment unjust, he should have a right of appeal to the constituted tribunal which, in this case, is the punishments appeal board. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY SUPER-ANNUATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [3.8] in moving the second reading said: Among the alterations to the Act, proposed in this Bill, there is one to enable members who have been in either House of Parliament, no matter for what length of time, to date their membership of the superannuation

fund back to the 1st January of the year in which they first commenced to make contributions to the fund.

With most members, it will mean that they will, if they take advantage of the opportunity proposed, exercise the option which the Bill will provide of paying contributions back to the 1st January in the year in which they first started to contribute to the fund. The option must be exercised within three months from the date on which this amending Bill becomes law. I think it will be agreed that it would not be advisable to allow this option to have a sort of Kathleen Mavourneen operation. That would not be advisable from any point of view. So it is considered that the option provided in this measure should be exercised within a period of three months.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Whether he is a member of Parliament or not?

The TREASURER: Oh no! Certainly not! This option will be available only to those who are members of Parliament at present or become members of Parliament in the future. Citing the member for Bunbury as an instance, he being the most recently elected member of Parliament, this proposed alteration to the law would allow him to pay contributions to the fund back to the 1st January this year and would thereby give him this year as one complete year of membership in the fund. That would, of course, be calculated as a previous year of membership in his favour in the future, provided he exercises the option to do that within three months of the date on which this Bill becomes law.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I doubt whether the Treasurer is quite right in his statement, because the Bill says that if a person is a member when the Bill comes into operation he can, within three months, pay into the fund, etc.

The TREASURER: That is exactly what I said.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But a person might not be a member three months after the Act is proclaimed.

The TREASURER: One does not have to wait three months after the Bill becomes law. The option can be exercised within two or three weeks. Of course, if the member dies or something unforeseen happens, that is his misfortune, naturally.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Would those that pay in from the beginning have to pay in again?

The TREASURER: Not unless they elected to do so. Take the member for Subiaco as another instance. She was elected about March of the year she became a member of Parliament, and she would commence to contribute to the fund when it came into operation.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: From the first?

The TREASURER: Not from the first—

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: I paid in for seven years to keep the fund going.

The TREASURER: All right. The hon. member might have done that but in doing so she started her contribution from the 1st March in the year in question. If the hon. member, after the passing of this Bill desires to pay back—in regard to the first year's contribution—to the 1st January, the Bill would give her the discretionary right to do so. If the hon. member, on inquiry, found that she did not desire to do so, there would be no compulsion. She would be perfectly at liberty to please herself and the position in regard to her membership in the fund would remain as it is now.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: That is all right. Thank you.

The TREASURER: The next amendment relates to a member who dies, leaving no dependant. Under the existing law, the fund obtains all the benefit of that member's contributions, and no money is payable by the fund to anybody in respect of the subscriptions to the fund paid by him over whatever period the payments might have been made. This Bill would place an obligation upon the trustees to pay to the estate of the deceased member the amount of contributions paid into the fund by that member, plus an amount of interest at a rate determined by the trustees.

A further amendment proposes to bring this legislation into line with that which granted a supplementation of £26 per annum to pensioners on other Government superannuation funds. Members will recollect that a few days ago we approved a Bill which had as its purpose the supplementing of pensions by granting £26 a year to those pensions already being paid to persons in this State receiving benefit from one Government superannuation fund or another. This Bill proposes to continue that principle in relation to people now receiving pensions under the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund. The total amount of money required to finance the supplementary payments will be made from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the State, and no proportion of the total payment will be made from the Parliamentary Superannuation Fund itself.

Mr. J. Hegney: Have you the number of beneficiaries under the fund now?

The TREASURER: No, I am not in a position to supply that information at the moment. The Bill proposes to amend the pension rates now set out in the Act in relation to future beneficiaries under that enactment. These proposed adjusted

pension rates will not, of course, be retrospective to apply to people already receiving pensions under this legislation. The new pension rates will come into operation after this Bill becomes law and will apply only to those members now in Parliament who come on to the fund in future. The new scale is, first of all, in relation to members who have paid contributions to the fund for a period of not less than 13 years, and the pension payable will be at the rate of £11 per week for ten years and thereafter at the rate of £5 10s. for a further ten years.

Where an hon. member has paid contributions into the fund for less than 13 years, but not less than 11 years, the pension is to be at the rate of £9 10s. per week for ten years and thereafter at the rate of £4 15s. per week for a further ten years. Where a member has been contributing to the fund for less than 11 years but not less than nine years, the pension is to be at the rate of £7 per week for ten years, and if a member has been contributing for less than nine years but not less than seven years, the pension payable will be at the rate of £4 10s. per week for ten years. Where a member has been contributing to the fund for less than seven years, such contributions will be payable to him, plus interest thereon at a rate determined by the trustees.

It might be advisable at this stage to emphasise that this is a contributory superannuation fund. There are members of the public who still believe that this fund is built up completely from contributions made by the Government. Actually, as all members of Parliament know, there are deductions made legally, compulsorily and regularly from the salaries of members as their share of the contribution towards the fund. Accordingly, members of both Houses contribute very substantially to this fund, and thereby assist to provide the pensions which are later payable to members.

It is true that, in addition, the Government makes a contribution each year; but there is nothing unusual about that. I think it might be found, on investigation of every superannuation fund, whether public or private, that the employer almost always, if not always, makes a contribution to the fund in addition to the employees concerned being called upon to do likewise.

Mr. Bovell: That is done in private firms.

The TREASURER: I have just mentioned that it applied to private superannuation funds as well as Government superannuation funds. Among other amendments in this Bill is one dealing with Section 12. On looking at the clause of the Bill which seeks to amend that section of the principal Act, I notice that

there appears to be a printer's error, or somebody else's error, in the spelling of the word "principal".

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It's a bad principle.

The TREASURER: Section 12 of the Act, as you would well know, Mr. Speaker, lays it down that a member who resigns from office before the expiration of his term in Parliament, shall not be entitled to any benefit of pension or other payment under the Act unless he satisfies the trustees that there are good and sufficient reasons why he should resign and should not seek re-election. There are also some other provisions in that section.

As a result of the operation of the Act it has been thought by an increasing number of members that this section is bad in principle, as suggested by the member for Cottesloe. It is thought that members should not have placed upon them an obligation to plead with the trustees—if plead is the right word to use—to grant approval for them to obtain the payment of their pension simply because a member for some reason, usually a very good reason, decides to resign or retire and not seek re-election.

I think members generally now consider that where a member of Parliament is qualified to receive a pension or some other payment from the fund, he should be entitled legally, without question, to receive that payment without having to be beholden to the trustees of the fund, and to obtain from them approval of his reasons for resigning or retiring. Accordingly, the Bill sets out to repeal that particular section of the Act. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, debate adjourned.

BILL—HOSPITALS ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [3.27] in moving the second reading said: The amendment contained in this small Bill will enable the board of management of the Royal Perth Hospital to borrow money so that it can purchase a property in Wellington-st. known as the Grand Hotel. The board has certain borrowing powers under the principal Act, but this particular transaction would not be covered by those powers. The property is required for use as a nurses' home. It is necessary to acquire additional residential accommodation for nurses in view of the increased size of the

nursing establishment in anticipation of the completion of the building extensions to the hospital.

As part of the financial arrangements, the board proceeded to arrange a mortgage in order to complete the transaction with the vendor. It was then that the question arose as to the powers of the board of management to borrow money. The principal Act provides that the board of any public hospital shall be deemed to have the powers of an institution within the meaning of the Public Institutions and Friendly Societies Lands Improvement Act, 1892, and may exercise, in respect of lands vested in it, such powers as are thereby given to institutions.

A board shall also, with the consent of the Governor, have power to sell, lease or exchange any lands vested in it, and to pay or receive money by way of equality of exchange. It would therefore seem the board has only the power to borrow in connection with land already vested in it. The amendment will allow the board, "to acquire land and other property and to borrow money on such security as the Governor thinks fit." We have found it necessary to secure more accommodation for our nurses. Forest House is going to be used for other purposes and the completion of the Royal Perth Hospital is shortly expected. In consequence we must have more accommodation.

It was thought that hospital boards had the power to borrow money, but on examination it was discovered that the boards could do so only if the land in question was vested in them. The Grand Hotel is not vested in the board and that is the reason for introducing the Bill. Section 17 of the Hospitals Act states—

(1) The Board of any public hospital shall be deemed to have the powers of an institution within the meaning of the Public Institutions and Friendly Societies Lands Improvement Act, 1892, and may exercise in respect of lands vested in it such powers as are thereby given to institutions: Provided that the portions of the Act requiring the concurrence of three-fourths of the members of an institution shall for the purposes of this Act be deemed to be eliminated.

(2) A board shall also, with the consent of the Governor, have power to sell, lease, or exchange any lands vested in it, and to pay or receive money by way of equality of exchange.

Clause 2 of the Bill seeks to widen the powers of hospital boards in these terms, "and to acquire land and other property, and to borrow money on such security as the Governor thinks fit." This is a very small amending Bill, but it is quite necessary. The hotel property in question, which is to be purchased by the board subject to the concurrence of the Governor,

is a very reasonable proposition and the board has gone into the matter very thoroughly. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [3.32]: I do not desire to secure an adjournment of the debate. The Bill is soundly based and I propose to support the second reading. As the Minister stated, hospital boards can borrow money only in connection with land already vested in them. The Bill will give them the power to acquire land and to borrow money on such security as the Governor thinks fit.

In Committee, etc.

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—SUPERANNUATION AND FAMILY BENEFITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 8, page 3—Add after the word "Fund" in line 35 the words, "and is further amended by adding after the word, 'marriage' being the last word in Subsection (3), the words, 'unless it appears to the board that in the particular circumstances of the case the operation of this subsection will result in hardship in which case the board may direct that the pension shall be paid and effect shall be given to the direction'."

The TREASURER: When the Bill was debated in this Chamber the question of amending the particular portion of the Act dealt with by the amendment of the Legislative Council was brought forward. The member for Cottesloe raised the point and said that in his opinion the present prohibition against the granting of a pension to widows of superannuated employees who married after they went on superannuation could be very unjust in application in some instances.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: It could apply in the final year.

The TREASURER: It could apply to a marriage which took place in the final year of service, or even after the Government employee had actually gone on pension.

When the Bill was debated in this House I undertook to have the matter examined closely and indicated that if on investigation it was regarded as being worthy of attention, a suitable amendment would be moved by the Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council.

On examination it was thought advisable to move an amendment to give the Superannuation Board a discretion in cases of this type. That amendment was moved in the Council, accepted and is now sent to this Chamber for concurrence. As the Government has approved of the amendment already and as it was responsible for the amendment being introduced in the Legislative Council, obviously it is in favour of the amendment being agreed to. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON: I would like to thank the Treasurer for having remembered to bring this matter before another place. It is gratifying to know that in the course of debate that takes place on Bills in this Chamber, even at quite a late stage—as occurred in the discussion on this matter—the Treasurer can find time to ensure that representations on behalf of certain people can be dealt with properly in another place. The amendment is humanitarian, and the fact that the board is given discretion fits the purpose quite suitably. I support the amendment.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

Sitting suspended from 3.43 to 4.6 p.m.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [4.7]: This particular Bill contains only two clauses, one providing for an increase in the salary of His Excellency the Governor, and the other removing from the principal Act the provision that is made for the salaries of Ministers, and arranging for it to be put into a more appropriate Act. I do not think anyone can disagree with the Bill, from the point of view of the amount that is being provided.

It is proposed to increase the salary of the Governor from £4,000 to £4,750. For many years. His Excellency's salary has been fixed at £4,000. I do not know for just how long, but I know the salary of the Governor has, under the Constitution Act, been fixed at £4,000. The Treasurer told us that of the proposed increase of

£750, £600 was worked out on the marginal formula which was arrived at nearly 12 months ago by the Public Service Commissioner.

These increased margins were, of course, given to the Public Service and to the teachers. There were two increases, one in December, 1950, and the other in January, 1954. All Government servants received marginal increases and, had the formula been applied in this case, the marginal increase would have been £600. It is proposed to add to this amount a further £150, bringing the total to £4,750.

When I was in London, as Premier, I discussed with the then Secretary for Commonwealth Relations, Right Hon. P. C. Gordon Walker, who was at that time a Minister in the Attlee Labour Government, the appointment of a Governor to Western Australia. I indicated the type of man we would like and told him as much about Western Australian conditions as I thought desirable. I must say he was very helpful, but he expressed the view that we were paying a pretty miserable salary, and from what I can ascertain, the salary paid to our Governor in Western Australia is much below the average of salaries paid to Governors in other parts of the British Commonwealth.

Under the circumstances I believe that even had a larger amount been provided in this case no objection could have been taken to it. Members know that Government House is the social centre of the State. Nearly all prominent visitors, either coming to or passing through Western Australia, call upon His Excellency and are entertained by him. Because of that fact, His Excellency is involved in a very much higher expense ratio than is the ordinary citizen or public person.

I suppose the Treasurer—or the Government—in arriving at this figure had a look at what Governors are paid in other States of Australia and considered the figure mentioned in the Bill to be a reasonable amount. I am not going to offer any objection to it, but I think we could at least have brought it up to a round figure of £5,000, particularly in view of the fact that the salary for this position has not been raised for many years, whilst other sections of the community have all had rises at various times. If the Treasurer feels that the figure should be brought up to £5,000 I would support any move in that direction, and I ask him to give consideration to it.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [4.14]: I do not propose to state that the increases in this case are warranted or otherwise. I would hate to say that they were not, because I would obviously be the odd man out; and if I did not agree with them, I would no doubt be asked whether I would take the increase if it were agreed to. In answer to that, however, I could mention

that I told the Premier the other night about a Labour Cabinet Minister in London who, before being appointed to Cabinet, had forcibly expressed the view that no man was worth more than £500 per annum.

However, on accepting the Cabinet post, he found that the salary was £5,000 per annum and when reminded of his previous assertion he said he had checked the position carefully and had been assured that £5,000 per annum was the rate of pay applicable to his new office and that he, for one, was not going to scab on his mates. Perhaps I could shelter behind that argument, in this case. However, the basic rate of allowance to members of Parliament—

MR. SPEAKER: Order! I think the hon. member is dealing with the wrong Bill. We are dealing with His Excellency's salary.

MR. CORNELL: I am sorry. I was a bit ahead of myself.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

MR. J. HEGNEY in the Chair; the Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Schedule IV repealed and re-enacted as amended:

The **TREASURER:** I move an amendment—

That the word, "twenty-four" in line 22, page 2, be struck out and the word "fifty-four" inserted in lieu.

As I pointed out in introducing the measure, this is an obvious error in the clause. This part of the Bill deals with the retrospective application in the payment of marginal adjustments. The retrospectivity is to the 24th December, 1954, and certainly not to the 24th December, 1924.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—JUDGES' SALARIES AND PENSIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [4.20]: I do not think that any objection can be taken to the proposed increases in judges' salaries. When introducing the Bill the Treasurer said—and I hope I quote him correctly—that if the judges had had their increases at the same rate as the marginal increases given to public

servants and teachers, in December, 1950, and January, 1954, it was quite probable that higher salaries would have been provided for judges than are now being granted under this Bill.

Incidentally, I had a look at what judges receive in other States of Australia and I found that the proposed increases still leave the salaries of our judges below the average of those in the other States. In the case of the Chief Justice, his present salary is £3,300 and under this Bill it will be increased to £4,150. In this case the marginal increase would have been £540, but members will see that a further £310 is proposed, bringing the total salary to £4,150.

I agree with the proposal that the senior puisne judge should receive something above the other puisne judges; and he is to receive a sum, I think, of £150 above the other judges. His salary will be increased from £2,900 to £3,650 and the other judges will have their salaries increased from £2,900 to £3,500. We all know that when appointments are being made to the Supreme Court bench, every effort is made to appoint an outstanding lawyer, one who has the respect of the legal world and of the public as well. Today the services of outstanding lawyers are widely sought and naturally they obtain large incomes. We cannot expect the lawyer with a large practice or a large income to make a considerable financial sacrifice in order to accept an appointment to the Supreme Court bench.

Throughout all British countries it is recognised that judges must be adequately paid. Judges' salaries have not been increased for some considerable time and the proposal under this Bill will bring them more into line with judges in other parts of the Commonwealth. I do not think I need say any more on the Bill except that I support the second reading.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [4.25]: I can sympathise with the Government of the day trying to fix salaries of people such as the Governor and the judges because of the peculiar circumstances that surround these offices. But I feel that the attention of the House should be invited to the proposals in the Bill and comparisons should be made with other States. As I understand the figures quoted by the Treasurer the other night—I am speaking largely from memory because the speech is not available at this stage—the puisne judges in this State will be brought on to the same basis as the district court judges in New South Wales.

As I understand the work of those particular judges, they have a limited responsibility as compared with the Supreme Court judges of this and other States. From the figures quoted the other evening, it would appear that, with the exception of Tasmania, our judges will be at the

bottom of the scale of remuneration as compared with judges in other States. Personally, I cannot see why there is a difference because the efficiency standard required, the standard of dignity required and the general standard of conduct required are the same in every State.

A judge is in a peculiar position inasmuch as when he accepts the post of a judge of the Supreme Court, he does, to a certain extent, detach himself from the ordinary everyday life of the community—for obvious reasons. Over the centuries the position has built up a certain dignity and special status because it is part of our British tradition that our judges should be beyond reproach; they must be men of great dignity and integrity, men whose ability is respected both by their own profession and by the public generally.

I suggest to the Government that when the question of judges' salaries is under review again, it might be worth while if the various States could, at an appropriate time—say, at the Premiers' Conference—confer in order to preserve a degree of uniformity or equity between the several States. It appears to me that if our Supreme Court judges are to be paid only on the same basis as district court judges in New South Wales, and those judges have a restricted responsibility, there is something wrong.

Mr. May: Would not that apply to many other people?

Mr. COURT: Even if it does, it does not make the position right.

Mr. May: I am not saying it does, but it would apply.

Mr. COURT: Not necessarily. It is not easy to fix the remuneration for people on this level, because they are in such a peculiar position as compared with ordinary men and administrators in senior positions.

Mr. May: But there is a big discrepancy in the salaries of members of Parliament in the various States.

Mr. COURT: I understand that that discrepancy will be adjusted during the next few days.

Mr. May: That is what I meant when I said it applies to other people.

Mr. COURT: If the hon. member wants to pursue that discussion he is on the wrong foot because, after the adjustments now proposed are made, we will be well up with the average for Australia whereas our judges will be approximately £600 below the average for Australia.

Mr. May: We have not been in the past.

Mr. COURT: I advance the suggestion and it might be worth while exploring it with the other States to see if a greater degree of uniformity can be achieved with respect to the salaries paid to our judiciary throughout Australia.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [4.28]: There are some salaries which are so important that special Acts of Parliament have to be passed to cover them to ensure that the recipients are beyond the influence of the community at large. Of course, one of those salaries is that paid to the Governor; it is considered to be so important that it requires an amendment to the Constitution Act. Until recently Ministers of the Crown were in the same category.

Under our system of government we have three principles. Firstly, there is the people and Parliament. Secondly, we have the executive, which is the Governor-in-Executive Council—the members of the Ministry also being members of the Executive Council. Thirdly, there is the judiciary. All those positions are of the greatest importance. I venture to suggest that in dealing with the judiciary we are probably dealing with the most important of them all, because a judge is appointed for life and he must have the complete and absolute faith of the people with whom he is dealing; I refer, of course, to the community at large.

The Minister for Justice: He now retires at 70.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so. If the community does not favour a Minister of the Crown, it has the remedy presented to it fairly often to do something about it. Similarly, if it does not favour a member of Parliament it can adjust that situation. But that is not the position with a judge. The practice of law in its higher realms is one that requires a great deal of ability and knowledge. It has often been said that both Mr. Menzies and Dr. Evatt were making much more money when practising at the Bar than they have received since. Had they not been public-spirited, they would have been much better off financially in carrying out their ordinary profession at the Bar. That applies equally to our judges. There is not one of our judges who would not be making a great deal more money at the Bar.

The Minister for Education: You would be that way too, I suppose.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: A lot of people have told me so.

Mr. May: What do you think?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I would not like to confide my view to the hon. member at this stage. I think we should do all we can to obtain people of the highest calibre from the community to exercise such an important function, and we will not be able to find them unless the remuneration is such as to enable those men to be attracted from their ordinary avocation at the Bar. They make a great many sacrifices. It is not possible for them to engage in business in the ordinary sense, and it is necessary for them to be aloof. They are

deprived of a great many associations and they make a great sacrifice once they go to the bench.

What attracts them to the bench is the honour and distinction that the position carries with it. It is the ambition of all members of the profession eventually to attain the honour of becoming a judge. We cannot consider this matter in the light of the number of hours they put in, although the work is of the greatest importance. I notice that in Victoria and New South Wales it is appreciated that the Chief Justice and even the puisne judges have certain duties that necessitate their having to entertain distinguished visitors from overseas. When I was Attorney General I know that that devolved quite frequently on the Chief Justice, and he was very often put to considerable expense out of his own pocket.

I think it has been customary when considering the salaries of judges to compare those paid here with the salaries paid in the Eastern States. Although some allowance has been made because of the smallness of the population, the responsibilities are no less here than in Melbourne or Sydney. The other day I noticed that in New South Wales the salaries to be paid at the smaller, new university are to be comparable with those paid at the Sydney university. This is to be done on the principle that people with equal skill should be paid the same. I would like the Government to note this.

With the member for Nedlands, I feel that some consideration should be given to the sacrifices made by these men when they accept a position on the bench. They do not accept it for the financial reward, because I know of my own knowledge that a judge would have commanded, and would have been receiving, a higher salary than that paid to him for the position he accepted. So, he does make a personal sacrifice. I hope this will be noted by the Executive Council, whose responsibility it is to adjust these matters; and I trust that the points raised by the member for Nedlands and myself will be given due consideration.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [4.37]: I have listened with a great deal of interest to what the previous speakers have said in connection with this Bill to increase the salaries of judges. There is no doubt that every man is worthy of his hire, and he should receive the highest remuneration for the service he contributes to the State. We appreciate the fact that these men, in having to interpret the law of the land, have very responsible positions. Not only must they interpret the law but they also have to mete out justice to the citizens of our State.

It is not so long ago, however, that the member for Mt. Lawley, was Attorney General; nor was it very long ago that

the Leader of the Opposition was Treasurer of the State. Accordingly, if the salaries here are below the average salaries paid, I would suggest that during the six years those two members were in office, they did not do what they are complaining that the present Government is not doing, namely, make these salaries commensurate with those paid in the Eastern States. It seems, however, that when they change from the Government benches to the Opposition, they adopt a different view altogether.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Do you know how much the salaries in the Eastern States have increased?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I know that the Commonwealth Government increased the salaries of the judges in the High Court while at the same time denying the workers the increase to which they were entitled because of the rise in the cost of living. I know that they did get a substantial increase in the High Court sphere. I have no objection to the judges here getting the full measure of reward for the services they render.

But there are a number of other professional men in this country who also render a great service, and they, too, have university qualifications. They contribute a great deal to the productivity of the country and to its wealth generally. I refer, of course, to the engineers. If there is one body of men who are starved as far as salaries are concerned, I would say it is the engineers. They are the backbone of Australia and they do not receive salaries commensurate with what is proposed in this Bill.

I have no objection at all to the increases proposed. But if the salary levels are low—and I have no doubt they are low in comparison with what is paid in New South Wales and Victoria—we must not lose sight of the fact that the resources of those States are far more considerable than ours are at present, and possibly their revenue is such as to place them in the position of being able to pay higher salaries to professional men. At one time the Leader of the Opposition and those associated with him were on this side of the House, and had an opportunity of doing something about this matter.

The member for Mt. Lawley is a member of the legal profession, and is in a position to be able to assess the value of the services rendered by judges. But he and members of his party did nothing when they were on this side of the House to bring salaries of judges into conformity with those paid in other parts of the Commonwealth. I take exception to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition and those associated with him.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Why do you take exception to what I said?

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Because the Leader of the Opposition was at one time Treasurer, and he did nothing to raise the level of these salaries to that prevailing in New South Wales; and now he is bewailing the fact that they are low—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I did not say anything of the sort.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: The hon. member was bewailing the fact—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I was not.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: —that the men in Eastern Australia—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You did not listen to me.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Of course I did! I have been listening to the hon. member for a long time. However, I am having a say now, and that is my point of view. I remember that not so long ago—about two or three years since—a judge was appointed to inquire into the salaries of members of Parliament. If I remember rightly, he did not assess the value of the services rendered by members at a very high figure.

Hon. L. Thorn: Well, they are judges!

Mr. J. HEGNEY: They can be out in their judgment in assessing salaries and wages! However, judges are an important part of our constitutional set-up. They have to be men of high probity and to have an extensive knowledge of the law in order to dispense justice. I am only too anxious to support a move to provide them with bigger salaries, but I contend that there are other professional men in this country who are making great contributions to the national well-being, but who do not receive a remuneration adequate to their status.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [4.43]: I want to make a few brief remarks on the Bill, mainly because of what the previous speaker said. He criticised the former Government for not making adequate adjustments to the salaries of our judges. I would point out that a Labour Government was in office before 1939 and onwards for a period of 14 years in all. During that time it had an opportunity to make salaries in this State equal to those of the other States.

Mr. J. Hegney: It had no money then.

Mr. YATES: Do not talk about money in those days! In 1939 it had as much money as the other State Governments had.

Hon. L. Thorn: Oodles of it—more than it could spend!

Mr. YATES: In 1939 the Chief Justice received £2,300; whereas the Chief Justice of New South Wales received £3,500. The figures for the other States were: Victoria, £3,000; South Australia, £2,500; Queensland, £2,250. The only two States in which the figure was lower than that of Western

Australia were Queensland, where the amount was £50 below that of Western Australia; and Tasmania, where it was £500 less. The other States were well ahead of us.

In 1955 the salary here is £4,150; and in New South Wales, £5,925. So there is still a big gap between the two States. The difference is approximately £1,800. The difference between the salaries in Victoria and Western Australia is £900. The figure in Tasmania has risen, and £4,000 is paid to its Chief Justice, which means that the amount here is only £150 above the remuneration in that small State.

The Labour Government had the opportunity in the past to raise the salary to a reasonable level so that succeeding Governments could have made adequate increases. It is difficult for any Government to provide a tremendous increase at any one time; the sum has to be built up gradually. We know that that applies to our own increases. I want to refute what the member for Middle Swan said about the actions of the previous Government.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [4.45]: It is very difficult to try to work out in actual £ s. d. the total value of the position of the Chief Justice or the other judges of our Supreme Court. It is equally difficult to work out, on the same basis, what should be the total salary paid to, perhaps, the Premier of the State and other people. I do not think anyone has ever tried to work out, exclusively on the £ s. d. basis, what should be paid to the Chief Justice or the Premier, or the Supreme Court judges.

I think the member for Mt. Lawley had the answer to this question when he was speaking, but did not realise the fact. He pointed out that the present Prime Minister, Mr. Menzies, and the present Leader of the Opposition in the Commonwealth Parliament, Dr. Evatt, had voluntarily given up their lucrative legal practices to take on public life in the Commonwealth Parliament. Obviously those two men felt that they were anxious to go into public life for the purpose of trying to give far better and greater service to the people than they could give in a legal practice, no matter how large it might be.

When a man or a woman goes into public life in the way they did, he or she knows that the service to be given will not be remunerated totally on a purely £ s. d. basis. They know they will receive an adequate salary, or a reasonably adequate one; and that, in addition, they will give a public service far and away above what might be covered by the salary they will receive.

The same, I think, applies to the Chief Justice of a State, and also to the other judges. When these men are offered a position as a judge, they certainly have some consideration for the salary that is

applicable to the position. But that is not their only consideration, and I doubt very much whether it is their main consideration, in deciding whether they shall accept the offer or not.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I said that.

THE TREASURER: All right; I am confirming it. They regard the acceptance of the position of a judgeship, with the possibility of some day becoming the Chief Justice, as being an opportunity to render a very special kind of public service; to assist materially in carrying out the Constitution and the laws of the State whenever the necessity arises for decisions of a legal character to be made under the laws or Constitution, and, whenever it is necessary, as a result of those decisions, to impose penalties upon wrongdoers. There is, too, a considerable amount of honour, prestige, achievement and social standing associated with the position of judge; even more so with that of Chief Justice.

We cannot possibly succeed—we would be foolish to attempt to do this—if we endeavoured to place a £ s. d. value upon these things. Men who give up lucrative legal practices to become judges know that they make a financial sacrifice, and they do it willingly. They do it because, as I said earlier, they will be rendering a very special kind of public service to the people.

The increases proposed in the Bill are fairly substantial. At the present time, the Chief Justice is receiving £3,300 a year, and in the event of the Bill becoming law, he will receive £4,150 a year. It is true that the main portion of the increase is represented by the application of the formula covering increases in margins to our Public Service. Nevertheless, the Chief Justice will become, I am almost certain, the second most highly-paid person on the salary roll of the Government. Only the Governor will receive a higher salary.

I am not here to argue the comparative value in £ s. d. of the position of the Chief Justice as against that of the Premier, but I think that if anyone did stage an argument about it, a great deal could be said to suggest that the position of Premier is one of tremendous responsibility, and one which probably requires that the occupant of the position should give a great deal more time to the duties associated with his office than would be given by the occupant of the office of Chief Justice.

However, I do not want even to suggest an argument or comparison as between the two positions, and I am certainly not suggesting that the salary attaching to the position of Premier should be higher than is proposed in the Bill which is to succeed this one. As a matter of fact, my personal view would be that the salary should be lower, but that is only by the

way. Just as the element of service to the public is very much associated with the position of Premier, so it is very much associated with that of Chief Justice.

I think the occupant of each position should be prepared to give service to the public without the necessity of feeling—or of anyone else feeling on his behalf—that the whole thing should be worked out on a hard £ s. d. basis and that the occupant should be paid every £, every 1s. and every 1d. that is thought would be applicable to compensate him completely in a financial way for the duties he has to carry out and the services he has to give.

Mr. Court: I think that applies to all forms of public service.

The TREASURER: Of course, in a lesser degree.

Mr. Court: Otherwise you could quote the terrific anomaly about the chairman of the Betting Control Board getting £3,290 as against the Premier getting only £4,000.

The TREASURER: Yes, and that is the main feature of the contention I am trying to place before members. In addition to raising the salary of the Chief Justice to the extent I have indicated, we are raising the salary of one of the other judges, who is to be known in the future as the senior puisne judge, beyond the present figure of £2,900 per annum to £3,650 per annum. This is a very substantial increase. I would not for a moment argue that it is not justified, but I think in all the circumstances it is an adequate increase.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It increases his pension rights, too, does it not?

The TREASURER: It does, indeed. Apart from the two judges to whom I have already referred, the Bill proposes to increase the salaries of the other judges from £2,900 per annum to £3,500. I think the proposed new figures are adequate. They will not involve the Chief Justice, the senior puisne judge or the other judges in any financial difficulties. I know it can be argued that the Chief Justice in New South Wales gets much more than the Chief Justice in this State, and that the other judges in New South Wales get much more than their counterparts here.

But I would say to members that if we are going to initiate a move to bring the salaries of highly-paid people in Western Australia into line with the salaries of similar people in New South Wales and Victoria, we will have some mighty big headaches. We cannot, in this situation, pick out a few of the most highly-paid people on the Government payroll in this State and decide to bring them into line with their counterparts in Victoria and New South Wales and stop there. Once we admit that principle and put it into operation, even in a small degree, I think

we automatically commit ourselves, as a Government and as a State, to carry the extension all through the Public Service.

If Western Australia, in its present stage of development, was to do that, then members opposite who have in recent days, been complaining about the large deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund for the period from the 1st July to the 31st October of this year, would be pushing the roof off this building, because the deficit would be increased to an ever so much greater extent than it was at the end of October.

Mr. Ackland: It is hardly fair to compare them with New South Wales because of the difference in revenue, population, etc.

The TREASURER: I think it is not reasonable to make that comparison, but I have approached the situation on a rather different basis. I quite admit, as the member for Moore suggests, that there are other arguments which could be put forward to establish the proposition that the Chief Justice in this State should not, in £. s. d., receive in the form of salary as much as the Chief Justice of Victoria or of New South Wales; or that the judges other than the Chief Justice in this State should not receive as much as their counterparts in the two larger States.

I know, from my practical experience as Treasurer, and I am sure the Leader of the Opposition found this out during his experience as Treasurer of the State, that there is always a sort of game going on, and it is a very grim game, if I might use the word "grim", in which people employed by the Government in one State are watching what the Government of each other State is doing on the question of salaries, annual leave, long service leave, and—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And they are very quick to act.

The TREASURER:—on the question of general employment conditions in the Government service. Once one State makes a forward move, the pressure is on throughout the Government services in all States.

Hon. L. Thorn: I found that out, as Minister for Labour.

The TREASURER: I am sure the hon. member, when Minister for Labour, found it out.

Mr. J. Hegney: Did you say "false" or "forward" move?

The TREASURER: We have to be extremely careful in dealing with a situation of this character—

Mr. Court: The other Treasurers will not be able to complain—

The TREASURER:—and I am sorry that there has been some debate about this Bill. I think it might have been better

had there been no debate about it and members had deliberately refrained from saying anything at all in regard to the second reading of the Bill covering the Governor's salary. I thought, in the circumstances, it was undesirable that there should be any debate on the Bill other than my introduction and the comments of the Leader of the Opposition. It might have been far better if the same method had been followed in relation to this Bill. However, that has not been possible, and maybe the discussion which has taken place will be to the good in the long run. I think the place for controversy is not on this Bill, certainly not on the previous one, but on the next one.

Members: Hear, hear!

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chamber; the Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 5 amended:

The TREASURER: I move an amendment—

That after the word "Judges" in line 18, page 2, the words ", whose office shall be known as that of Senior Puisne Judge." be inserted.

I think this amendment is not absolutely necessary, legally, but it is desirable as it will indicate clearly in the law that there shall be an office of senior puisne judge and that he will receive the salary set out in paragraph (c).

Amendment put and passed.

The TREASURER: I move an amendment—

That the word "subsection" in line 23, page 2, be struck out and the word "subsections" be inserted in lieu.

The reason for the amendment will be obvious if members look at the following amendment in my name on the notice paper.

Amendment put and passed.

The TREASURER: I move an amendment—

That the following subsection be added at the end of the clause:—

(1c) For the purposes of the provisions of this Act relating to pensions, the salary of any judge retiring after the twenty-fourth day of December, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-four, and before the first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and

fifty-five, shall be deemed to be three thousand four hundred pounds.

The reason for this amendment is that one of the Supreme Court judges did retire between the two dates mentioned. The marginal increase is payable as from the 24th December, 1954, and so logically the salary which was payable as from that date was £3,400 and not £2,900, which is still the figure in the Act. Therefore, it is thought that as the actual figure should have been a higher one as at the 24th December, 1954, and, of course, from then onwards, this amendment should be made.

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

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—TRUSTEES ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's amendment.

BILL—FAIRBRIDGE FARM SCHOOL ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR JUSTICE (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [5.12] in moving the second reading said: This is a small but necessary and helpful Bill. At the time of the passing of the principal Act, the land mentioned therein was vested in two societies, Fairbridge Farm Schools (Incorporated) and Kingsley Fairbridge Farm School Society of Western Australia (Incorporated)—the former being the London society. Since the passing of the Act, the land has been in the possession of the London society and managed by its board of governors.

The name of "Fairbridge Society", which is the London society, is now the "Fairbridge Society Incorporated"; the Western Australian society has ceased to exist. An amending Bill is required to give effect to the change of name and to vest the Fairbridge school property in the society under its altered name. The appropriate notation on the relevant certificates of title cannot be made unless application is made by both the English and the State bodies. The section in the principal

Act which requires this is therefore repealed and a new section enacted in its stead. The new section—

- (a) sets out the new name of the English body;
- (b) vests the land in that body under its new name;
- (c) authorises the Registrar of Titles to note the vesting on the relevant certificates of title.

As the body is philanthropic, it has been provided that this is to be done without payment of stamp duty or registration fees. I commend the Bill to the House, and move —

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.15]: The Minister was good enough to give me an opportunity of seeing this Bill, and also told me what he intended to say and why it was necessary. I agree with the Bill and have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

New clause:

The **MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I** move—

That the following be inserted to stand as Clause 2:—

Section two of the principal Act is amended by substituting for the passage, "Folio 424" in the last line of paragraph (b) of the interpretation, "Fairbridge Farm School properties", the passage, "Folio 425".

As will be readily seen, there was a mistake made in the number of the folio and this new clause proposes to correct it.

New clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (ALLOWANCES AND SALARIES ADJUSTMENT).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [5.19]: This Bill has created more interest than the two previous measures that we have discussed this afternoon. My experience is that whenever there is a move to raise parliamentary salaries, opposition is

expressed in certain quarters. I hope the time will soon arrive when we will not have, what I regard anyhow, the unpleasant task of deciding what our salaries shall be. I think it would be better if we could have some outside tribunal completely free from political influence to decide, in the future, what parliamentary salaries should be or whether any increases should be granted from time to time.

There are some mistaken ideas on parliamentary salaries held by people outside. When the salary increases were granted to the Public Service on the dates which I mentioned previously and also, when salary increases were granted to the teachers, they were considerable. Parliamentarians did not receive such increases in salary. Yet they were affected by the increased cost of living in the same way as the members of the Civil Service, the teachers and, indeed, all other sections of the community that received the benefit of those marginal increases. A member of Parliament faces expenditure additional to that confronting the ordinary citizen. He has to travel a great deal and spend much of his time in Perth away from his home. Further, he has other calls made upon him which ordinary members of the public do not have or, at least, not to the same extent as a member of Parliament.

The Treasurer, in introducing the Bill, said that if parliamentary increases had been adjusted on the same basis as the salaries paid to civil servants and teachers had been adjusted in 1951 and again in 1954, the increases would probably have been greater than those provided in this Bill. There is some discussion going on as to whether these increases are too high and reasons are being given why parliamentary salaries should be increased at the rate proposed.

During the afternoon reference was made to salaries generally as they affect the Civil Service in this State, and indeed outside that service. What we try to do in regard to salaries is to keep somewhere within the average paid in the other States. From what I can learn about this matter, such a principle, if I might describe it as one, has worked reasonably successfully. The proposed increase in the salaries payable to parliamentarians appear to me to be in keeping with the general Australian average.

With reference to the position of parliamentarians, this subject deserves some consideration when their salaries are being discussed. Most people regard security of tenure in employment as of prime importance, and I agree with that belief. No parliamentarian can say that he has security of tenure, not even members who hold what are termed safe seats today, because no one knows what will happen next in the political sphere. When I first came into this House, many of the present-day members had not been elected,

and of the 80 members who were in both Houses of Parliament at that time, only four remain today. That will give an indication of the fairly rapid changes that take place in the political life of this State.

I remember a remark made by a one-time Attorney General, the late Mr. T. A. L. Davey, in the early days of my political life. He said that political life unsuited a member for other forms of work which he might have to take up after losing his seat. I do not agree with that remark entirely because a number of ex-members have done good work after they left Parliament. I do think that in a large number of cases, particularly when they have served for a long period, ex-members find it hard to settle down to life outside of Parliament. This is a penalty which one accepts and pays when he enters political life.

In the course of his speech, the Treasurer said that no increase had been made in parliamentary salaries for a very considerable time, and that the only increase that had been granted was £300, which was termed a reimbursement of expenses. It was agreed that those expenses should be paid to members of Parliament. Some members of the public seem to hold the idea that parliamentary salaries are not taxable; of course, that is far from factual. I am not putting up the fact that these salaries are taxable as an excuse why they should be increased. I cannot do that, because everyone with a taxable income is taxable.

I have mentioned the additional expenses which members of Parliament have to pay. Looking at some of the salaries after the proposed increases have been added, I find that on an income of £4,000, the tax is £1,196. I know there are permissible deductions from that income. For a net income of £4,000 that would be the amount of tax. On a net income of £3,500, the tax would be £967; on £3,000 it would be £753; and on £2,300 it would be £482. So we can readily see that taxation will take a considerable bite out of the salaries.

There is one other matter I would like to bring to the notice of the Treasurer. It was referred to me by the member for Mt. Marshall. The base figure of the salaries of members of Parliament is subject to basic wage adjustment. The base salary is £1,000 per annum, but the adjustments have increased that to £1,360. Today the salary paid to a member of a city electorate is £1,360. If the Bill is passed, parliamentary salaries will not be increased by £700 but by £1,060.

The Treasurer: I have already drafted an amendment to cover that position.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: As this matter has been referred to me, I felt it my duty to mention it. I do not think it was

the intention of the Treasurer that members should receive an increase of £1,060, and I would not agree to it. There is no need for me to say anything more, except to refer to the proposal to pay £400 to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. If there should be another political party in the House consisting of seven or more members, that allowance will be paid to the leader of that party.

I suggest to the Treasurer that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition should receive a remuneration extra to that paid to the ordinary member. There is no doubt that he has additional duties to perform and they involve him in further expense. As Leader of the Opposition, I am glad to have the assistance of the deputy to represent me on frequent occasions at functions in different parts of the country, and also his assistance in the metropolitan area. The amount of £400 mentioned in the Bill should be paid to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I would offer no objection to a similar amount being paid to the leader of a third party when there are seven members or more in it. I do suggest to the Treasurer that he agrees to the proposal to give some extra remuneration to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Personally, I do not propose to say anything more. Those who support the Bill know what are the responsibilities of members of Parliament. Very shortly, as was pointed out by "The West Australian" today, we shall face our electors. If necessary, we can give the answer as to why we supported the Bill. In passing, I might say there is an impression outside of Parliament that members will receive the increase of £700 per annum retrospective to the 24th December, 1954. That, of course, is not correct. That is the impression given by the leading article in that newspaper.

The Minister for Housing: It definitely says that.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The public should know that is not correct. Members are to receive only a portion of the retrospective payment. I am not absolutely certain of the maximum amount that will be paid retrospectively to the 24th December, 1954, but I do not think it comes to even half of the proposed £700.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [5.35]: On three previous occasions when a Bill to increase the salaries of members of Parliament was introduced, I opposed it, and on each occasion I opposed it for the same reason.

The Minister for Education: Have you accepted the increases?

Mr. ACKLAND: On this occasion, my reasons for opposing the Bill on previous occasions do not exist. Those who were in this House before the general elections of 1947 will no doubt be aware that a

meeting of the parliamentary parties during the lifetime of a previous Parliament agreed that whoever came into office after the general elections in 1947 would introduce legislation to increase the parliamentary salaries. But as far as I know, no reference was made to the matter during the election campaign and one of the early Bills introduced into the new Parliament was to increase members' salaries by 50 per cent.—from £600 per annum to £900 or thereabouts.

I opposed that Bill because I believed then, as I did subsequently, that when a man contested a general election and came into Parliament, he entered into an agreement with his electors to represent them at a certain salary for a certain period. I have never suggested at any time that the parliamentary salary was adequate—in fact, I think members must be financial wizards if, out of their parliamentary salary, they can do their job properly and support all the requests made to them—I have always believed that the job should be paid far more adequately than it is.

On each of the previous occasions I adopted exactly the same attitude because each time it was a new Parliament that gave itself extra money. Although I was very unpopular some three years ago when I opposed the addition of travelling allowances to members, when the basic wage had been pegged, I then stated that if a Parliament going out of office was to pass legislation to increase parliamentary salaries so that those who were interested in contesting a general election would know what the salaries were to be, I would support the measure.

That is being done on this occasion and therefore I feel that I am not being inconsistent in supporting the second reading of this measure. In 1946, and the early part of 1947, the money paid to parliamentarians had a higher purchasing power than the money they are receiving today. It is impossible for a member satisfactorily to do his parliamentary work on the salary he is at present receiving, and as this Bill has been introduced in the closing hours of a parliament, anyone who is interested in standing for Parliament at the next general election, which is likely to be in the near future, will have the opportunity—

The Treasurer: The hon. member should not threaten!

Mr. ACKLAND: I consider that the Bill is thoroughly justified. We shall all be facing the electors shortly, and they will have an opportunity to approve or otherwise of what we are doing.

Personally, I do not like the retrospective provision. I know that retrospective provisions are contained in much of the legislation we have passed, and perhaps there is some justification for it on this

occasion because of the precedents that have been established, but I believe that we, as members of Parliament, are becoming to a degree quite irresponsible in the matter of the way we are allowing the cost of services to be increased. I certainly support the second reading of the Bill, because I believe that the increase is justified, especially in view of the fact that it is being mentioned immediately before the holding of a general election.

MR. CORNELL (Mt. Marshall) [5.42]: I feel like the racehorse which, having crashed the barrier, was sent to the outside of the field, because the point I wished to make has been taken by the Leader of the Opposition. However, may I be permitted to amplify that aspect a little. Under the present legislation, the basic allowance for members of Parliament is £1,000. This rate has been operative from the 1st September, 1950, since when cost-of-living allowances have been added to that sum. The cost of living adjustments, when they amount to £20 per annum, have been paid since the 23rd July, 1947.

The effect of this has been to increase the basic rate of £1,000 by an amount equal to the difference between today's basic wage and the basic wage that obtained on the 23rd July, 1947. At that date, the basic wage was £5 9s. 3d. a week, whereas today it is £12 12s. 5d., an increase of £7 3s. 2d. or, for the whole year, £380. That is the nearest figure to this increase in multiples of £20, and that has made the parliamentary allowance £1,360. This figure ignores the reimbursement of expenses also paid to members.

The increase in the allowance to £2,100 refers to the basic rate only. To the amount of £2,100 must be added the cost-of-living increases, amounting at present to £360, making a total rate of £2,460. Thus, at first blush it would appear that the increase is £740, but it really amounts to £1,100 per annum. After having listened to the Treasurer's speech when moving the second reading, it was obvious that this was not intended. I directed his attention to that aspect, which appeared to be an obvious error in drafting, and I understand that he intends to move an amendment to correct the position.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [5.45]: Obviously, more interest has been created by this measure than by any other Bill that has been introduced into the House this session.

Mr. Yates: By the Press.

Mr. NALDER: Yes, and I would say it is evidenced also by the number of members in their places while this matter is being discussed. I think we should try to evolve some formula whereby the matter of salary increases for members should not have to be brought before Parliament in

this way. I am not opposed to the measure, because I believe that members are not receiving sufficient recompense for the amount of work they have to carry out and the responsibilities they are called upon to bear. There is no doubt that the payment to members as compared with the salaries being paid outside Parliament are not comparable. I have looked up the advertisements in the Press on several occasions to see what positions were being advertised. Last week, there were three, all of them carrying a salary far in advance of what members of Parliament are receiving.

The Minister for Justice: And members have no security of tenure.

Mr. NALDER: That is so. Surely, some formula could be evolved whereby salaries could be adjusted, thus making it unnecessary for this matter to be brought periodically before the House! There is no doubt that the present method leaves a nasty taste in the public mouth. I have not gone into this question in detail, but I do think that some formula based on the basic wage, plus a margin, could be evolved whereby these increases would be granted automatically. Then the public would appreciate what was being done and members would know what the position would be when the basic wage moved up or down.

An arrangement of that description would obviate the need for bringing proposals of this sort before Parliament from time to time, and as the people as well as members would know of the formula, members would not then be brought into disrepute by the publicity given to this matter. It is right that the public should know what Parliament is doing, but this constantly bringing before the public the voting of increased allowances has an undesirable effect on the minds of the people. I hope that the Treasurer will give consideration to this idea and that at a later stage—not this year—a Bill will be brought in to provide a formula that would operate automatically and thus save the question from being brought before Parliament.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [5.49]: The frequency with which this matter has been brought before Parliament in the last decade or so has obviously been caused by the inflationary conditions that have existed during that period. While previously the question did come up for examination from time to time, these occasions were comparatively infrequent, and when this did happen the changes that were made were relatively small, just as they were during the same period in respect of the wage structure generally. Of course, the Legislature did not forget, at one stage, to recognise the difficulties then existing by decreasing the allowances of members to a very substantial extent, in common with those of all other members of the community.

It is therefore not altogether a reason for astonishment that Parliament and the Government—which has done the investigation—should be inclined to recognise the continuance of this inflationary spiral and to recollect what has been taking place in regard to remuneration paid in other and somewhat similar sections of our public life, particularly in other parts of Australia.

We, in Western Australia, I fear—it might be said to have been thought of by the Leader of the Opposition when referring to judges' salaries—have, I think, been somewhat accustomed to depreciate the services of some of our public people in that we have rarely, if ever, sought to bring their remuneration up to the level provided for their equals in other parts of the Commonwealth.

I remember that when the Teachers' Appeal Board dealt with appeals from the reclassification of teachers a few years ago, it based its decisions on a certain percentage below what prevailed as an average of the standard States. It did not, apparently, consider that the equivalent professional services in Western Australia were equal to or to be valued at the same figure as they were obviously being valued at in some of the other States of the Commonwealth.

While that was not inconvenient for the Treasury with its many financial difficulties, looked at logically, I think, and from every angle, it could hardly be regarded as fair to the Western Australian section of the profession. There have been other instances one of which, as I say, was referred to in regard to the judges, where this is still going on, and it is certainly going on to some degree, as the legislation stands at present, in respect of the members of the legislature of this State in comparison with some of the other States to which I have referred.

I do not think we are justified in willingly allowing that condition of affairs to apply and so I am going to support the second reading of this measure. But before sitting down there are one or two other observations I wish to make. First of all, I feel indebted to the member for Mt. Marshall for drawing my attention—as he did that of the Treasurer—to the points which he raised in his speech a few moments ago, and also earlier in the day. I must say that the effect of the change in the basic wage which appears in this Bill, when taken in conjunction with the wording of what one might call the parent Act, had entirely escaped my notice and I would not willingly have subscribed to a proposal which would, in addition to the increased allowance obviously proposed by the measure, have resulted in a very substantial increase above that figure.

Of course there have been, as I suppose everybody knows, some discussions in recent months between the respective

leaders of parties—and their colleagues in some cases—as to the possibility of this measure being brought forward. I want to know—if the Treasurer will be good enough to tell us, as the Leader of the Opposition did not seem to be clear upon it—whether the amount that it is proposed to pay retrospectively is, in this measure, going to be greater than the amount which was to be paid retrospectively when the Treasurer made his submission in writing to me some few months ago. That amount, I think, was £228.

The Treasurer: That is correct.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Then I have no quarrel with the retrospectivity provision—if it is limited to that amount—because I think it has been calculated on the basis of what it would have been had the award been made, as it was in other cases, approximately 11 months ago. I wish to support other members in their remarks concerning the very considerable burdens that are placed upon members of Parliament and which there is increasing proof are becoming greater every day.

One has only to consider the necessity today to run a motor-vehicle. Its cost is now five times as much as it was 12 years ago and the cost of maintaining it, I would say, is at least $3\frac{1}{2}$ times what it was then. Even with the most careful handling of such a vehicle, in the light of the normal average use of it by a member, and particularly a country member, and bearing in mind the very considerable capital cost and rapid depreciation, I would say the cost of running it is not less than between £500 and £600 per year. I might add that the vehicle is used 90 per cent. of its time in the service of the constituency and not that of the member.

The member, in the cases to which I am referring, has no desire to be dodging hither and thither and sometimes doing 200 or 300 miles per day, or even more, for his own benefit. He does it because he has reason to believe that by doing so he can give better service to his constituents—and very frequently it is at their request. So when I recollect, having quoted those figures which I think are extremely conservative in regard to the present day, the difference in them as compared with what they would have been eight or nine years ago—at which time I was keeping some very careful records—it is quite obvious that the scale of the allowance has been reaching a position of imbalance and that there ought to be some remedial action taken, provided that it is reasonable, as I am now fairly satisfied it is.

I agree, further, that it would be desirable for a method to be found to remove from the legislature the major obligation of deciding the amount to be paid from time to time and leaving it only to implement—as I think would still be necessary—by statute the decision of a responsible tribunal. I hope that careful consideration will be given to that question,

not only by any Government that may be in power after the next general election, but also by all members in this House so that we may unanimously, perhaps, arrive at some satisfactory answer to a problem which must exercise our minds from time to time and which ought to be capable of a reasonable solution.

THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [5.58]: I desire to address myself not as a Minister, but as a member of Parliament to the debate on this Bill. In the first place there is not, so far as I am aware, any great public interest or concern in connection with this measure. That is something which has been concocted by the Press on this, as on previous occasions. I wish to state frankly that during the whole of the time I have been a member of Parliament—and as the Leader of the Country Party has said—because of the circumstances there have been many adjustments of parliamentary allowances, yet there has not been one single criticism raised with me either in person, by letter, telephone or in any other way because of the steps taken.

But on almost every occasion there are gibes by the Press through their leading articles, cartoons and the rest of it. I think it is a very unfair state of affairs that members of Parliament—not we who happen to be here at the moment but members of Parliament who comprise the parliamentary institution—should have to stand up to that sort of thing. The institution of Parliament and the confidence of the people is being undermined to that extent.

The amount of allowance proposed in the Bill was not a hit-or-miss affair—it is not somebody's guess; it is a figure that is the average received by private metropolitan members of the other States of the Commonwealth. As a matter of fact, it is slightly less than the average of the other States. I had a discussion with the Chief Justice who was, on several occasions, as members are aware, chairman of tribunals which investigated parliamentary and other allowances and salaries. He informed me that if his will prevailed and if there had been another tribunal, he would have used exactly the same principle as that used by the Bill in determining the figure now before us.

I do not know on what grounds, while it is cheapjack sort of stuff, the morning newspaper can question this figure without apparently having made any investigation or serious inquiry into it. What is the position? Officers of this Parliament—and what I am about to say, let me here interpolate, is in no way to be construed as suggesting that they are receiving too much or too little; I do not know because it is a matter for somebody else to determine their salaries—the Clerks of this

Chamber, receive hundreds of pounds a year more than do members of Parliament. Those who take the "Hansard" notes receive hundreds of pounds more than members of Parliament are receiving at present.

Those who are reporting for the newspapers are receiving more than members of Parliament; and judging by what appears in the newspapers I should say that they average about two lines per head per day. In other words, Parliament is treated with the greatest disrespect. It is just as though anything that is said here, notwithstanding that it might be the culmination of many weeks or months of work, travel and research in developing new ideas and approaches to questions, is apparently unworthy of any publicity whatever. Here let me make myself perfectly plain; I have no criticism so far as I personally am concerned. I prefer the morning newspaper to forget all about me. But that is personal, and I do not intend to pursue it any further.

Hon. L. Thorn: I think they have forgotten.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: When the paper does say anything, it unmercifully distorts what I have said. But what I am saying here is not a criticism of the Press reporters in our gallery. Apparently it is the estimation of our worth placed upon us by the principals of the newspaper down in St. George's Terrace. Surely if there is a reasonable and solid basis upon which a figure has been determined, there should not be these slighting and sneering references against members of Parliament! No arguments have been adduced as to why these amounts are in excess of a reasonable figure; they have not been, because it is impossible so to do.

We have the position, and will still have the position, that there are public servants in receipt of salaries in excess of Ministers who are in control of them. Those public servants have privileges, security and the rest of it far in excess of those received by Ministers who, in the ordinary course of events, are there for only a few passing years. So I do not think that any member need have any compunction whatever in supporting this measure.

I know, and members of all political parties can bear me out, that in many cases there has been the greatest difficulty in parties inducing candidates to offer themselves for election to the Parliament of Western Australia because of the financial sacrifice they would be called upon to make if they were elected to represent the people. The other evening I was present at a meeting of businessmen and I put it to them fairly and squarely that scarcely any of them, except those who were completely and utterly independent and felt so disposed, would make a sacrifice to serve the public as a member of Parliament in this State. What state of affairs have we

reached when it entails sacrifices of the dimensions that I have mentioned in order that a person shall attain a seat in Parliament, if it be the wish of the public whom he seeks to represent!

The position is ludicrous. Because of the interest that I displayed in this matter some years ago, when members paid me the compliment of allowing me to prepare the draft of a case to be submitted to an independent tribunal, I have made it my business—since that time some 7 or 8 years ago—to make inquiries of members of Parliament. I have been astounded to learn that some have come from apparently humble jobs outside and yet their experience is that, after being in Parliament for 12 months or so, their position is worse than when they entered the House. In other words, the critics are saying that no matter whether one be a third-grade clerk in the Public Service or a salesman selling haberdashery or something of that nature in a store, it is right and proper that he should be more secure and receive greater emolument than if he were successful in being returned by the people to Parliament.

Let us have a look at the question reasonably and consider the examples I have quoted. Who, that has a mind in clear state and who thinks directly on this matter, should be compelled to say—because economic welfare does mean something to all of us, both inside and outside of this House—to his son, "My boy, it is a far better thing that you become a Hansard reporter, a clerk of parliament or a newspaper reporter. There are far greater prospects for you in those avocations than if you are elected to Parliament and serve your people, no matter how brilliant you may be in the position you hold."

I have cited those three examples because they are positions in this parliamentary institution, but I could stand here for half an hour and quote dozens of instances of people in all categories and in all walks of life whose payments for service are in excess of those received by private members of Parliament. So I conclude on the note—and other members with whom I have discussed this matter agree with me on this—that there is no public outcry in connection with this move.

It is the usual thing to crack jokes at the expense of mothers-in-law. It is the usual thing to have a bit of a laugh at the expense of parliamentarians and the parliamentary institution, but do not let us be deceived by the people who make such jokes or by those in a few quarters from whom viciousness emanates, to distort the real facts of the situation. On the occasions that I have spoken to persons on the matter, they have criticised my colleagues and myself and also members on the other side of the House by saying, "Well, the matter is in your hands. Why do not you do something about it?"

There is one other point. The members of the Queensland Parliament, in order to overcome a situation such as that which we are now discussing, had their salaries tied to that paid to a high departmental officer. Following that, there was a reclassification in the Public Service and the classification of the high departmental officer was increased by hundreds of pounds. Shortly after that, marginal adjustments were granted and the emolument of that officer was increased by hundreds of pounds again. Therefore, in a short time the Queensland members of Parliament found themselves in a complete state of affluence in *contras* with what their position was previously.

That, of course, did not stop the criticism of the Press in that State. I saw a copy of the newspaper which had headlines to the effect of, "This is a grab by politicians", and on the front page of that newspaper appeared a photograph of every member of the Queensland Parliament so that the public could see those people who were grabbing something from the public purse. After all is said and done, they were receiving merely what was granted automatically—without any question from any quarter whatsoever—under a decision given by the Public Service Commissioner or other authority for an increase in salary.

Apparently it is all right for the ordinary civil servant or the higher-placed civil servant to receive an automatic increase in salary, but when it comes to the question of an increase in the salary paid to a member of Parliament, then, in the minds of some—who obviously have no proper appreciation of the responsibilities of a man in public life and the type of man who should be attracted to serve the public—a certain amount of pleasure and satisfaction is derived from the fact of sticking the boots into those who form part of a parliamentary institution for the time being.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [6.12]: I propose to support the Bill, because when I entered this Parliament in 1930 the salary of a member of Parliament was then £600 and, if I remember correctly, the basic wage at that time was £3 7s. per week. Today, however, the basic wage is almost four times that figure. Therefore, the proposed increase that will be available to members if this Bill becomes law places at least myself—who was a member in 1930—in no better position than that in which I was in 1930.

It is true that, subsequently, because of the financial emergency then existing, the parliamentary salary was reduced from £600 to £525 in the first instance and in the second instance to £480. That reduced figure remained the salary for a member of Parliament for a considerable period until the improved economic conditions made an increase possible. Following

that, a parliamentarian's salary was increased from time to time according to basic wage adjustments in an endeavour to improve the position of members.

After I was first elected, I represented the electorate of Middle Swan, a metropolitan constituency, for 17 years and there is no doubt that it meant a great deal of work. As its representative I was available to the public at all hours, as members are aware. I remember being on duty at my home, in days gone by, from 6.30 a.m. until as late as 10.30 p.m. so that the public had full access to my services.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Before the tea suspension I was submitting to the House my position as a member of Parliament today from the monetary point of view as compared with the time I entered politics. I pointed out that it had not been improved since then, taking into account the fact that the purchasing power of money has depreciated considerably in the intervening years. I mentioned that the salary in 1930 was £600 and that the basic wage at that time was £3 7s. or £3 9s.—I think it was £3 7s. The basic wage today is £12 12s. 5d. It will be seen, therefore, that in the meantime there has been almost a fourfold increase in the basic wage without a similar increase in the salary of members.

From the point of view of the duties of a member of Parliament, there is no question but that members must make their services available much more frequently than they used to do in the days immediately past. As a matter of fact, it is well known that in better times—and I am now going back to the days before I entered Parliament—members concentrated solely on politics. They were able to study politics in its true sense, and apply it to their discussions in Parliament. But in the intervening years members have had to contend with all types of problems that have arisen from time to time.

I emphasise the fact that for 17 years I represented the largest of the metropolitan constituencies. Members will know, particularly those who represent wide areas, how much it is necessary to be on the highway to keep in touch with the various parts of one's electorate, so that the people whom we serve will be well-informed on what is happening. The services of members are freely available to the people they represent. They become intermediaries for the local authorities and for the progress associations in submitting their various problems to the departments and to the Ministers of State, apart from urging the development and expansion of their districts.

In addition to that, there are many real personal problems that electors seem to have, particularly in my electorate. In

the district I represent, I know that most of the people are workers and at times they have acute economic problems. The fact that one is able to represent the people and do a great deal of work for them, in itself gives one a great deal of satisfaction, quite apart from the monetary consideration involved. In the Labour movement, to which I have belonged all my life, oftentimes we find a consensus of opinion among many that when a worker is elected to Parliament he has an opportunity of deriving considerable financial benefit from it. After an experience of many years, I would say that nothing is further from the truth.

I feel that we should make a fair and reasonable assessment of our value. If we do not assess our own ability and capacity to represent the public in a fair and reasonable manner, and draw a comparison as to what members in like circumstances receive in other parts of Australia, I think we would underestimate our ability and capacity. We are here to represent the people of Western Australia in this Parliament, and we are called upon on many occasions to exercise judgment and make decisions on very important phases of government.

We know that the payment of members is a principle that has been established in Australia over a long period of years; since the time the first Labour members were elected to Parliament. If we consider the early history of New South Wales, we find that in the first instance no payment was made, but later there was a very small amount allowed. Those men who came from the ranks of the workers were not in a position to be elected as members of Parliament unless they worked on something else in order to help supplement their income.

Because of the intensity of the problems that are dealt with by Parliament in recent times, it is necessary for members to give more time than they used to, to the affairs of State. This also applies to members on the other side of the House. Many members of the Liberal and Country League have no other income, and they have sought to represent their various electors. To a lesser extent this also applies to members of the Country Party. Having regard to the resources available under the Parliamentary Allowances Act, I have no doubt that they find it difficult to make ends meet and keep in close contact with their electors.

Our electors look to us to keep in close contact with them. I know that my electors keep in close contact with me, and I am available to them from early in the morning till late in the evening. It is well known that members make frequent visits in their electorates with a view to helping people in difficulties. Because I devote all my time and service to the job, I think the salary proposed in the Bill before us

is not altogether unreasonable. In all the circumstances, I feel that the proposition before us is a fair and reasonable one.

It is not a question of members burgling the Treasury as the newspapers frequently refer to it, but it is an endeavour to see that members get some measure of justice in relation to their parliamentary allowances. The Leader of the Country Party referred to the cost of running a vehicle. I ran a vehicle, and the car I owned did me from the time I was elected to Parliament until recently. It became so dilapidated that I was known by my car.

People who did not know me, knew my car, and on many occasions I was asked when I was going to get a new one. The truth was that I could not afford one because my parliamentary allowance did not permit it. Many new members who have entered Parliament have young families whom they are endeavouring to rear and for whom they are trying to do their best. I assert, without fear of contradiction, that if other members are in the same position as I am in they do not make anything out of their salaries when in Parliament. I support the second reading of the Bill because it is one which metes out justice to members of Parliament.

MR. JAMIESON (Canning) [7.40]: I do not want to delay the vote on the second reading. In considering the payment of allowances in future, I would ask the Government to give serious thought to some extra remuneration being made to the Government and the Opposition Whips. I notice from the recent report of the committee that inquired into salaries, allowances and retiring allowances for members of Parliament in Tasmania, of which Mr. Justice Walker was chairman, reference is made to the Party Whips in the various States.

Rather than impose on the political parties the responsibility for payment of the Whips for their extra services in the task of keeping the House in a proper state—if members are absent, it cannot be left to the leaders to watch the state of the House—the payment of the extra remuneration should be borne by Parliament. It is high time that this aspect was given consideration. In the report of the committee of inquiry, there is one passage which seems to sum up the position clearly.

It says that members of Parliament should be remunerated for their services to an extent which should enable them to defray reasonable expenses properly incurred by them in the performance of their duties as members, and that each of them should then, to borrow the words of the recommendation of a select committee of the House of Commons in 1946, "receive a sum which will enable him to maintain himself comfortably and honourably, but not luxuriously, during the time he is a

member of the House." We must consider that a member must be paid a sum which will allow him to conduct himself in an honourable manner in accordance with the position he holds in the community. I support the second reading.

THE TREASURER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [7.44]: There is very little I want to say in reply to the debate which has taken place. Both the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Katanning mentioned the desirability of trying to evolve a satisfactory system under which the salaries of members of Parliament could be adjusted automatically to obviate the necessity for Bills to be introduced in Parliament whenever an alteration in salaries becomes necessary. There is a good deal to be said for the point of view put forward by those members.

The Minister for Housing pointed out that in one other State this system does operate in regard to parliamentary salaries. As I understand the position, there the parliamentary salaries are adjusted automatically whenever adjustments are made to the salaries of certain classes of officers in the Public Service. Whenever the salaries of those officers are adjusted as a result of expert investigation by the Public Service Commissioner, the Public Service Board, or some other authority, an adjustment is applied automatically to members of Parliament.

I understand that system is working satisfactorily, although fairly recently—I think the Minister for Housing mentioned this—there was something of a bubble because the adjustment made to the salary of the class of officers mentioned was a very substantial upward lift. There was some argument publicly as to whether members of Parliament would automatically receive this very substantial adjustment to their salaries. However, this question could be looked into very closely before the next session of Parliament; we might then give it some attention.

Next I wish to express appreciation to the member for Mt. Marshall and to others who spoke to me on the question of the cost of living content in the present salary paid to members. This angle of the situation was discussed with the Parliamentary Draftsman when instructions were given for the Bill to be drawn up. He was satisfied, when he finally drafted the Bill, that that position had been properly covered and that the cost of living adjustment already existing, amounting to £360 per annum, would be absorbed in the proposed new total salary of £2,100.

However, the query raised by members caused me to take the matter up with the draftsman. Not only did he have a much closer look at the question, but he also conferred with other draftsmen in the Crown Law Department. Out of the multiple of counsel came at least a spirit

of caution, if not a greater degree of accurate knowledge, with the result that an amendment has been drafted which is now in my possession and which will be moved in Committee.

The amendment will make it clear beyond any shadow of doubt that the present cost-of-living adjustment of £360 per annum will be part and parcel of the proposed new basic salary of £2,100 for members. There will therefore be no possibility that the law as it will be amended by this Bill will provide for a basic salary of £2,100, plus the £360 cost-of-living adjustment which applies to the existing salary. I think I have covered the observations I wished to make in reply to the debate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Interpretation:

The TREASURER: There are a couple of drafting errors on page 2. I move an amendment—

That the figures "32" in line 25, page 2, be struck out and the figures "33" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The TREASURER: I move an amendment—

That the figures "1934" in line 27, page 2, be struck out and the figures "1944" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The TREASURER: The Leader of the Opposition, in his second reading speech, put forward an argument in favour of an allowance being granted to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, even though there was in the Opposition a second party with a membership of at least seven members. Part of Clause 3 provides for an allowance of £400 per annum for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to be paid to the leader of a second party in the Opposition if it has at least seven members. Where a second party of that size exists, as it does at present, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would receive no allowance at all.

The Leader of the Opposition argued that his deputy would still have to carry out many duties and should receive an allowance. The arguments advanced have received the consideration of the Government and it has been agreed to provide an allowance of £200 per annum for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition whenever there is a second party of at least

seven members. To achieve this, amendments to Clause 3 are required. I move an amendment—

That after the word "but" in line 2, page 4, the following words be inserted:—"shall be entitled to an allowance of two hundred pounds per annum; and".

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I suggested to the Treasurer that some additional consideration should be granted for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and I support the proposal as outlined.

Amendment put and passed.

The TREASURER: A consequential amendment is now necessary. I move an amendment—

That after the word "to" in line 4, page 4, the words "that allowance instead" be struck out and the words "the allowance of four hundred pounds per annum" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

The TREASURER: The amendment I now wish to move is the one I mentioned during the second reading regarding the cost-of-living phase of the salary increase. I move an amendment—

That after the word "pounds" in line 38, page 5, the following new subclause, to stand as Subclause (5), be inserted:—

Section 6B of the principal Act is amended by adding after the word "operation" being the last word in that section, the following passage:—"and the amount of any increases effective under this section before the first day of December, One thousand nine hundred and fifty-five, shall be considered as part of the amount of the allowances mentioned in Subsection (1) of Section 3 and Subsections (1) and (2) of Section 6 of this Act."

The amendment has been worded by the draftsman for the purpose of removing any doubt which might have existed regarding the cost-of-living content of the £360 per annum now paid to members of Parliament. The amendment will make it certain that the amount of £360 will be part and parcel of the proposed new total salary for members of £2,100 per annum. It is essential that this doubt should be completely cleared up.

Earlier in the debate I mentioned that it most certainly was not at any time the intention of the Government that this cost-of-living figure of £360 per annum should be in addition to the proposed new basic salary of £2,100, but should be part and parcel of that figure. I am sure that the amendment will remove all possible doubt.

Amendment put and passed.

The TREASURER: I move an amendment—

That the section designation "6B" in line 3, page 6, be struck out and the section designation "6C" inserted in lieu.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments and the report adopted.

BILL—LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [8.5]: The Bill sets out to alter the conditions in the pastoral industry as far as improvements are concerned. The Act, as regards improvements, provides for the expenditure of £5 per thousand acres for the first five years, and £10 per thousand acres up to 10 years. The Bill makes provision for £10 per thousand acres in three years, which is more than double the amount that the pastoralist has to find for improvements because the time is cut from five to three years; and £20 per thousand acres up to six years. Here again the time is cut down.

I feel that this is going to be too harsh on the pastoral industry. It will be realised that most of the good pastoral areas in the North have already been taken up and so are alienated. Therefore we have to understand and agree that it is the poorer types of land that remain to be taken up. Whoever takes up these leases will have a hard enough struggle to succeed under the present conditions without making the terms harder.

Members will notice also that the Bill excludes the homestead which was previously taken into consideration in connection with the expenditure on improvements. We know that a pastoralist must have a homestead, and also sheds and accommodation for his employees. This means a financial burden on the pastoralist. If the homestead is to be separate from the improvements, the pastoralist will have to find the money to erect the homestead, and at the same time find double the amount for improvements. I feel that is most unfair and, as I said before, will prove harsh as far as development is concerned.

Another matter I wish to bring to the notice of members is that it was not so long ago that we sent a delegation to Canberra to ask for taxation relief for the pastoral industry in the North.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What did the Prime Minister have to say about that?

Hon. L. THORN: It does not matter what he said.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is what we want to know.

Hon. L. THORN: The point is that in the opinion of this House it was considered fit and proper to make representations to the Commonwealth Government to grant that relief.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The point is, what did he say?

Hon. L. THORN: I told the hon. member. After asking for that relief for the North-West pastoral industry, in order to give it an opportunity of making good and putting back into the stations by way of improvements what would otherwise be paid in tax, we are asked to impose these conditions. I repeat that the properties which have made good are today mostly alienated and so these provisions would impinge almost solely on those station-owners who are at this stage still trying to make a success of the venture, and would bear very harshly on them.

Another clause gives the appraisalment board power to send inspectors around to tell the station-owners to what extent they must stock their properties. Who is the best judge of what stock a property can carry?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The inspector, perhaps?

Hon. L. THORN: He is not. Who is the best judge of the condition of the station and the feed available? Of course it is the squatter, who is continually riding over the property and appraising what feed he will have for his stock.

The Minister for Health: Sometimes they overstock.

Hon. L. THORN: If the board's inspector gives the property a cursory examination and instructs the squatter to stock up to a certain number, it is more than likely that the squatter will be forced to overstock. In 1912 I was in the North—not very far north—at Booloogo station. Another young man and I took the first team of machine shearers to that area and later I went to Booloogo and worked for the late Harry Campbell.

There was a severe drought at that time and I know what its effects were. Most of our time was spent in collecting dead sheep at the water troughs and either burying or burning them. It was necessary to cut down top feed in an endeavour to keep alive what sheep we could. In the North the stock depend largely on top feed. Only the station-owner knows the condition of his top feed and to what extent he can afford to stock up. It is not likely that he will understock, as that would mean a financial loss to him and I think it is wrong that he should be instructed in this way as to what stock he must carry.

As regards spending money on improvements, I would like to see brought in a scheme—if we are to have any scheme at all—after full investigation and inquiry with regard to the improvement of leasehold properties in the North, under which certain essential improvements could be done. We now say that the squatter must spend so much per 1,000 acres, but of what use is £5 spread over the whole of the area, and what use could the station-owner make of it? The only sensible thing to do would be to improve a small area around the homestead, or wherever he thought fit, as the rest of the property—perhaps 150,000 acres—could not be touched at all. There should be some scheme to help the squatter put in his developments on a more or less full scale.

The last clause in the Bill seeks to give the Surveyor General complete power over mapping, as he now has over surveying, and I think that is entirely wrong. When I was Minister for Lands, Mr. Phil Stanley, a most efficient officer, was Superintendent of Mapping and the McLarty-Watts Government agreed to allow him to go overseas to seek the latest information on mapping and planning. He picked up a tremendous amount of information and on his return recommended to the Government that certain mapping machines and instruments be bought. We approved of that expenditure and those machines are amazing as regards the work they are capable of doing.

If we lined up every surveyor in this State we would not find one with a knowledge of mapping, so why should the Superintendent of Mapping be placed under the Surveyor General and have to submit his ideas and allow that officer to make the decision as to what recommendations should be adopted? I do not think this is a sensible provision, and I suggest to the Minister that the Superintendent of Mapping should be the chief executive officer responsible to the Minister for Lands and that the Minister keep full control of mapping.

Great strides have been made in mapping in recent years and after our department carries out the work and prepares the plans, the Commonwealth Government purchases copies of nearly all of them for its own use and information. This mapping is most valuable to our air force and from the point of view of defence. I feel that the station-owners are entitled to be given time fully to consider this measure and the effect it will have on the North. The Pastoralists' Association should be given full time to investigate and consider this legislation. It has been brought down far too late in the session for that consideration to be given to it. From the little experience I had when in office, and after examining this Bill, I shall certainly oppose it.

On motion by Mr. Rhatigan, debate adjourned.

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 15th November.

MR. WILD (Dale) [8.20]: It obviously became necessary the other evening for the Minister to introduce this Bill to amend the Marketing of Eggs Act. But I must say that I was surprised to know, when the Minister submitted the measure, that even though members were not in a position to see the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner who recently investigated the industry, the Government had implemented two of the recommendations. I do not know for how long the Government has been in possession of the report; but only a matter of an hour or so before the Minister moved the second reading on Tuesday, the report of the Royal Commissioner was placed on the Table of the House and, as a result, nobody had had an opportunity of perusing it.

I was able to see a copy over the weekend but I can believe the Minister when he says that he does not know what happened to the copies. I would probably be right in saying that I am the only member on this side of the House who has had an opportunity of having a peep at what Mr. Smith, the Royal Commissioner, had to say.

The Minister for Agriculture: The report is on the Table of the House.

Mr. WILD: It has been on the Table for a few hours only; it was presented and laid on the Table of the House on the same day as the Minister moved the second reading of this Bill.

The Minister for Agriculture: I laid it on the Table of the House as soon as I could.

Mr. WILD: I think that before I discuss the amendments contained in the Bill, it is necessary that we look for a moment at the egg industry as a whole, because I want the House to appreciate fully the deplorable state in which this industry finds itself today. In the main, it is an industry that has grown up since the war and I think, in order to indicate just how much it has grown, we should look at the figures which are contained in the Quarterly Statistical Abstract, up to September, 1954. From those figures one can realise just how much this industry has grown postwar.

In the year 1938-39, which was the year preceding the war, the quantity of eggs exported from Western Australia was 739,239 dozen. But in 1950-51, which was six years after the cessation of hostilities, that figure had grown to 2,576,067 dozen, and in 1953-54 it had grown still further to 4,734,284 dozen. So the exports had increased by 600 per cent. since 1938-39.

During the course of my remarks this evening, in order to prove my statements, I shall quote from the evidence submitted to the Royal Commissioner, and as it was given on oath I have no doubt that one can assume that it is correct. I notice in looking through the evidence that Mr. Mayo, who at the time the commission was held was general manager of the Egg Marketing Board of Western Australia, said that at that period—and this was three months ago—there were approximately 3,000 producers in Western Australia who were sending eggs to the local board. This industry has grown, I repeat, in size to such an extent that it now exports, in round figures, 4,700,000 dozen as compared with 700,000 dozen in 1938-39. It employs a large number of men both directly in the production of eggs and also indirectly in transport and in the distribution of the product; in effect, the industry has grown into one of some magnitude.

Further evidence was submitted before the Royal Commissioner to show that in the year prior to the holding of the commission—that would be in 1954-55—the value to Western Australia, from the export eggs, had grown to over £700,000. It was submitted, and admitted by the commissioner, that the industry was the sixth largest in Western Australia. In other words, the Royal Commissioner indicated that the industry returned to this State an income which placed it sixth on the list. But I think it would be fair to say that the industry has grown, since the war, on far from firm foundations.

There were many men who had given years of their lives in the service of their country and who had been regimented—some of them anyhow—for five or six years. After being discharged from the services many of these men felt that at long last they were free and that they now had an opportunity of getting into something and, with their deferred pay and what little savings they had, they could become egg producers which, as the commissioner himself said, is a poor man's industry. For the first four or five years after the war, as the figures will show, fortune favoured them to a large degree. The price overseas was reasonably high and, as a result, these fellows were able to make a fair sort of living. I will not say that they prospered but at least they were enjoying the freedom they had dreamed about for so many years.

However, some two years ago the bottom fell out of it. It would be as well for me to mention at this stage that because of the growth of this industry and the tremendous production following the increased number of producers, it is necessary for us to export in the vicinity of 40 per cent. of our total production in order to get rid of the surplus. That being so, it means we are completely dependent on overseas markets for 40 per cent. of our

income. In the past our main market has been Great Britain, but two years ago the British Government decided to subsidise the egg industry in that country and did so to the tune of 2s. per dozen. This was to increase production in Great Britain and in the year 1953-54 the Government of that country subsidised the egg industry to the extent of £22,000,000.

The result was that production in England stepped up and soon afterwards, with the cessation of Government contracts and with sales getting back to the basis of trader-to-trader, the Egg Marketing Board in Western Australia—and this applied to other Egg Boards in the Eastern States—was faced with the position of trying to sell its eggs on a subsidised market, and as a result was receiving, in round figures, only 2s. 6d. per dozen. I think I would be right in saying that on every dozen we are forced to sell to England, we are losing practically 1s., and the only person who can make good that loss is obviously the producer because, fortunately, by having a board, we have had an equalisation scheme and at certain times of the year a producer has to contribute to the fund to make up the deficiency in the price at which the exportable surplus is sold overseas.

This was a tremendous blow to the industry and the board, which has been the custodian of the egg industry in this State since 1945, was forced to regulate the local price, taking into consideration what it could get for its exportable surplus overseas and at the same time what the local consumer was prepared to pay. The result was that egg production in this State began to decline because men were forced out of the industry.

The parlous state of this industry is probably best illustrated by the evidence submitted before the Royal Commission by one of the large produce merchants in this State. This evidence appears on page 2137 of the proceedings, the witness being Mr. Jack Keith Richards, of 631 Albany Highway, Victoria Park, produce merchant. He was asked by the Royal Commissioner—

From your experience, would you say that the poultry industry is in a very healthy position financially?

He replied—

I should say it is very unhealthy.

He was then asked—

In order to allow producers to carry on, the produce merchants are finding it necessary to give considerable credit?

The answer was—

Far too much.

The next question was—

You were not very willing to give us this information, but would you tell me how many sundry creditors you are carrying at the moment?

The witness, by way of reply, asked—

Do you think that figure would be of any advantage to you?

The commissioner replied—

I think it might.

Mr. Richards then said—

The figure is somewhere about £30,000.

Earlier, he was asked by the Royal Commissioner how many poultry farmers he had on his books and in answer to that question he replied, "About 70". Further on in his evidence he was asked by the Royal Commissioner, after he had commented that it was dreadful to think that he was owed £30,000 by members of the industry—

I think you have certain individuals who owe you large sums for poultry requisites.

Mr. Richards replied, "Yes". He was then asked—

What would be the biggest?

And Mr. Richards replied—

Somewhere about £1,500.

The next question was—

What are your chances of getting this money?

Mr. Richards replied—

They are pretty remote at the present moment. The only hope I have is if they happen to sell out, and, of course, they cannot sell a losing proposition.

That is a pretty fair indication of the state of the industry today. Conditions in the industry now are practically the same as they were when that evidence was given about three months ago. In this State, we have had, since 1945, an Egg Marketing Board, and, while the Premier may not be very interested in fowls, I am hoping he will take notice of what I am about to say to him. If he were to eat two more eggs per week—as we would like every individual to do—we would not have any surplus production to send overseas and the result would be that we would not have a merchant appearing before the Royal Commission and giving evidence that he was owed £30,000 by poultry farmers.

The Premier: Before I commit myself, will you tell the House how many eggs per week you eat?

Mr. WILD: I eat quite a few because a poultry farmer has quite a lot of cracked eggs on his hands and, as I am a half-bred Scotsman, my wife puts them before me fairly frequently.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Some time ago, the posters displayed that the Premier had eggs for breakfast.

Mr. WILD: Over a period of years, the board has had its difficulties. Although I am only a very new producer, I have represented a poultry farming district for the nine years I have been in Parliament. I do not know how my constituency compares with the district represented by the member for Middle Swan or that represented by the member for Canning, but I would say that, proportionately at least, I would have as many egg-producers in my electorate as any other constituency. So I have been able to keep fairly close contact with poultry farmers over a period of time.

As with all primary producers, I think they always have a grouch. When things have been bad, particularly in a period such as the last 12 months, they have looked for an Aunt Sally, and on this occasion the Aunt Sally is the board. I would not say that the board is everything it should be, but, without fear of contradiction, I say that there is no hope for the industry in Western Australia unless there is a board. Eggs are a perishable commodity. They are a commodity that just does not keep.

As I have told the House before, 40 per cent. of the egg production in this State has to be sold somewhere else, outside Western Australia, and somebody has to handle that surplus. Somebody has to be in a position to sell it in England, Indonesia, Malaya or some other country, so that it can be drained off. The Royal Commissioner had many pertinent comments to make—and I think the Minister will agree with them, if he has had an opportunity to read the report—especially about the board. I repeat that, while I agree with many recommendations made by the Royal Commissioner—I agree with him to the extent that there must be a board—I still think there is considerable room for improvement.

Therefore, when the Minister introduced this amending Bill the other evening, he picked out only two plums, as it were, from the five or six recommendations. When I say that, I want members to appreciate that many more recommendations were made by the Royal Commissioner, but only five or six could be implemented by legislative action. The rest could be implemented purely by administrative action. However, on only a cursory glance—on the Minister's own admission, because the report had been in his office only about a fortnight before the Bill was introduced—

The Minister for Agriculture: It had been examined by me.

Mr. WILD: Yes, but the Minister merely picked out two points only. He said, on the one hand, "We will give the board five years" and, then, on the other hand, he said, "The board will have control of eggs from the producer right down to the consumer."

The Minister for Agriculture: That is exactly what the Bill is.

Mr. WILD: Why pick out those two recommendations when there are other major recommendations? I think that is totally unfair. I have given a great deal of thought to this question, not only in my own interests but in the interests of other producers. I came into the industry when it was at its depths, but having gone so far with my preparations, I felt I could not go back, and so I decided to go onwards. With the other producers I have either got to sink or swim.

This industry has thousands of men in it. There are 3,000 men sending eggs to the Western Australian Egg Board. There is every opportunity for the industry to be revitalised, but there are a number of major problems to be dealt with. In my view, the report put up by Mr. Smith, the Royal Commissioner, is one of the best I have seen during the nine years I have been in Parliament. It is a most comprehensive report. Without doubt he went into every angle of the industry, and when members have an opportunity to read the report, I am sure they will agree that he has given a leavened and well-balanced judgment on an industry that is having a bad time.

So I would say to the Minister that when he picks out these two plums, he cannot expect me or the Opposition to accept them and leave the rest of the recommendations. We want the industry to continue under the aegis of the Egg Marketing Board. We believe in the board, but we must have more than just the two recommendations the Minister has picked out from the report of the Royal Commissioner. Not only can the industry be helped in this State by a good board administratively, but the industry itself can help. There must be a co-operative effort.

The Royal Commissioner made great play on the quality of the eggs. Again, that is something in which there must be a co-operative effort. Firstly, there must be co-operation on the part of the producers. They must be induced to market their eggs more frequently. Then again when the eggs reach the board, they must be sent out more expeditiously. The other evening I heard the member for Subiaco talk about stale and rotten eggs that came from the board. I do not say for one moment that the board does not at times send out stale eggs, but if the retailers would have a look at their own house, they would find that it is not always in order when it comes to putting out stale eggs.

I have a permit, like other producers, to sell eggs to certain stores. I have found that when I have taken along a case of eggs to a store, they still had some of the eggs that were delivered the week before. If one does not visit the store for a week, and they still have eggs from the

time before, they place the new eggs on the filler at the bottom and eventually somebody finishes up by getting eggs that are two or three weeks old. When this happens people look for an Aunt Sally and, of course, blame the Egg Board. It is not the Egg Board that is to blame, however, but the retailers themselves.

Some very pertinent evidence was given by a witness who was apparently able to keep an eye on eggs that had been delivered to a particular shop. He was able to do so because the eggs had cat foot-marks on them. The witness concerned visited the shop day after day and those eggs were still there three weeks later. But if a customer had been given those eggs he would have blamed the board. In most cases it is not the board that is to blame, but the retailer. That is one of the many problems that must be overcome in order to improve the industry.

I would like to get back to the position of the producers for a moment. We must play our part. We not only have to produce fresh eggs and get them into the board as frequently as we can, but, in order to bring the price down for ourselves and to lower our cost of production, we must produce more eggs per bird. In that connection I am hoping we will be able to thank the research station and the Department of Agriculture that has put up the station at Herdsman Lake.

The improvement in the number of eggs per bird is something that will not be achieved overnight. It will take a number of years, but at least we now have a foundation. I would like to tell members that in Western Australia we average roughly 150 eggs per bird per year. The postwar figures for England—and they have endeavoured to improve their output—have gone up to 165 eggs per bird per year. The figure for the Netherlands is 200 eggs, whilst in America they are getting close on 300 eggs per bird per year. This all goes to show that by research and by looking after one's genes and by getting the right parent stock, it can be done.

Whilst it can be said that I was complaining about the surplus of eggs, I would point out that I am for the moment concentrating on what would be a lower cost to the producer. For the same amount of labour and for the same amount of feed, he would be getting a large increase in output, and would be able to market his eggs at a cheaper price. This is one of the many factors that should go towards stabilising this industry.

As I mentioned when I heard the Premier muttering about fowls under his breath, I would like to repeat that if we could only get every man, woman and child in Western Australia to eat two more eggs per week per person, we would not have to export any eggs at all. We would not have to sell those eggs to England at a loss. They would all be put out in this

State, and we would have a healthy and prosperous industry. I am afraid I am not able to agree with the Minister's contention that we should have just these two matters he has picked out.

Mr. Heal: Are you proposing to submit amendments?

Mr. WILD: Yes, I do not agree with having the board regulate the price of eggs singled out on its own, together with the continuance of the board for five years. As members of Parliament I think it is our duty and responsibility to have a good look at that report. I have seen it and the Minister for Agriculture has seen it, but I would say that only the two of us have read it.

Is it right to ask members on the other side of the House to follow their Minister, or for me to expect members on this side of the House to agree with me, without their having seen or read the report? It is the responsibility of members to have a look at this report and then give their considered vote. It is something that will virtually determine the future of the egg industry in this State.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not see any amendment on the notice paper.

Mr. WILD: It is a very small amendment and refers to the life of the board. I do not agree with the principle adopted by the Minister for Agriculture in picking the currants out of the cake. The Royal Commissioner made several recommendations and it is not fit and proper that this House should be asked to pick out two of those recommendations and accept them on the Minister's suggestion after he has given the report only a cursory glance. The Minister admitted as much.

We agree there must be a board to handle egg supplies in Western Australia. At this late stage we should give the board one more year to carry on, so that the Government in office, whether it be the present Government or members now sitting in opposition, can bring before the House in the next twelve months a Bill to amend the Marketing of Eggs Act, by which time all members will have had an opportunity of perusing the report of the Royal Commissioner and arriving at a balanced judgment.

The Minister for Agriculture: Suppose you tell the House the four or five recommendations that need legislation.

Mr. WILD: The first recommendation requiring legislation is an alteration to the financial position. The commissioner also recommended a report by the Auditor General to Parliament, which provision is also contained in the Marketing of Eggs Act in South Australia. He made pertinent reference to the fact that it is fit and proper for the Auditor General to report to the House each year on his investigation on the financial position of the Egg Marketing Board.

The second recommendation was the question of the duties of the board. In this regard it is only fit and proper that I should read what he did say about the board. He said—

It has not been difficult to ascertain from the minutes and otherwise that the board has not always been a happy family. A very excellent contrast is the Potato Marketing Board which appears to work very harmoniously. The Egg Board has been too inclined to divide into sections and the cleavage between the producer and consumer representatives has been most marked. This is a bad thing when the chief object of the board is to sell eggs and do the fair thing by everybody in the community—producer, retailer and consumer.

The chairman of the board was originally a consumer representative and the producer members seem to regard him with suspicion. On one occasion an actual motion of no confidence in the chairman was moved, seconded and carried.

At this stage it is necessary to speak frankly and I hope without offering offence. Mr. Harvey, in addition to being chairman of the Egg Board, is—

- (a) A councillor of the Cottesloe Council,
- (b) chairman of the Beach Works Committee,
- (c) The Cottesloe representative on the Local Government Association,
- (d) The Local Government Association representative on the Library Board,
- (e) A member of the Town Planning Board of Western Australia,
- (f) A journalist by profession.

I am of the opinion that considerable time and energy are required from the chairman of an organisation like the Egg Board, and if Mr. Harvey is to continue as chairman he must shed some of his other duties.

He went on to say that this was an industry which produced for Western Australia £2,000,000 a year.

Mr. Heal: What does Mr. Harvey do in his spare time?

Mr. WILD: The hon. member has illustrated the point.

Mr. Brady: What does he receive as chairman of the Egg Board?

Mr. WILD: He receives £275 a year.

Mr. Brady: He would not give a lot of time for that amount.

Mr. WILD: That is not the point. This is an industry returning to the State £2,000,000 a year, and all that can be paid to the chairman of the board is £275 a

year. Can one wonder why the industry cannot get a good job done by the board chairman? The Royal Commissioner pointed out that here was a big industry with a part-time board, a part-time chairman and five part-time members. In reply to the Minister's question to me, I would mention that the Royal Commissioner also recommended this—

I very early formed the opinion that the present method of constituting the board was unsatisfactory and that the only qualifications for appointment thereto should be integrity and proved commercial ability. Since making up my mind about this, I have had the opportunity of reading the Lucas Report in detail and I think it sets out very aptly and better than I can put into words the principles which should be followed in constituting commodity boards such as the Egg Marketing Board.

I therefore recommend that the Minister for Agriculture be empowered at his discretion to appoint four members to constitute the board. The Minister has an overall picture of the industry and those engaged in it, with the result that it is within his province and ability to appoint the best men. I should imagine that he would probably select some or all of the members from within the industry, but he should not be fettered in any way, as better and more capable men may be offering from outside.

I have only read the recommendations. To my way of thinking, after reading the evidence, there are many more matters which need legislation than the two picked out.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you agree with that recommendation?

Mr. WILD: I do. We should have such a board but we must pay for the services of the members. This is an industry with a £2,000,000 turnover yearly. If a firm, say Boans, had a turnover of £2,000,000 a year it would not hesitate to pay £5,000 or £6,000 a year to the chairman of its board. The Government might say to Mr. Harvey, "Get rid of all your other jobs and we will give you the job." With an industry of this magnitude, we need a keen businessman to manage it. We are dealing with a delicate industry. A forecast has to be made months ahead, and consideration must be given to what the English market will be. The seasonal conditions of this State will also have to be considered. This industry needs the services of a top-rate man to direct it.

The Minister for Agriculture: Of course, we have top-rate men on the business side now.

Mr. WILD: I am in no way doubting the integrity of those at present on the board. What I am saying is that the Royal Commissioner has recommended

that this industry, because of its magnitude, requires a full-time board chairman, a man of proved ability.

The Minister for Agriculture: You do not agree with producer representation on the board?

Mr. WILD: I do believe in producer representation, provided the right men are obtained. No doubt the Minister will agree that there are plenty of us who are excellent in our particular avocation, but that qualification does not make us good businessmen. This is a big industry and we should be prepared to pay a good salary for the services of a good businessman to direct it.

To sum up, I say that we on this side of the House are not prepared—and I hope the Minister will agree with me—to merely pick out two recommendations of the Royal Commissioner at the eleventh hour of the parliament session and pass legislation dealing with them. It is only fit and proper that the recommendations should be considered in their full perspective. I propose to do this in Committee but I ask the Minister to agree now to carry on the board for twelve months and then as early as possible, irrespective of the colour of the Government, a Bill could be brought forward, taking into consideration all the recommendations.

The Government might not agree with all of the recommendations, but at least it should have an opportunity to consider these matters. When the Government decided to appoint the Royal Commissioner, doubtless it did not do so with the idea of indulging in eye-washing and let him spend two or three months examining witnesses and preparing a report, only to say after a quick look at the report, "We will take up these matters this session." I feel sure that the Minister, just as much as I or any other responsible person, would desire to have a good look at the report and then come to the House with something concrete. If he did so, he could be assured of the support, not only of members of this party but also of the people generally.

At this stage, I intend to support the second reading, but in Committee I shall ask the Minister not to press the three earlier amendments relating to the fixation of prices by the board, which would not be fit and proper, and instead of extending this legislation for five years at one fell swoop, allow the board one year more so that in the interim we can give full consideration to the report and recommendations.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [9.11]: The member for Dale has given some idea of the magnitude of the egg industry in this State, and I do not propose to say much along those lines. I agree with him that we as members have not had much opportunity to study the report of the Royal

Commissioner as a result of his inquiry into the industry. Since the suspension for afternoon tea today, I have given some little time to glancing through the report, obtaining a little information and checking up upon some of the points that have been raised. Unfortunately, I have not been able to contact many of the poultry farmers in my electorate, although some have taken the trouble to ring me and express their opinions.

Then again, the member for Dale told us how the egg production side of the industry had increased very sharply in the postwar years and quoted some figures. I think he quoted the year 1954-55 when the exports were valued at £750,000 odd. In the year previous, it was over £1,000,000 which indicates that this is an industry of no mean magnitude. Like many other primary industries, however, production in the egg industry is seasonal. During the flush period of the year, there is a very large surplus, which is demonstrated by the fact that it has been necessary to export 41 per cent. of the production either in shell or pulp. The export season is of comparatively short duration, and during other parts of the year, it is not possible for the production to keep pace with the consumption side, and it is not unusual to chill eggs during the time of plenty and make them available for consumption during the time of shortage.

Thus members will appreciate that there are many problems associated with the organisation and management of the egg marketing side. If it were simply a matter of over-production right through the year, the solution would be easy, because the production could be cut to keep pace with the consumption. This, however, is impossible, as I have mentioned, because part of the year there is difficulty in getting sufficient eggs, while in the other part of the year there is a huge surplus.

Although it is a fact that overseas credits are built up to some extent by the egg exports, the fact is that the eggs are very often exported actually at a loss to the growers. In order to keep the growers solvent and make the industry worth while and equate the price of the exported commodity with the price of that consumed locally, an equalisation pool charge has been imposed. This charge has at times amounted to as high as 8d. per dozen, though the yearly average has varied from 1½d. to 4½d. This in itself is one reason why eggs are inclined to be very dear to the consumer, for this charge must be included in the retail price.

When the export of eggs to Britain was seriously curtailed last year, the Commonwealth Government appreciated the fact that the industry was in a bad way and made available to it a sum of something like £250,000. Of that Western Australia received approximately £15,000. However, that amount was not of great

assistance to our producers, but it did show that the Commonwealth appreciated that the industry was in a bad way.

As to the composition of the board, it at present consists of three producer representatives, two consumer representatives and the chairman. The report gives instances indicating that the members of the board are not altogether a happy family. Unfortunately, it seems to be sectional, the producer and consumer representatives battling to gain a victory the one over the other. I understand that at present the board is working more harmoniously. Perhaps there is a possibility of its members realising that their duty is to consider the interests of the industry as a whole and not simply to represent the particular sections. If the members of the board can bring themselves to appreciate that fact, I believe they will work together in much greater harmony.

Members of the board must realise that the more eggs consumed within our borders, the better the chance the poultry farmers have of making a living. On the other hand, if the price of eggs is forced to too high a level, it puts the commodity beyond the reach of many consumers, and they either go without or become backyard producers, keeping a few fowls to supply their own requirements. My own experience is that it is a rather short-sighted policy because, what with the price of feed, particularly buying in small quantities, and the trouble incurred, it would be found, if all the costs were kept, that they were very dear eggs even though produced in the backyard. That is a point which the board must consider. If it can keep the price down to the consumer, but still allow it to be above the cost of production so that the grower can make a living, then it will automatically overcome the competition that it now suffers from the backyard producer.

During his speech, the member for Dale criticised the Bill inasmuch as he said it was dealing with only two of the recommendations of the commissioner as against the five points on which he suggested alterations. With regard to the control of the price of eggs extending right to the consumer, although I am not altogether happy about price control as such, it does seem that there are possibilities of keeping the industry in a much more stable position if this is allowed. This principle is operating successfully with milk which is controlled by the Milk Board.

Just recently I heard of an instance where the Milk Board showed its authority when a certain milkman in my district told his customers that because of the bad state of the roads the cost of delivery was excessive and therefore he was going to put up the price of milk by, I think, 1d. per

pint. This was brought to the notice of the Milk Board which promptly told the man concerned that he could not do it.

The evidence given to the Royal Commissioner showed pretty conclusively that there was a possibility of reducing the price of eggs to the consumer if the board had control of the margin charged by the retailer. In fact, the commissioner states in his report that the retail margin in Western Australia is the highest of any State in the Commonwealth. The commissioner said—

If the retail price is analysed, it will be found that the present margins are very remunerative, and there is considerable substance in the suggestion that a maximum margin of 6d. per dozen is ample.

In fact, the margin charged by the retailers varies from 7d. to 9d. and, on occasions, it has gone up to 10d. per dozen. This shows that the retailer is apparently on a very good thing.

The commissioner's notice was also drawn to the fact that there have been one or two retail wars when the retail margin was reduced by 2d. and even 3d. a dozen on the figures quoted. Apparently the retailers could still make a living by reducing their charges. It was pointed out to me that the retail margin at the present time is proportionately much higher than it was in the pre-controlled marketing days when there was no board. The retailer then was satisfied with a much lower margin in proportion to what he is getting now. So I feel that this portion of the Bill is well worth supporting, although I would prefer to have the opinion of a few others on it. However, the evidence given to the Royal Commissioner was very conclusive on the point.

On the question of the continuation of the board, the Bill suggests that a period of another five years is desirable. I would not be happy to reduce it to one year because that would hamstring the board. It would not know whether it was to continue or to go out at the end of the year and that would not be conducive to its long-term planning. I feel that the board has, during the time that it has been in operation, gained of a lot of experience and it has made alterations to fit in with that experience. I consider it should be allowed to continue for another five years.

The other recommendations can be studied, and possibly amendments could be brought down next year or the year after as we are able, with more certainty, to predict their effect. I support the second reading and, as the amendments to be moved by the member for Dale come along, I will consider them. At the present stage I feel I can support the Bill as it stands.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE
(Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply)
[9.17]: During my introduction of the Bill, the member for Subiaco wanted some information regarding the capital expenditure of the board. I have been able to get quite a bit of information which should indicate not only the tremendous amount of money that has been invested in the marketing side of eggs, but also the board's solvency, and just who is responsible for the payment of the money.

When in 1947 the board took over from the old controller, who was a Commonwealth officer and handled the business on behalf of the Commonwealth in all the States during the war years, there was a large sum of money in existence, and it was distributed amongst all the States for the purpose of establishing State boards and marketing systems. This State received no less than £55,000. So the hon. member will easily see where this undertaking found the nucleus of its initial capital. It was something that was passed on to the State and it was not a charge on the community or the producer. It came direct from this centrally controlled fund that existed during the war years under Commonwealth legislation.

The fixed assets of the board in land and buildings are as follows:—

	£	£
Fremantle	34,714	
Welshpool	1,296	
Bunbury	9,669	
Narrogin	3,266	
Geraldton	354	
		49,300
Equipment and machinery at most of those places	43,167	
Motor vehicles	3,963	
		47,130
Total fixed assets to date	96,430	
Current assets—		
Consumable stores, stocks, sundry debtors, cash at bank		193,918
Total assets	290,348	

That information will give a clear indication, I think, of the solvency of the control of the industry on the marketing side. We can see how soundly it was originally based in 1947, and those who have followed the industry and the marketing system from then till now will know that there has never been any increase in those assets without a proper backing for all the money used for that purpose. Even at the present time, although it may seem that they do not need too much more money, there is still a desire to keep this

organisation solvent and, as I explained the other day, of the 4d. deducted for administration, handling and grading charges, 3d. is still subtracted in case any further developments are needed in other parts of the State similar to those at Bunbury, Geraldton and elsewhere.

Not only is this board soundly based but also its influence goes all over the State where eggs are produced for market. I am somewhat concerned about a number of matters mentioned this evening by the member for Dale, and I wonder if he was sincere in suggesting that we should have an opportunity of studying more closely the other important recommendations of the commissioner which require legislation. If so, it is a wonder to me that he rejected the first two because the continuation of the board for five years was a definite recommendation of the commissioner, who also recommended that power should be given to the board to control prices up to the retailer and consumer stage—

Mr. Wild: Why did you pick out only those two?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Plenty of reports of different kinds have come to this House but no Government is bound to accept all the recommendations contained in such reports. It selects those which it thinks the more urgent. The hon. member referred to the need for the Auditor General to come into the picture more closely, and I agree with that entirely, but that is not a matter of such urgency as giving the board extended life.

Mr. Wild: I am prepared to give it extended life.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member said he did not want the board at all in its present form. He said that in answer to an interjection I made. He does not approve of producers being on the board.

Mr. Wild: Do not misquote me, and get it straight right here and now that I did not say that at all. You asked, did I agree with there being a producer on the board, and I said that I did.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member does not agree with the present set-up at all.

Mr. Wild: I said it should be a board upon which there were businessmen.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, where no person is elected by the people in the industry.

Mr. Wild: I said I agreed with the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner that the Minister—

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is what it is.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. Wild: I do not like the Minister misquoting what I said.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is exactly what the recommendation is. I asked if the hon. member agreed with the commissioner's recommendation, and he said, "Yes."

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister must address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so, but I felt I must correct the hon. member.

Mr. Wild: You should speak the truth and not make false statements.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am not making false statements. The point is that it would be ridiculous to give this board a life of only a further 12 months. What state of mind would the members of the board be in during the next year, wondering whether every action they took was going to be closely scrutinised and subjected to criticism by people like the member for Dale, who apparently has not given the matter much thought?

Mr. Wild: You have not given it any thought.

Mr. Ackland: There has not been much opportunity to give the matter thought, as we have not seen the report.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Considering that we have only just received this report, it is necessary for the House to decide whether it will give further life to the board, and that is the main reason for this Bill being before the House.

Mr. Wild: We agree with that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: But the hon. member does not. He wants to give the board 12 months' life while they shiver in silence—

Mr. Wild: In order to ensure that the matter comes up again for debate.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If the member for Dale and others who think along the same lines wish to make any alterations to the personnel of the board, this provision of the Bill extending the board's life for five years will not prevent them doing that next session.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Yes, it will, because the others will be appointed for that period.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Not necessarily.

Mr. Yates: But they will be.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: What is wrong with having a system, as we have in all our other marketing bodies, where about half the number of members are appointed by the people producing the commodity and the others are appointed

by the Government in order to see that there is a proper balance in administration? We do not have to agree to everything that a Royal Commissioner recommends.

Mr. Wild: But you have barely had time to examine the report.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have had a very good look at the report.

Mr. Wild: You have not had time to examine it thoroughly.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not see how the hon. member thinks he can do any good by speaking at the same time as I am trying to speak. I kept quiet enough while he was speaking.

Mr. Wild: I will remain quiet if the Minister will refrain from making misstatements and misquoting me.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am putting before the House the fact that the Government decided to bring this Bill down in its present form, and I say, in answer to the hon. member, who evidently cannot keep quiet, that his suggestion of only one year's extension of life for the board is ridiculous and not worthy of a poultry farmer, which he claims to be. I do not believe there is any other person in the industry who would agree with his view, and I have a letter here from the Poultry Growers' Association of this State, recommending that the term of office of the board should be not five years but 10 years. That shows how much the member for Dale is out of step with the people with whom he works in the industry.

Mr. Wild: That is all right. Carry on.

The Premier: The member for Dale does not work.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: We have reached the point where the hon. member wants the life of the board extended by one year, and his fellow-producers want the term to be 10 years, while the Government has decided to accept the recommendation of the Royal Commissioner—which is not acceptable to the member for Dale—of five years. That is a matter we say is essential in regard to this Bill. It is not very fair to quote slightly the fact that there is a chairman who has a number of occupations other than that as chairman of the board, which entails remuneration of something like £275 per annum—

Mr. Wild: I quoted the Royal Commissioner word for word.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member had to say it, in order to quote the Royal Commissioner, and I am referring to what he quoted. I say it is not a fair outlook, in comparison with other considerations. One of the greatest

Government industries in the State today, the State Housing Commission, which only last year spent almost £12,000,000—as against the £2,000,000 handled by the Egg Board—has a part-time chairman drawing £200 per year, for the simple reason that he has an expert staff under him, just as the Egg Board has. Why is it necessary to have a board over an expert staff except to see that there is a balanced policy in regard to marketing? That is all these men do.

Mr. Wild: It is evident that the Minister has not examined the evidence.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
Do not start telling lies.

Mr. Wild: I have examined the evidence, which I have here.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:
I cannot help it if the hon. member does not like what I am saying. I have the right to reply to what he said and I say he is trying to do a very wrong thing. I can understand the hon. member not agreeing with the principle of allowing the board to control prices as far as the retailer, because he belongs to a party which would never agree to that. But that does not necessarily mean that the policy or principle of it is wrong. It could be right, and we think it is right; and so we say, first of all, that this board ought to be given the confidence of this Parliament for a time that will enable it to carry on its policy, which it cannot do if it is given a life of only 12 months. We have suggested five years, and no doubt in everybody else's opinion that would be reasonable, bearing in mind that it is a normal period for administration purposes; for instance, the formation of this board under the original Act.

In regard to the latter portion, as to whether the board should have the power to control or fix prices and decide what the consumer shall pay for eggs, I think it is abundantly clear from what the member for Darling Range just said, that the margin charged by retailers for the selling of eggs is higher in this State than in any State of the Commonwealth. In most costs and charges, such as buildings and other costs, New South Wales usually has the highest figures in the Commonwealth, but in New South Wales the retailer gets only 5d. a dozen margin and 1d. a dozen is charged for cartage. In this State the costs are as high as 10d. per dozen because we work on a percentage basis instead of a flat rate.

We are the people who have said in effect, to these retailers over the years—because we have had to agree to it and there has been no power in the Act to do otherwise—"You can go ahead and charge just as much as the margin will allow you because the wholesale price of eggs is so

much and you are allowed a 15 per cent. margin." But when we reach the stage where eggs are costing 6s. 1d. a dozen, members can well understand why the ordinary people cannot afford to buy eggs. The retailers have received as much as 10d. or 11d.—certainly 10d.—for every dozen eggs sold.

I have already indicated how these costs can be reduced, but the member for Dale gave us a thesis on the poultry industry and took us on a trip all round the world. It was interesting in its way, but it had nothing to do with the Bill. If he is honest about conditions in the poultry industry, as he says he is, he could very well take a portion of that margin of 15 per cent. and give it to the people who produce the eggs. That is exactly what is set out in the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. But evidently the member for Dale and those sitting with him do not like that; the Government does like it and that is why we have brought forward these amendments to the Act. We have an opportunity now to do two important things for this industry. One is to give power for further administrative work by the board and the other is to give power to the board to declare what price the consumer shall pay for his eggs.

Next year, as the member for Dale said, whichever party occupies this side of the House can implement the other recommendations in the report. The member for Dale did not mention all of them. He said that there were four or five, but he took pretty good care to mention only one or two. There will be sufficient time next year, whichever Government is in power, to go into the other matters. Most of the recommendations—and some of them are only suggestions and are not recommendations at all—can be given full consideration by whatever Government occupies the Treasury Bench. The two amendments contained in this Bill are two matters in which this Government believes and are based on two recommendations of the Royal Commissioner. There are two recommendations, out of a number of others, to which the member for Dale seems to be favourably disposed, but he is not in favour of those in the Bill:

So if anyone can tell me that the member for Dale is consistent in his attitude or in his arguments in this matter, I do not know what the word means. I have no doubt that if this Bill is carried in its present form it will do what it sets out to accomplish. It will be a good thing, not only from the point of view of the industry, but also from the point of view of restoring or attempting to restore by legislation the confidence in the board which to some extent must be impaired when we hear arguments such as we have heard in the Chamber this evening. It

would be better to kick out the board right now rather than to give it a life of only 12 months and allow it to shiver in silence wondering when the axe will fall.

How could we expect it to work well and efficiently for the people it represents—the producers on the one hand and the consumers on the other—if it lives in such a state of uncertainty? So I hope the House will not agree to the amendment foreshadowed by the member for Dale in his second reading speech.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Brady in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 5 amended:

Mr. WILD: Clauses 2, 3 and 4 are all related and the first refers to the interpretation of retail, and that is tied up with the board having the statutory power to fix the price of eggs from the producer to the consumer. So I think on this particular clause we can express our differences. The Royal Commissioner, in recommending a five-year life for the board, at the same time recommended that the board be newly constituted. Therefore, one point cannot be separated from the other.

It is of no use the Minister saying that I picked out only two matters and he picked out only two. I say they are both related and that is why the Opposition will not have a bar of it. The incoming Parliament should be given an opportunity to have a look at the recommendations and give them due consideration. As the Minister admitted, only two on this side of the House, the member for Darling Range and myself, have had a chance to look at the report. We on this side agree with the Royal Commissioner's recommendation of a five-year term, but that is linked up with his recommendation that the board be reorganised. By taking one point without the other, the Minister is not adopting the Royal Commissioner's recommendation. As I said on the second reading, I am not prepared to accept only two of the recommendations without looking at all the others; so do not let the Minister misquote me.

I quoted two matters that the Minister did not mention; he mentioned two others—the five yearly period and the question of controlling the price—and the other two that I mentioned dealt with the changing of the personnel of the board and the Auditor General's report being laid on the Table of the House. That makes four points and the fifth concerned the accounting system.

The Minister for Agriculture: That can be attended to.

Mr. WILD: I oppose the clause because I want the incoming Parliament to be given an opportunity to have a look at the report as a whole.

The Minister for Agriculture: That does not stop you from considering the two points.

Mr. WILD: I am considering them. If by any mischance—I do not think there is even a possibility of it—we are still in Opposition in 12 months' time, we will be debarred from attempting to change the personnel of the board, because Mr. Speaker would not allow us. It would mean that payment would have to be made to people and that, of course, would result in money being taken from the Treasury. The Minister, by proposing a board that is to have a tenure of five years, debars the incoming Government from carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commissioner.

If the Minister had been sincere, why in the name of fortune did the Government spend £5,000 or £10,000 of the taxpayers' money to appoint a Royal Commissioner and then, when the Royal Commissioner submits his report, pick out only two points which have relation to the platform of the Minister's party? Why do only that? The Government might have saved itself all that expense. I oppose the clause.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I do not know what I am about to say actually relates to the clause. First of all, I thank the Minister for the information he supplied. However, has the £3,000 mentioned by him been expended on buildings, machinery and plant for the board or does it include the wages of the board's personnel?

The Minister for Agriculture: No, that is for expenditure on fixed assets.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: How much more does the retailer pay as a result of that £3,000 having been spent?

The Minister for Agriculture: He does not pay any extra.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: In that case, where did the £3,000 come from? Does not the consumer supply that money that has been spent? Eggs could be bought for a penny each less, I believe, if that money had not been expended.

The Minister for Agriculture: In the long run the consumer actually pays for everything, but the producer pays back to the board part of what he obtains from it in sales, and a portion of the total contributions is used on buildings.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Yes, and the result is that the housewife has to pay more for eggs which, in turn, leads to decreased sales.

Mr. ACKLAND: I wish I was a little better informed on the legislation now before us. It is a pity that the Minister did not give us an opportunity to peruse the Royal Commissioner's report before the Bill was introduced. I know that the egg producers want the board retained and have asked that its tenure be for a period of ten years instead of five. I agree with the Minister in principle when he refused to accede to the request made by the member for Dale to appoint businessmen on the board instead of producers who, in the first instance, own the eggs.

If there is to be good management, the personnel of the board dictates policy more so than matters of administration. Knowing that the producers want the Egg Board to remain in operation for ten years instead of five, I am inclined to support the clause. It is part of my policy to support any move which allows producers to have representation on any board.

Mr. WILD: I would like to clear up this point that has been made about producers asking for a ten-year period. The only reason they have asked for a longer period is that they are desirous of establishing a floor of their own at a cost of £250,000. The Royal Commissioner, however, said that he would recommend that the board remain in operation for a further five years but only on the condition that it was reconstituted.

He also said that he was not prepared to agree to a period longer than five years because at the end of that period the industry should be given the opportunity to determine whether the board should continue. I think the suggestion by the producers to establish a floor of their own is a wise move, taking the long-range view, but to implement it a ten-year period would be required because, obviously, they would have to approach a bank for finance and no bank would agree to advance a loan if the board had only a short-term period.

The Minister for Agriculture: How much of a loan do you think they would raise for a one-year period?

Mr. WILD: I made the suggestion that the board should remain in office for twelve months merely for the purpose of giving us an opportunity to peruse the Royal Commissioner's report. Furthermore, the Royal Commissioner has recommended a five-year term with a reconstituted board.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are trying to break down the primary producers' authority.

Mr. WILD: I am not. The Minister is completely off the beam.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am only using your own words.

Mr. WILD: We should bear in mind that it is the Minister who is going to select the personnel of the board if it is reconstituted as recommended by the Royal Commissioner.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am not going to say whether there should be price-fixing of eggs or not.

The Premier: Will the hon. member please speak up?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am not going to say whether there should be retail price-fixing of eggs or not. But I do say that the consumer is rightly interested in this question and so are the retailers. Either we must have an independent board or all interested parties should have proper representation. The retailer is not given any representation on this board. I know that in South Australia, the Government there decided that it would not give the board power to fix the retail price for that very reason, which, of course, was that the producers wanted strong representation on the board. The Government there said, "If you are going to fix the price to the consumer, and he has an equal interest in getting the eggs, surely the housewife is entitled to some consideration?" Is this board a suitable one to do the price fixing? The finding of the commissioner is that it is not. He said that if the board were to be given the authority, there must be an independent board, so that it would not be swayed one way or the other. I think the member for Dale put the matter clearly. Perhaps the Minister wants to give such a board power to fix the price to the retailer and the consumer.

The Minister for Agriculture: I know where he stands now.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is a lot the Minister does not know. He is not worried about the housewife at all but only the producer.

The Minister for Agriculture: You never read my speech.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I listened to the Minister. He did not say one word in the interests of the consumer.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is exactly what I did say.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No. The Minister wanted to take something away from the retailer and give it to the producer.

The Premier: The member for Mt. Lawley should be the last one to talk about the interests of the consumer. Only the other night the hon. member argued himself blue about price control.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: There is room for a division of opinion there.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I think hon. members had better address the Chair.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I think so, too, Mr. Chairman. If any organisation has an absolute monopoly—

The Minister for Agriculture: You still do not know what you are talking about.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: —we ought to see that those in authority are independent of any influence. Are they in this case? Of course not! If three people who are not producers recommended a reduction and the producers say "No," the answer will be "No." Where does the consumer come in? He pays the higher price until the producer yields merely because he cannot sell all his eggs.

The Minister for Agriculture: If what you say is true, how did the board effect a reduction recently?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not possible to get a reduction without the agreement of the producers.

The Premier: Was there a substantial reduction lately?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes.

The Minister for Agriculture: That shows the producers are fair-minded.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not suggest they are not fair-minded. They are elected, however, and everyone naturally looks after his own interests, even the Minister himself. Let us give some thought to an independent board and consider whether it should control the price from beginning to end, in view of the fact that it controls a statutory monopoly.

The Government of South Australia would not give the board there the right to fix the retail price because it was not a sufficiently independent board. Had the Government here been genuine in this, it would have dealt with the board and we would have been in a position to consider the other point. All we want to achieve is justice to the consumer, the retailer and the producer, and it cannot be done with this type of board.

Mr. OWEN: I think the producer representatives are alive to the fact that they must sell as many eggs as they can at their price for the good of the industry. The more eggs we can sell in Western Australia, the better it will be for the industry. So with that thought in mind, the producer members will do their best to keep the price down to the consumers. In recommending that the price be controlled to the consumer, the Royal Commissioner also states that he is not in favour of price fixing by a prices commissioner or a tribunal but that he was in favour of the board controlling that margin. The idea is to keep the price as low as possible to the consumer in order to boost the sale of eggs. This would benefit the industry as a whole.

Clause put and a division taken with the following result:

Ayes	25
Noes	17
Majority for	8

Ayes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Doney	Mr. Molr
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Heal	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Owen
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styant
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May
Mr. Lapham	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Gardeil-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Mann	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Tonkin	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Sewell	Mr. Hill
Mr. Rhatigan	Mr. Nalder

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 3 and 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Section 40 amended:

Mr. WILD: I shall not go over all the ground again. This clause affects the period recommended by the commissioner. I agree with it, subject to reorganisation of the board. A few moments ago we heard how the producers did not want a rise in the price of eggs. I want to reveal to members that when the price of eggs was increased to 6s. 1d. per dozen—and this is in the evidence of the Royal Commission—the chairman, Mr. Harvey, who had the balance of power on the board, was not present. I am a producer and I can tell members that producers want as much and more than they are getting today.

On the occasion when the price was increased, the producer representatives on the board numbered three against the two consumer representatives, because of the absence of the chairman, and they did more harm to the home consumption of eggs in this State than any other act done in the previous 12 months. The sale of eggs in the metropolitan area dropped by from 20 to 30 per cent. in the following week because the housewife refused to buy eggs at 6s. 1d. per dozen. That increase was brought about by the action of the producer representatives.

It is in evidence that Mr. Harvey said that he was not present at the meeting, and when asked if he agreed to such a rise he said he preferred not to comment. It was the action of my fellow producer representatives who put the price up to

6s. 1d. per dozen. This was the most unwise thing they could have done. This board should only be extended to act for 12 months to enable every member to have a look at the findings of the Royal Commission. One feature which requires careful consideration is the reconstitution of the board. After that is done, the term could be extended to five years. If we are to have an efficient egg board we should give it some permanence.

The present time is not opportune to legislate for five years, when the Minister, after a cursory look at the report, decided to introduce the Bill. I guarantee that the Minister has not read the report and evidence as often as I have, yet he has picked out two currants out of the cake, so to speak, and drafted legislation to cover them. My reason for saying that the term should be one year is that the Minister should have another look at the recommendations so that next year he can put before the House a well considered Bill.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Like a number of other members who have spoken on this Bill, I have had no chance of seeing the report of the Royal Commissioner. Any member, whether he favours this Bill or not, is entitled to make some protest. There is important legislation being brought down at the last minute of Parliament and the Government is forcing its ideas on members. Why does the Government want this extension for five years? I do not know whether any changes are contemplated in the personnel of the board and I do not know whether the terms of the existing members have run out or not.

Here in the dying hours of Parliament and on the eve of a general election, the Minister comes forward with a proposal that the life of the board should be extended for five years. Surely it is a reasonable enough proposition if we agree to extend the life of the board for one year. Members on this side are not opposing the continuation of the board. There is no opposition to that. The member for Moore himself said that he has not had a chance to look at the report, and like myself he has practically no knowledge of it, yet this Government takes up the attitude that it wants a five-year extension.

The Minister for Agriculture: That has been the usual practice since the beginning of the Act.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: In view of the commissioner's report, which should be read by every member, what harm would there be in continuing this board for 12 months and when Parliament reassembles again, consideration could be given to the full report of the Royal Commissioner. We shall then have some independent ideas of what the commissioner proposed.

The Minister for Agriculture: We have not heard too many ideas from your side.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am expressing my own views at present.

The Minister for Agriculture: This is the first time I have heard you trying to destroy a marketing board.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am not trying to destroy any marketing board. The Minister is trying to score politically by his remark. I do not oppose any marketing board. I do say that in view of the near end to this session—

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not blame you for trying to back up the member for Dale. He has made a mistake. Because you are his leader, you are backing him up.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am backing up a principle. Members will agree that this is rush legislation introduced at the close of a session. The Government wants an extension for five years when we on this side will agree to an extension for one year to allow a full consideration of the matter when Parliament reassembles.

Mr. WILD: I wanted previously to move an amendment. I do so now. I move an amendment—

That the word, "fifteen" in line 35, page 2, be struck out.

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

Ayes	....	....	....	....	16
Noes	....	....	....	....	25

Majority against 9

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Sir Ross McLarty
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Court	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Roberts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Doney	Mr. Moir
Mr. Graham	Mr. Norton
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Heal	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Owen
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Styants
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May
Mr. Lapham	

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Perkins	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Hill	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Nalder	Mr. Rhatigan

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agree to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

LOAN ESTIMATES, 1955-56.*In Committee.*

Resumed from the 8th November, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Votes—Railways, £4,000,000; Tramways and Ferries, £50,000; State Electricity Commission, £1,000,000; Public Works, £3,535,350; North-West, £804,650; Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage, £1,275,000; Mines, £173,000; State Housing Commission, £1,852,000; Agriculture, £50,000—agreed to.

Vote—Forests, £100,000:

MR. COURT: A few days ago, I asked the Minister for Forests whether he had seen an article that appeared in a local journal dealing with the future problem of timber supplies in this State. It indicated that by the year 1980, with the normal development that would occur in this State, we would be faced with a very considerable shortage of timber, both softwoods and hardwoods, in spite of the valuable forests that we have and the present pine-planting programme. The Minister was good enough to give a fairly comprehensive answer to the question, but could not be specific that the problem would be overtaken and that we would avoid a deficit of timber for the use of this State by 1980 and a very considerable import problem of timber of various sorts from other parts of the world.

In the Estimates, provision is made for an amount of £100,000 for pine-planting in 1955-56, and I am wondering whether the Minister can supply further information as to how the department hopes to deal with this problem, which seems to be inevitable by 1980, if not before, unless a considerably increased amount of money is made available from loan funds or revenue for an increase in pine-planting and forestation generally.

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS: I appreciate the interest displayed by the member for Nedlands in the question of timber supplies. My feeling is that a great majority of people in this State believe that land is not being fully utilised or developed unless it is cleared and used for grazing, stockraising purposes or the production of crops, little appreciating that actually a timber stand is another form of crop, but one that takes considerably longer to mature or reach the stage of economic use.

The position in Western Australia is somewhat better than was thought to be the case by the Royal Commissioner who inquired into forestry and timber matters here several years ago. Through aerial photography and other activities of the

Forests Department, it has been ascertained that there is more marketable timber in some of the southernmost areas of our forest country than was originally thought. In addition, the Land Utilisation Committee has been carrying out investigations as a consequence of which, as I indicated earlier this afternoon, in the last 12 months 370,000 additional acres have been added to the State forests. A recommendation has also been made by that committee for the addition of a further 160,000 acres to our State forests; and it is thought that when investigations proceed a little further, another 400,000 acres will be added.

MR. COURT: Is that jarrah and karri?

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS: Jarrah, karri, wandoo and marri, in connection with which there are likely to be some developments in a very short space of time, in appreciation of the fact that the timber can be commercially used.

MR. COURT: Do I gather from your remarks that it is now possible to determine from aerial photographs whether the timber is marketable?

THE MINISTER FOR FORESTS: That is so. As a matter of fact, what can be ascertained from the air is nothing short of remarkable. From aerial photographs it is possible to establish the types of timber, the density of it and, almost with precision, the volume that can be removed. In any event, all of what I have said indicates that there is a much greater timber potential of our natural hardwoods than was thought to be the case a few years ago. Because of that, the Conservator of Forests has expressed the opinion that the permissible cut for the State can be raised from 800,000 loads a year to 900,000 loads. That, of course, because of the growth of our population and the demand for timber—bearing in mind that the consumption of timber in Western Australia is almost at the top of all the countries in the world on a per capita basis—would still not be sufficient to meet all the demands made upon it.

For that reason we do require, for general and special uses, to develop timber which grows and matures far more rapidly than our own. This brings me to the point specifically raised by the member for Nedlands: The need for more pine plantations. The goal of the Forests Department is some 200,000 acres of pine plantation in Western Australia, but at the present moment we have only in the vicinity of 20,000 acres. So we have a long way still to go. There is some physical limitation to what the department can undertake.

It is thought that the present allocation of loan funds, of approximately £100,000 a year, could, with great advantage to the State, be doubled and the figure made £200,000. Representations to this end are, of course, made to the Treasurer, but there are requirements in so many different directions that he finds it impossible to make the full allocation in every instance where money is sought. Apropos of this, if I am still Minister for Forests next year, it is my intention to endeavour to arrange for a tour by members of the timber growing and forestry areas generally, because I feel that only by such steps can a full appreciation of what is being done and what needs to be done, be driven home in the minds of members.

If this is done, it will have the effect all the way through—even to the Treasurer of the State—of emphasising the need to ensure that Western Australia has adequate timber supplies in the future. I do not know that I can usefully add any more to what I have already said except that the Forests Department is seeking additional funds. It is well aware of the need for additional pines because the species, *pinus radiata*, grows rapidly to maturity when it can be used. The position, however, is held somewhat in the interim by the fact that supplies of timber greater than was thought a little while ago have been located. In addition, as I have already outlined, further areas are being added to the State forests.

Mr. COURT: I wish to—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I point out that the Minister has replied and the hon. member has no further right to speak.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Other State Undertakings, £1,425,000; Sundries, £233,000—agreed to.

This concluded the Loan Estimates for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

BILL—LOAN, £11,604,000.

Second Reading.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 8th November of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Treasurer in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 7—agreed to.

First Schedule:

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Could we have some information about the additions and improvements to opened railways and the £850,000 provided for rollingstock?

The TREASURER: The additions and improvements to opened railways would relate mostly to reballasting, relaying, the purchase of new steel rails, ballast, sleepers and so on. The new rollingstock item would relate largely to some rollingstock still to be delivered from England and particularly, I think, to diesel locomotives. The £850,000 would be the authority required from Parliament for the expenditure of loan funds involved in the payment for that rollingstock.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Under "Public Works" there is an item of £1,000,000 referring to country areas, town water supplies and loans to local authorities and water boards. I presume the greater part of that deals with the comprehensive scheme.

The Treasurer: Yes.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: What other town water supplies would be involved? Further, we see "Loans to Local Authorities and Water Boards." For what purpose are the loans being made available? Are certain towns installing their own schemes at present and receiving assistance from the Government?

The TREASURER: There are several town water supplies upon which loan money is being expended this year—towns such as Bridgetown, Wongan Hills, Carnamah, Collie and a number of other centres. As the Leader of the Opposition suggested, most of the expenditure would relate to the comprehensive water scheme on which the amount estimated to be expended from loan funds this year is, I think, in the vicinity of £700,000. Loans to local authorities and water boards would be in respect of local water supplies not carried on directly by the Government. In those instances the Government makes money available from loan funds to the local water board where some addition or extension to the local scheme might be required.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Another item, £220,000, refers to drainage and irrigation and I presume that money is being used for extensions to the irrigation areas and maintenance work there. What proportion of that money is being spent on irrigation? Drainage is creating considerable interest in many districts. I know that some of this money will probably be spent in the metropolitan area and some of our larger rural towns but I would draw the Treasurer's attention to the bad state of affairs in relation to drainage in certain

country districts. I was alarmed to hear the Minister for Works say in this House—it also appeared in a report on a deputation—that there was no money available for drainage.

Drainage is a very important item and in some areas of the South-West certain farmers are facing greatly reduced production owing to lack of drainage. Members with a knowledge of agriculture know that land water-logged year after year cannot be developed and the longer it is left the greater the damage done. In the circumstances, I would have thought greater efforts would be made to provide money for drainage in areas where it is urgently needed. Farmers have complained to me about the drainage rate and, in fact, the drainage rates have gone up steeply this year.

There is a graduated system in regard to land drainage and a number of farmers have expressed to me their concern about the steep increase in rates and have complained that they are not being given value for the rates they pay. I know there is a drainage appeal board to which they can appeal if they think they are not getting justice in regard to the rates they pay but, apart from that, I feel there is an obligation on the Government to provide efficient drainage particularly in the water-logged areas.

If the shortage of loan funds is the plea, I should certainly say that the money would have to be provided on an urgent priority list to carry out drainage in the areas that are seriously affected and where production is being retarded. I would be glad if the Treasurer would give me some information in regard to that item.

The TREASURER: The printed details of the Loan Estimates on page 5 indicate that the money provided under this heading is to finance preliminary work associated with the raising of the wall of the Wellington Dam, developmental work in the Harvey No. 2 irrigation area and improvements to the main Collie irrigation channel. Members will know that it is proposed to raise the retaining wall of the Wellington Dam to enable the capacity of the dam to be increased from 7,500,000,000 gallons to, I think, 35,000,000,000 gallons. As far as I know, there is little or no money in the Estimates for drainage work and I think it would also be correct to say that little or no money has been provided for this purpose for some years.

The demand for so many other undertakings has been so urgent that no Government has found it possible, in the last 10 years, to provide money for drainage. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that the long winter and the far-above-average rainfall which we had this year

has high-lighted considerably, in some areas, the necessity for drainage work. However, it would be impossible for the Government, during this financial year, to make anything but a very small sum of money available for drainage purposes.

Mr. BOVELL: I am very disappointed to hear the Treasurer say that no money will be made available for drainage work this financial year. For many years efforts have been made to drain the Boyanup-Capel area and certain plans have been made by the department with a view to effecting the necessary work. Pressure has been going on for some years to secure adequate funds to do something in this area. Now we are informed, at this late stage, that nothing will be done during this financial year.

It is necessary, I feel, to drain this country. Full details are with the Public Works Department and in replies to questions I have submitted to the Minister over the last two or three years, I have been encouraged to believe that action would be taken to carry out drainage work in this area. I hope the Treasurer will give further consideration to this matter and formulate some proposals so that the necessary drainage work in the Boyanup-Capel area, which is adjacent to the Preston River, can be carried out.

The TREASURER: I will give some further consideration to the matter and I would also suggest to the hon. member that he again represent the particular district to the Minister for Works.

Mr. Bovell: Thank you.

Mr. COURT: I wished to ask some questions in regard to item No. 27 but as the Minister for Forests is not in the Chamber, I think it would be better if I deferred my queries until speaking on the Forests Department estimates.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I would like some information in regard to item No. 28, Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry, £20,000. I want to know in what direction the money is being spent. Also, under the item dealing with the Rural & Industries Bank there is a sum of £600,000—this comes under the heading of "Other State Undertakings." I want the Treasurer to tell us why this sum of £600,000 is necessary in the Loan Bill. I know that loan moneys have been provided previously for the Rural & Industries Bank, but could he tell us what proportion of the money will be used for agricultural expansion and what is likely to be used in other directions?

My reason for asking this question is that I feel a careful view must be taken in regard to the money provided by the Rural & Industries Bank to assist certain industries. From previous experience we know that the bank has been a heavy loser

in regard to advances that it has had to make to assist certain industries and because of that fact, it has suffered from a shortage of funds with which to help primary industries. While I know that its function is also to help secondary industries—and I agree with that principle—I still contend that its principal function is to assist in the expansion of primary industries.

The Government has committed itself to an expenditure of £2,000,000 to assist the dairying industry in the South-West, and I know that it is making special representations to the Commonwealth for assistance on a £ for £ basis. But should that fail, the Treasurer has told us that it is still the intention of the Government to provide a large sum of money to assist and rehabilitate the dairying industry. Would I be right in presuming that a good deal of this money, if not all of it, would have to be advanced by the Rural & Industries Bank? The total sum in this Bill is £800,000 and I would be glad if the Treasurer could tell us how this money will be spent.

The TREASURER: At the moment I am not in a position to give information regarding details of the £600,000, but I will obtain it and make it available. In connection with the charcoal iron and steel industry, the expenditure has to do with the installation of further ore-crushing and other plant at Koolyanobbing and Wundowie and also for some improvements to the blast furnace at Wundowie.

As members know, most of the iron ore now used at Wundowie comes from Koolyanobbing, which is some 30 miles north-west of Southern Cross. The proposed expenditure this year is being made to effect economy in the handling and crushing of ore at Koolyanobbing and the expenditure which will be incurred at Wundowie is normal in order to make some improvements to the plant there so that it may operate much more economically than at present.

Mr. COURT: I refer the Treasurer to item no 31 which deals with the Rural & Industries Bank and delegated agencies—industrial guarantees. I would like him to indicate the nature of that particular item.

The TREASURER: As I understand it, the item covers guarantees which are made for industrial development propositions. Periodically, the position arises where a firm requires some accommodation to expand, perhaps, its operations in order to take in some additional plant, and through the agency section of the bank the advance is made or, if it can be so arranged, a guarantee is given.

Mr. COURT: This agency would not pay out a guarantee, would it?

The TREASURER: I think not.

Mr. COURT: I was wondering whether there would be any allocation of funds.

The TREASURER: As far as I am aware, there would be no guarantee given by the bank where a person, given a guarantee by the bank, had fallen down in his business activities. However, I will check the point for the hon. member before next Tuesday.

Hon. D. BRAND: In regard to item No. 34 I was wondering whether the Treasurer could advise us in regard to the position of Cockburn Cement Pty. Ltd. We know that £500,000 was advanced within the last financial year and from a remark made by the Treasurer recently a further application for £500,000 had been made but had not been acceded to because of the shortage of funds. Is the company being held up with its development or is it finding its own capital for the time being?

The TREASURER: There has been no hold-up in its development. The industry is now in production as the member for Greenough knows, and the product is now on the market. The finance of the company has been arranged from London by the chairman of directors—if that be his correct title—Mr. Redditch. He has, during the currency of this financial year, asked the Government to make available a further sum of £500,000 in cash. He was in Perth a few months ago and he discussed the matter with me at the time. On that occasion I told him, as I have told him in writing on two or three occasions, that the Government is not in a position, this financial year, to advance any further actual cash to the company. He has accepted that situation but has asked the Government to keep the matter under consideration and to review it periodically.

First Schedule—put and passed.

Second Schedule, Third Schedule, Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

Third Reading.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.