BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 18th November.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [8.13]: I obtained the adjournment of the debate to examine the Act, and I think that the amending Bill will be of great assistance to the department and will straighten out the position in the country, where the present shop districts overlap chiefly in road board and municipal areas. I think it would be an advantage where there is divided opinion in regard to early closing and the annual weekly holiday. The Minister mentioned Busselton, where there was some confusion, and said that people living in another township had the right to vote in the Busselton district, in which they had no particular interest. I should imagine that if there was a keen opinion with regard to the weekly holiday or closing on Saturday, it would be awkward for people who had a genuine right to vote on such a proposal. I therefore think the Bill should be passed and I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

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

That the House at its rising adjourn till Tuesday, the 25th November.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 8.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 19th November, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

HOUSING.

As to Privately-Built Homes at Bassendean.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON (on notice) asked the Premier:

On the 31st July, 1947, the following Notice of Motion was given, and subsequently lapsed:—

That all papers having reference to the selection of sites—tenders and acceptance of same—together with all inspectors' reports and the ultimate occupation by tenants of two houses erected by private contractors and now occupied, at Barton Parade, West Road and Deacon Streets, Bassendean, be laid upon the Table of the House.

Can he give an assurance that the subject-matter of the proposed motion will be investigated by the Royal Commission now sitting, and state whether the Commission, in its report, will embrace a reference on the selection of the sites for the homes stipulated, and the erection and occupation of same?

The PREMIER replied:

As the Royal Commission has been appointed and the terms of reference gazetted, the inquiry is now outside the jurisdiction of the Government. It is suggested that the hon. member should approach the Commission with a view to submitting any evidence he may desire.

SUPERPHOSPHATE WORKS.

As to Co-operative Establishment at Albany.

Mr. NALDER (on notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Would he be interested in the establishment of a superphosphate works at Albany?

(2) In the event of a co-operative company being formed by primary producers, would he make a suitable site available for the establishment of a superphosphate works?

(3) Would he offer any financial encouragement to the company until it reached full production capacity?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Negotiations are now proceeding with an established superphosphate company for the construction and operation of a superphosphate works at Albany. Should these negotiations break down, every consideration and assistance, including financial assistance and the making available of a site, will be given to a co-operative company provided, after investigation, the proposals of such company are proved to be sound.

(3) Answered by question (2).

NURSES.

As to Number Employed by Metropolitan Doctors.

Mr. NALDER (on notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Health:

(1) How many (a) trained, (b) untrained nurses are employed by medical practitioners in the metropolitan area?

(2) How many are double-certificated?

(3) Is it correct that some medical practitioners employ more than one nurse?

(4) If so, how many of these are double-certificated?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) This information is not available to the Minister for Health.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) Answered by No. (1).

(4) Answered by No. (1).

BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

1, Electoral Districts.

Introduced by the Attorney General.

2, Coal Miners' Welfare.

Introduced by the Chief Secretary.

3, City of Perth Scheme for Superannuation (Amendments Authorisation).

Introduced by Mr. Needham.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

1, State Housing Act Amendment.

2, Optometrists Act Amendment.

3, Town Planning and Development Act Amendment.

4, Commonwealth Powers Act, 1943, Amendment.

5, Commonwealth Powers Act, 1945, Amendment.

MOTION—ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [4.37]: I move—

That on and after Friday, the 28th November, the House, in addition to the days already provided, shall meet for the despatch of business on Fridays at 2.15 p.m., and shall sit until 6.15 p.m., if necessary, and, if requisite, from 7.30 p.m. onwards.

This motion is necessary because we are—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Not getting on very well!

The PREMIER: We are not getting through the business as quickly as I would like. It is not much more than a month to Xmas and I am anxious that members should be home a few days before that time.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The member for Mt. Marshall talks too much.

The PREMIER: I do not want to encourage members to talk unnecessarily.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: If you stopped those followers of yours you would get through quicker.

The PREMIER: I suggest that the hon. member might have a word to say to some of his colleagues. If possible I do not want members to have to meet after 6.15 p.m. on Fridays, but it all depends on what progress we make with the business of the House. There is a fair amount of matter on the notice paper, and it will take us all our time to get through it before Christmas, according to the progress we have made lately.

Hon. A. H. Panton: With a couple of all-nighters you will finish it.

The PREMIER: I hope the motion will be agreed to. Unless I consider that it is necessary, I will not ask members to sit on Friday nights.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.41]: There are one or two features of the motion, Mr. Speaker, that I do not like. I think 2.15 is a bit early for the afternoon sitting, and I do not think it should be necessary to sit after tea on Fridays. I hope it will not be found necessary. Another objection —not altogether a facetious one—is that a very important event is to take place on Friday, the 5th December, when Western Australia's second Sheffield Shield match is to commence. I believe that sitting after tea on Fridays could be avoided if the Government would expedite its own business. I regret to say that there have been many instances of Ministers stonewalling their own measures.

Mr. Leslie: That is a funny one!

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There have been many instances of debates being prolonged unnecessarily by the over-stressing of the obvious. I am anxious—as the Premier knows—to assist him in the despatch of business. An analysis of the notice paper shows that it is not formidable. There are only four or five items of importance on it, and they could be cleaned up in a couple of weeks if the Government was anxious to adopt that course and leave matters of less importance at the bottom of the notice paper. I have no objection to the motion, as such, and do not intend to vote against it, but I hope the Premier finds that he can so conduct the business of the House as to render sitting after tea on Fridays unnecessary.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [4.43]: I hope that we do sit after tea on Fridays. If country members must remain here, instead of going back to their electorates on Friday mornings, I hope the House will push on with the business that appears on the notice paper. I would see no harm in a few all-night sittings, by way of a change, in order to get the business through.

Hon F. J. S. Wise: They would not worry you; you would not be here.

Mr. MANN: I am surprised to hear the Leader of the Opposition refer to a cricket match. It would be a waste of time to delay the business of the House on that account, but perhaps the Premier would also like to attend that match, and in that case we could divide the House to see whether members should attend the match.

Mr. Fox: What a pity you do not play cricket!

Mr. MANN: I play cricket here. I hope the House will sit late and finish the business, and that next year we will not have minor Bills being brought down in the early part of the session. That has happened every session since I have been a member here. The custom seems to be not to sit long hours in the early part of the session, and then to have the usual rush towards the end. I am sure my colleagues on this side of the House will bring down their important Bills early in the next session.

MR. HOAR (Nelson) [4.45]: I regret the apparent necessity for sitting on Fridays. Members representing South-West electorates have to catch a train at 7.35 a.m. on Fridays if they are to get home for the week-end. A number of them —and certainly myself—cannot afford to stay in Perth for ever. We wish to get back to our electorates and our families. Although I may not have the same knowledge as has the Premier of the amount of business still to come before the House, I do not think it is necessary to sit at all on Fridays, and I am sorry the Premier has thought it desirable to move this motion. The only reason why I would approve of it is that it might help the

Premier to make up his mind and come to a decision on a certain matter that has been under consideration by a tribunal recently. He is evidently unable to make up his mind in this respect on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday so perhaps the extra day of sitting will help him to come to a decision.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington—in reply) [4.46]: Evidently the member for Nelson has in mind some important legislation that has not yet been dealt with, or that is not on the notice paper. I appreciate the difficulties of country members in the matter of Friday sittings, and I hope that only two or three such sittings will be necessary. My main reason for moving this motion was to try to avoid all-night sittings, which I do not think are desirable or in the best interests of legislation. If it is possible to get through the business without sitting on Friday nights, I will do so. It will depend on the progress made with legislation.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS, PRECEDENCE.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray-Wellington) [4.47]: I move—

That on and after Wednesday, the 26th November, Government business shall take precedence of all motions and Orders of the Day on Wednesdays, as on all other days.

This is the motion usually moved at about this stage of the session. I can assure those members who have legislation or notices of motion on the notice paper that those matters will be dealt with. However, it is necessary to move this motion in order that we may get on with Government business.

HON. F. J. S. WISE (Gascoyne) [4.48]: It is customary for Leaders of the Opposition to stress the importance of private members' business.

The Minister for Education: Quite customary.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Following that custom, I wish to accept the assurance of the Premier that private members' business will be given every facility and opportunity of being concluded before the session ends. There are on the notice paper only two private members' matters that are likely to take up much time, and I hope the Premier will find opportunity for those Bills to be dealt with in this House, in time for reasonable consideration to be given them in another place before the end of the session. That is most important. Not only should opportunity be given for private members' business being considered here, but it should be clear of this House in time for full consideration to be afforded it in the Legislative Council, as members in that place sometimes take a long time to give Bills full consideration.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

BILL—NATIVE ADMINISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—GAS (STANDARDS).

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Committee's report be adopted.

Question put and passed.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: That is a good one you have put over us.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Yes, you promised to adjourn the consideration.

The Minister for Works: I will make a statement on that.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is a rotten trick.

BILL—LICENSING (PROVISIONAL CERTIFICATE).

Report of Committee adopted.

MOTION—LAND ACT.

To Disallow Abrolhos Islands Amended Bylaws.

Debate resumed from the 12th November on the following motion by Hon. E. H. H. Hall:—

That amended bylaws Nos. 3, 6, 12, 13, 17, 18 and 20, made under the Land Act, 1933-1946, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 10th October, 1947, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 21st October, 1947, be and are hereby disallowed.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [4.52]: To assist the business of the House, I wish to indicate at

the outset that I do not intend to oppose the motion. I have had a good look at these bylaws and from the start I did not feel too favourably disposed towards them because they would impose a tax upon the commercial fishermen. This position came about through the Abrolhos Islands Board of Control looking after the islands from a tourist point of view. The board undertook to make provision for lights, the blasting of the coral channels, sanitation and other amenities. On the board is a gentleman named Mr. Trigg, who acts as secretary to the commercial fishermen, but I understand that he was not informed of the meeting and that the arrangements were made in his absence.

I have met a committee from the commercial fishermen, the president and secretary, who explained their point of view, which is very reasonable. They stated that they would be taxed to provide funds for amenities for tourists and they contend they do not fish in those waters. They fish further north and, therefore, no amenities would be provided for them. They also clearly indicated that they do not require the amenities, so I consider the member for Geraldton was quite in order in moving the motion. The reasons may be summarised thus—the commercial fishermen do not fish there and did not ask for the amenities, which would be of no use to them, and they would be taxed to the extent of 10s. a month or £5 a year to provide amenities for tourists. I appreciate the value of the islands from a tourist point of view, and whatever I as Minister can do to assist the board to provide amenities for tourists will be done, but it is very evident that the commercial fishermen should not be called upon to provide funds to assist in that direction. For those reasons, I am not opposing the disallowance of the bylaws.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

BILL—GAS UNDERTAKINGS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 12th November.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. V. V. Doney—Williams-Narrogin) [4.56]: Mem bers representing Fremantle districts have allowed themselves to believe that their gas sufferings are greater than they can bear.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are not worrying very much about them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member need not get nasty; he has nothing to fear from me with regard to this Bill.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: A Minister who would do as you did this afternoon is entitled to no consideration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I shall have to call your attention, Mr. Speaker, to those utterances if the hon. member is not very careful. To ease his mind a little, I propose to say something on the point he has raised. I had anticipated getting this Bill through without mentioning B.T.U. or calorific values, but, of course, the issue has been forced. The question arose as to whether the variation between 450 and 550 B.T.U. had not better be raised to 500 and 550, and I was agreeing with the member for North-East Fremantle that it would be desirable if it could be done. This happens to be an occasion when the interests of several members representing the Fremantle districts clash with the interests represented by the member for Collie. Still, that cannot be helped; it is a quarrel which the members involved must work out for themselves.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: There is no clash of interests at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am glad if there is not, but my point of view is that there certainly is a clash. However, I do not know that this is germane to the Bill, so I shall not speak further about it. I said I would canvass the idea whether the change which the member for North-East Fremantle and I desired could be brought about. Had it been possible to bring it about, I would have taken steps to have the Gas (Standards) Bill re-committed, but my inquiry elicited the information that it is not possible, having regard to the gas-producing quality of the coal we import from Maitland, which of course is only f.a.q. coal and not the particularly good coal that in the past was used at Fremantle and for which we paid an extra good price.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That should not have prevented you from doing as you promised the member for North-East Fremantle to do.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member is not interested, I shall proceed with a discussion of the Bill before the House. The hon. member cannot have it both ways. The information given to me is that the gas works, either in Fremantle or in Perth, but Fremantle particularly—and those are the only works concerned at the moment—cannot rise to that total, namely, 500, although possibly it might do so when the new buildings and the new plant are supplied in about 18 months or two years. Since it is impossible, as represented to me by those who know something about it—and I do not claim to know very much about it—to get that, then I submit to members this question: Why should I hold up the Bill in the circumstances?

Hon. J. T Tonkin: The Minister is not to do so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am saying that I did not promise willy-nilly on any account to hold up this Bill.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: The Minister is not telling the truth, unfortunately.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I ask the member for North-East Fremantle to withdraw that remark.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You did make the statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for North-East Fremantle will withdraw.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: In deference to your request, Sir, I am obliged to withdraw; but the Minister knows what he promised me. I withdraw, but the Minister knows.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is not the type of withdrawal that suits me, and I take strong exception to the member for Fremantle making a similar statement again.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You can take what exception you like!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not mind at all. I am calling the Speaker's attention and the attention of the House to the fact that the hon. member is not using Parliamentary language.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: You put it over me properly.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You put it over us properly.

Mr. SPEAKER: Will the member for North-East Fremantle withdraw?

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I have already withdrawn my remark.

Mr. SPEAKER: The hon. member must withdraw. This subject is out of order, except as a personal explanation.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for North-East Fremantle might just as well contain himself for a little while.

Hon. J .T. Tonkin: You do not get me a second time.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You deserve it.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Unless I have protection, particularly from the hon. member in the back bench, I shall resume my seat in protest.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: We would not miss you!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is quite likely. I was trying to intimate to the House that in my opinion the grievances of the Fremantle members have been considerably exaggerated. Certainly they suffered a little. I am always prepared to admit that, but I cannot see that they have suffered any more than have consumers in other centres where gas is supplied. They keep on saying, more frequently by interjection than in a speech, "Why should we tolerate this sort of thing any longer?" I comment upon that by asking, "Why did they tolerate it at all? They had their remedy, but forbore to use it." That is the position. I point out that all gas undertakers, and consequently all gas consumers, suffered during the war years for the reason that so much of the coal supplied by New South Wales to Western Australia was low-grade, or if not low-grade it certainly was of substantially lower gas-producing quality than Fremantle and Perth were in the habit of receiving before the war. I do not want the House to get the idea that I am working towards a wholesale condemnation of the Bill. Far from it. There are provisions that I like. There are other provisions that I do not like. I shall vote for the second reading without hesitation and generally shall treat the Bill on its merits.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Then we shall have no trouble in passing it!

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It will go through if you do that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If the hon. member will permit me, I might say that I admit the Bill supplies a quite attractive proposition from the point of the consumer. That is very good so far as it goes, but it is not quite enough, because we in this Chamber must go to a certain amount of trouble to mete out favours even-handedly, by which I mean that the member for North-East Fremantle appears not to have had sufficient regard for the interest of the Fremantle company, which appears to me—I may be wrong—to be giving a great deal and getting extremely little in return. I made reference to coal for gas supplies. My inquiries have shown that prior to the war the Fremantle company paid exceptionally high prices for better class coal. I mention that as showing that the company, like the Perth City Council, did its best during those times to produce gas of a high standard. But with the coming of the war the Coal Distribution Committee took charge in the Eastern States, with the understanding that fair average quality coal was to be used in New South Wales and for export to the various States requiring it for gas-production purposes. It is said that the best coal is retained in New South Wales. I do not assert it, but if that is so, then the complaints that all States other than New South Wales are getting low-grade coal, and lower quality gas, must have some grounds.

It should be remembered to the credit of both the Fremantle and Perth suppliers that, despite the type of coal which they have been receiving they have not, as have the suppliers in the Eastern States, put up the price of gas. There is also this to be thought of, that when we regard this Bill we might properly consider it as reflecting in some degree upon the management of the Fremantle company. I am sure that is not intended by any member in this Chamber, but nevertheless I consider it must be guarded against. I have made inquiries, and from all quarters am told that the secretary or manager—I am not sure which; secretary-manager I think we might call him—stands high indeed in general esteem not only because of his recognised integrity but also because of his knowledge of the gas business and his undoubted qualities as an executive, I think the chief executive, of the company.

If I have not already indicated it, I indicate now that, so far as the major provisions of the Bill go, the hon. member responsible for it breaks no new ground. That I think he admitted when introducing the Bill, although that is far from saying that his requirements always dovetailed smoothly into local conditions. A case in point is where he wants the measurements of gas heat to be based upon the therm, which is a British measurement term meaning 100,000 British thermal units. That basis is not at all acceptable to any Australian State, as I understand the position. The hon. member will lose nothing whatever by ridding himself of the therm and taking in lieu thereof the gas unit basis which is in use, I understand, in every State of Australia, and which equals 3,412 B.T.U. I think the hon. member intends to make that change and I am very glad indeed that it is so, because it will very certainly make the Bill much more palatable to those who are concerned with it.

When speaking to the Bill, the hon. member expressed rather strong views on the limitations of dividends. As I see it, his limitations were not unduly harsh. He names 6 *per cent. on ordinary shares* and sets a limit of 5½ per cent. on preference shares. That cannot be cavilled at. So far as my knowledge goes, the Fremantle company has not paid more than 6 per cent. for the past three or four years, and for quite a number of years before that the company paid not more than 8 per cent. Having regard to the changes that are taking place, even had the hon. member's Bill not been before the House, there would have been but small likelihood of 6 per cent. being exceeded for some time. I see nothing wrong with that decision of the hon. member.

With regard to the issue of additional shares, his provision looks revolutionary, although I do not say it is. I have not heard of such a change having been sought in any of the other Australian States. I point out that the issue of shares at par to existing shareholders is often a recompense to those who ran risk in their earlier association with the company. I can quite understand that the hon. member's idea, if accepted, might easily tend to destroy the company's initia-

tive and its desire for expansion. It might be claimed that the limitation of profits would provide against anything alarming happening in regard to this matter. I do not mind agreeing here that the hon. member could probably claim precedent for this provision, but I cannot help but regard it as being quite unnecessarily punitive in the special case of the Fremantle company. Nevertheless, viewing the matter broadly I cannot assert that it is in any degree unfair and therefore I think the question might well be submitted to the will of the House.

What I especially dislike in the Bill is the compulsory purchase clause. This might well have been left alone. I see no justification whatever for it. It will tie the company down to a bare arbitrary value, and I repeat it seems to be specially harsh. It makes it look as if the hon. member wants to strip the company of all it has. It should not be pursued to that extent. If the local governing body concerned—that would be the Fremantle City Council—wants to resume the property under discussion, there is ample machinery in existence for it to do so. There is the Public Works Act under which any local governing body may resume at valuation, and it allows due right of appeal to the owner, as I think is well-known to all members. In addition, 10 per cent. is allowed for what is termed severance, another term which I think is generally understood, but in case it is not, it means an allowance in return for compulsory acquisition. The member for North-East Fremantle also wishes to take away another source of revenue, to wit, the rent for meters.

I think the amendment on the notice paper, which I have not yet had an opportunity to examine fully, is not quite as harsh in this direction as was the one it displaces. I point out that gas meters represent invested capital, and there must be income from the meters themselves, either by their sale or use, in order to service that capital. This matter will probably crop up when we are in Committee on the Bill, so for the moment I will say no more about it. The hon. member also desires that gas provided through a slot meter shall not be greater in cost than that supplied through an ordinary meter. There again the hon. member comes up against much the same objection as I have raised in connection with meter rents. But I mention it here, although it is a relatively small matter, only with the object of showing that one by one the several sources of income of the company are being closed down by the hon. member. That is rather regrettable, because it tends to spoil a Bill which would otherwise have been reasonably acceptable to all members.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Why should people who pay for gas before they use it be charged more than are people who pay for their gas after using it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I can only say that the particular meter, I understand, costs more than does the ordinary meter. There is also this point too—although I am not sure of this—that the amount of such gas is probably more difficult to compute than when an ordinary meter is used. I support the second reading.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [5.18]: The Minister for Works has indicated a slight support of the Bill, but once again he has proved himself to be a champion of private enterprise as against the interests of the people. I do not know whether any private company has been concerned about the interests of the individual. Whenever machinery displaces men, whose life interests are centred in the district in which they are working and living, so that their employment is taken from them, they have to get out without receiving any compensation for the equity they have built up in the district. No concern is shown for those people. They simply have to move on and make another start elsewhere. In this instance, the Minister has stated his concern for the interests of a private company that is building up a large amount of capital, which is really not goodwill except what is created by the people living in the district.

I agree that the only demand the company is entitled to make is for the capital amount and nothing more. That would be a fair price at which to take over the assets. Most of the machinery is worn out, and what is being installed now is for the purpose of renewal. There is to be a big company, and the local authorities should have an opportunity of taking it over at the structural valuation. That is only fair and reasonable. It would be pretty difficult for

another company to start, because the population is not sufficient to run two or three concerns, as is done in other States. There are several companies in New South Wales which means that with competition the gas is kept up to standard. The quality of the gas in Western Australia has been very low, and some manufacturers have found it difficult to carry on. In fact, some have not been able to install new machinery on account of the low heating content of our gas.

I was recently told by a representative of one company, that it has placed quite a large order for new machines, but it would not be able to run them because they require at least 500 B.T.U. for their operation. The gas producers of South Australia are in the same position as we are. The same class of coal is received there, and they have to produce gas of 500 to 550 B.T.U. I do not see why that cannot be done in this State. I do not know why we should not be able to maintain a supply of good gas. The Bill is welcome, and we do not need to have any gibes from the Minister for Works because something was not done before. We agree that something should have been done but, when we have plural voting, it is difficult to do anything and that is something the Minister supports. If he would give us a hand to do away with plural voting, we might be able to get down to the position where we could give the users of gas a fair spin. But while he chides us on the one hand for doing nothing he is, on the other, putting every obstacle in the way to achieving our desires.

All members should believe that a utility like gas should be owned by the Government or a local authority. It is essential for the welfare of the people and no private person should make a profit out of it. If there is anything to be got out of gas, it should be returned to the people by way of the best possible supply, and to those working in the industry by giving them all possible amenities such as superannuation, retiring allowances and other similar social services. We are far behind the other States and Great Britain in gas legislation. In Great Britain the dividends have been limited and the price fixed. I do not think there is anything out of the ordinary in the suggestion contained in the Bill that when new shares are being put on the market, those working in the industry and the general public, should be given the opportunity of purchasing them. We do not want to water down the capital by 50 per cent., in order to maintain a 6 per cent. dividend. That really means an increased dividend. I welcome the Bill. We should be grateful for the little assistance the Minister has promised, but I hope he will go the whole hog and support the Bill as it is.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.25]: I congratulate the member for North-East Fremantle on the Bill, but I am not going to congratulate the Minister because he has made two bites at this matter and has not got half a Bill from the two. It has been left to the member for North-East Fremantle to introduce a decent Bill. We might be able to patch up the Minister's Bill in Committee. If the measure under discussion passes through Committee as it is, it will be just what is wanted. The Minister for Works was not quite fair to the member for North-East Fremantle when he said on a previous occasion that he had nothing to say against the Bill. The member for North-East Fremantle on that occasion made several suggestions which were not carried out.

The whole Act should have been reviewed and all the provisions necessary in the year 1947 should have been included. It is of no use the Minister saying, "You did not do this and you did not do that." He did not do very much on this occasion until he was pushed pretty hard. He did bring down a Bill to allow the company to double its capital, and for the shareholders to get the lot. Can you Mr. Speaker, with your knowledge of finance understand that? I do not think you would agree with it. If you were on the floor of the House I know you would raise your voice against it. The Minister's Bills are nothing like they should be. It has been left to my colleague to bring down just what is wanted for the consumers in Fremantle. Everything is going to be claimed by 210 shareholders. The parent Act provides—

> All such new shares, unless the general meeting resolving on the creation of the same otherwise direct, shall be offered to the members of the Company, in proportion as nearly as may be to the shares or stock for the time being held by them respectively; and if an offer of new shares is not accepted by the member to whom the offer is made, within one

month after the date thereof, the directors may dispose of such shares in such manner as they shall deem most beneficial for the interests of the Company.

That means that they are doubling the capital. Under that section the shareholders will be able to take the whole of the new capital proposed to be issued in the new company.

Mr. Yates: Why is the company doubling its capital? It must need the money to increase the plant.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Of course it is increasing the plant.

Mr. Yates: It will not mean an increased return to the shareholders.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: There will be an increase in turnover, and the shareholders will get an increase unless this Bill is passed.

Mr. Yates: I cannot see much in it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The hon. member may not be able to, but I can.

Mr. Yates: I do not think you can.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The member for Canning can have a go directly. He may be the financial genius opposite, and able to explain it. This is what the English Act provides, and what the member for Canning could not agree with, of course—

The profits of the undertaking to be divided amongst the undertakers in any year shall not exceed the prescribed rate, or where no rate is prescribed they shall not exceed the rate of ten pounds in the hundred by the year on the paid-up capital in the undertaking, which in such case shall be deemed the prescribed rate, unless a larger dividend be at any time necessary to make up the deficiency of any previous dividend which shall have fallen short of the said yearly rate.

Thus away back in the period from 1847 to 1852, they took the precaution to look after the financial side of the business. Again, the principal Act provides for meter rents. There has been quite a lot of discussion in this House recently about that question. But it is interesting to note that in Perth no meter rent is charged and that applies to Great Britain as well. No meter rents are charged in connection with the electricity supply or the water supply.

The Honorary Minister: You are not right about Perth.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: If the Honorary Minister wants to speak, would you, Mr. Speaker, make her move up a bit or speak up because I cannot hear her.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: It is all very well for you to call for order, Mr. Speaker, but the Honorary Minister gets in interjections and no-one hears what she says with the result that we know about it first when we read "Hansard."

The Honorary Minister: At any rate, what I say is correct.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I want Mr. Speaker to get the Honorary Minister to move up a bit so that we can have an opportunity of hearing what she says.

The Honorary Minister: I am sorry if you cannot hear me.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Speak up like a little man, and then we may be able to hear you.

The Honorary Minister: I would not be like a little man, anyhow.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: May I appeal to you, Mr. Speaker, to tell me what the Honorary Minister said. I have no chance of hearing her here. Was the Honorary Minister telling us that she does not pay any meter rent in the Perth district?

The Honorary Minister: If you like I will bring in my receipt to show that I do pay it.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: What does she say?

The Honorary Minister: I am afraid the the member for Fremantle requires some hearing aid.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: The Honorary Minister can bring her receipt before us on the third reading of the Bill, and I will listen to her then.

The Honorary Minister: I will bring it for you.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Very well. As I was saying, no meter rents are charged in Perth in connection with the gas supply and that applies to electricity and water as well. In the Eastern States such meter rents are not paid, and in Great Britain they are not charged. Despite that, the Fremantle people are compelled to pay rent for their meters and some of those meters have been paid for half a dozen times over. The Minister for Works does not care what

the people have to pay in that district and he displayed his attitude last night when he raised objections to certain action being taken. He does not care how much the Fremantle people have to pay for their gas.

The Chief Secretary: You pay a telephone rent.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Then again at Fremantle a gas supply cannot be obtained unless a meter is installed. Only small parts of the Palmyra and Bicton districts have a gas supply.

Mr. Needham: There is no scarcity of gas here anyhow.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Judging by the looks on the faces of members on the Government side of the House, they are not short of gas. In portion of North Fremantle quite a number of premises are not supplied with gas. Yesterday I heard of one place where although the pipes had been laid down and have been in position for some considerable time, the company refuses to supply gas because no meters are available. There is one other fault I have to find with the parent Act and it is that the company is not compelled to supply gas. The Bill, which will amend the principal Act in this respect provides—

> Any 20 occupiers or owners of premises situated in a defined locality within the limits wherein which a gas undertaker is authorised to supply gas may address a request to the commission setting forth that the said premises are not supplied with gas, and could conveniently be so supplied and ought reasonably to be so supplied by such undertaker and undertaking to become consumers of gas for a period of at least 12 months thereafter upon its being so supplied.

Not only does that provision appear in the Bill submitted by the member for North-East Fremantle, but a somewhat similar section is also embodied in the New South Wales Act, which contains the following provision—

> A gas company which refuses or wilfully neglects to give or continue a supply which it is required to give or continue under this Act, shall, upon summary conviction, be liable to a penalty not exceeding 40s. in respect of each day during which such refusal or neglect continues.

Then again that section states in an earlier part—

> A person desiring a supply of gas to premises a boundary of which is situated within 25 yards of any pipe of a gas company authorised to supply gas within the locality shall serve on the company a notice specifying the premises in respect of which the supply is required and the day, not being earlier than 45 days from the date of service, upon which the supply is desired to commence.

Therefore if the Bill before the House is agreed to, a great boon will be conferred not only on the present consumers but also upon those who may desire at some future time to take advantage of the gas supply. If they desire to be connected up, the company will be compelled to meet their request by making available a satisfactory gas supply. Moreover, the consumers will not be required to pay any meter rent. I trust the Bill will be afforded a speedy passage through Committee.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (North-East Fremantle—in reply) [5.36]: Very little objection has so far been taken to the Bill, and the only opposition indicated has come from the Minister who said he did not have a great deal against it and promised to vote for the second reading. Unfortunately I can place no reliance upon the Minister's promise.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is the worst part of it.

The Minister for Works: On a point of order! I think that, having been warned on two occasions, the member for North-East Fremantle should take some notice of your rulings, Mr. Speaker. I call attention to the fact that the hon. member has just stated that no reliance can be placed upon my word.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Neither it can.

The Minister for Works: Never before has that been said of me.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: But it is pretty right.

The Minister for Works: I will deal with the hon. member later.

Mr. SPEAKER: I ask for a withdrawal on behalf of the Minister.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I withdraw the particular words to which exception has been taken, but the Minister knows very well that he made me a promise this afternoon and he has not kept it.

The Chief Secretary: You cannot get away with that.

The Minister for Works: It was a qualified promise, as you well know.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You cannot get away with it on your side like that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: As this is another promise that has been made, I shall take no notice of it. The Minister objected to certain provisions in the Bill, stating that they were aimed at imposing a penalty on the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company, and that the provisions were too punitive. That is not true at all. The Bill now before the House is designed to bring the legislation in this State into line with that which exists elsewhere. We have got to understand that in the future development of Western Australia there will be other gas companies formed which will in time reach the size of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company, and they will have to conform to the provisions of this Bill, too.

There is nothing in the measure which is not already operating in Great Britain or in other States of Australia. After the year 1840 in Great Britain, it was usual for the private Acts—and there were many of them—in regard to the gas companies to limit the rate of dividend and the Gas Works Clauses Act of 1847 standardised the provisions of the various private Acts and limited the rate of dividend to 10 per cent. But gas producing in 1847 was still a risky business and was not an investment in those days. It was still a speculation and so it was to be expected that although dividends were being limited a fairly liberal provision was made and 10 per cent. was allowed. However, in time it became obvious that 10 per cent. was far too great a dividend to allow for this type of business and subsequent private Acts limited the rate of dividend to seven per cent.

Those Acts also prescribed that new capital was not to be offered to existing shareholders but had to be put up for public auction and that was done about the 1870's. Those two provisions—the limitation of dividends and offering new capital by public auction—are embodied in this Bill. There is nothing new in that. When these shares were offered for public auction, even although the dividend was limited to seven per cent., they brought very high premiums and it became clear that seven per cent. was far too high and the companies themselves voluntarily changed the capital to a lower dividend-bearing class. Of course, they had to get parliamentary sanction to do that, but let us contrast what occurred then with what is happening now. I am asking the House to agree to a proposal which will cause the companies to be limited to a lower rate of dividend.

In connection with the illustration concerning England to which I have referred, the companies themselves, realising that the rate of dividend was responsible for the high premium on their shares, sought parliamentary sanction to reduce the interest rate on their shares so that they would all be shares of one class. Members may ask what is wrong with shareholders who voluntarily reduce the dividend rate on their capital. The reason is easy to find. When the legislation limited the dividend rate of the gas companies provided that all new shares had to be put up for public auction, and further that the premiums upon such shares had to be taken in as revenue, then the companies gained nothing from the premium on shares because, when that money was taken into revenue with a limited dividend, it simply meant that the company was obliged to reduce the price of gas, and so it was of benefit to the gas consumers.

To obviate that they sought authority to change their capital to a lower interest-bearing class so that when their shares were put on the market they would not command the high premium which they had done previously. A few days ago, the ruling price of the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company's shares was 33s. 6d. per £1 share. Thus anyone who desired to purchase such shares would regard them as so good an investment that they would be prepared to pay a premium of 13s. 6d. on every £1 invested. They will only get the dividend rate on the £ share but they are prepared to pay 33s. 6d. for it. That is a clear indication of the class of investment that this company presents because of the fact that it is not controlled in any way as monopolies are elsewhere.

Mr. Yates: Share values generally are higher today.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Nothing to be compared with the share values of this particular company.

The Attorney General: Not very far off.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: A long way off. Will the Attorney General give me an illustration?

The Attorney General: Take Foy and Gibson's six per cent. preference shares at today's market. These are round about 30s.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The sum of 33s. 6d. is a substantial addition to that.

The Attorney General: It is a little more.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It is considerably more. In 1875 a sliding scale of dividend control was introduced in Great Britain and provided for an increased dividend as the price of gas was reduced. That scale after being in operation for some time showed obvious defects, and the companies concerned tried in various ways to find a better system. In 1920 as the result of recommendations of a committee of inquiry, the Gas Legislation Committee, an Act was passed in Great Britain called the Gas Regulation Act which made provision for the adoption of what was known as the basic price system, regarded as an improvement on the sliding scale system, the standard price and the various other systems which had been tried over the last 100 years. The Gas Regulation Act of 1920 was proposed to bring the legislation in Great Britain up-to-date in conformity with the recommendations of the various committees which had from time to time given consideration to the question. That Act provided for the basic price system. I propose to read an extract from the report of the Committee of Inquiry presented by the Minister for Fuel and Power under the hand of His Majesty. The extract is taken from page 11, paragraph 46 and is as follows:

> The basic price system has never been embodied in general legislation, but it has become increasingly popular especially with the larger companies, and more than half the gas in the United Kingdom was in 1938 supplied under it. Its special merit is that it facilitates the sale of gas for heating, especially in the industrial field, at substantial discounts which are economically justified and are necessary to enable gas to compete with other fuels. Before 1920, in consequence of the effects of the maximum price and sliding scale systems (especially the latter), it was the general practice for gas to be sold at the flat rate, and there is no doubt that the marked development of the industrial use of gas in the '20's and '30's owed a great deal to the more elastic basic price system.

Surely that speaks for itself. It is not obligatory on the companies in Great Britain to use the basic price system although they are authorised to do so under the Gas Regulation Act. Since the passage of that Act more than half of the very great volume of gas now being manufactured in Great Britain is being manufactured under the basic price system. My Bill provides for the adoption of the basic price system. As the companies in Great Britain have voluntarily adopted that system it would seem to indicate that it is the best one known at present. It is therefore an argument why we should accept it in this State. It is not in use in New South Wales where they are adopting the standard dividend and standard price.

The basic price system is regarded in Great Britain as a very great improvement on the standard dividend and the standard price, so much so that the companies have voluntarily adopted that method and more than half the gas produced in Great Britain is produced under that system. I suggest therefore that there is no hardship imposed on the Fremantle company if it uses that method. The Minister did not like the provision in the Bill regarding the compulsory acquisition of the company's assets. When the Act was first passed by this Parliament in 1886 a provision was inserted that the municipality would have the right to take over the assets of the company upon certain conditions that were laid down. So it was recognised even in those for off days that it was right and proper that the municipality should, if it so desired, take over the undertaking, and it was known to the shareholders of the company when they started business that there was always the possibility that the local authority would buy them out.

This Bill simply changes to some extent the conditions under which they will be bought out. The provisions are roughly these. With regard to the land upon which the undertaking stands, if the local authority buys the property it shall have to pay a fair market value. Is there anything wrong with that? Could anyone expect to obtain more than the fair market value of the land that was being sold? It would be unreasonable to expect otherwise although it has obtained in various other places without justification. A fair market value of the site will be guaranteed to the company under the provisions of the Bill.

In regard to buildings, plant, etc., which have been in use all these years and which

have given to the shareholders a steady run of dividends, it may be asked what price should be paid there. The company should be paid the actual cost which would be involved in rebuilding, namely the structural value. If the municipality buys the undertaking it will have to pay the company the sum which would be required for the establishment of that plant. Assuming there was no plant on the site at all and the municipality was going to erect a plant which would compare with the one already there, the cost of doing that would be the price it would have to pay for the undertaking. No-one can say that that is unreasonable.

To talk about ten per cent. on this or that is so much nonsense. The company has the right to expect the fair market value of the site, the land upon which the undertaking has been erected, and what it would cost to go into the business and establish a plant of comparable size. If Parliament authorised a second company to establish their gas works on a piece of land of similar value to that held by the Fremantle company, the amount of money involved in buying such a piece of land, erecting gas works of a size compared with what the Fremantle company has, is the amount that the company would get if the municipality bought it out.

Mr. Hoar: There is nothing wrong with that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There is nothing unfair about that so far as I can see. The shareholders of the company always knew that there was a possibility that the municipality might one day decide to purchase the undertaking. It is in accordance with modern thought on the question and is in accordance with the thought that existed in 1886, because Parliament of that day deliberately inserted such a provision in the Fremantle Gas and Coke Company's Act.

Hon. E. H. H. Hall: Why has not the municipality exercised this right?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: One reason is that the conditions laid down authorising it to take over the undertaking are so involved and likely to lead to such high costs that it could not contemplate any such action. There are provisions for all kinds of things to be considered. I am anxious to encourage the local authority to give favourable consideration to the taking over of the gas works, as has been done in Perth where the gas business is conducted by the municipality. Could anyone object to that?

It is right and proper that there should be a municipal undertaking in Fremantle. To encourage the Fremantle Council to think seriously of the proposition I want to set down in clear form what amount of money may be involved if it desires to effect the purchase. Under existing conditions it would be impossible for the municipality to decide what such an undertaking was likely to cost. It would cost all kinds of sums according to the view taken. My intention is to make the Bill perfectly clear on that point. It sets out the amount of money that would require to be paid. The shareholders of the company would not lose anything that they were entitled to get. They would receive a fair reward for their share in the establishment of the undertaking.

There is nothing new in the Bill and nothing revolutionary about it. The provisions I have put into it have been enacted by a succession of Tory Governments in Great Britain, Governments which are usually shy of legislation which imposes restrictions on private companies. The various Tory Governments of Great Britain felt it necessary to provide in their legislation for the limitation of dividends and the limitation of price, making it obligatory on the company to offer their shares at public auction and the like. I desire to bring our legislation, which is about 100 years behind, into conformity with modern practice on this subject.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Hon. J. T. Tonkin in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Interpretation:

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I find it necessary to move an amendment to the definition. When the Bill was originally drafted it was modelled closely upon English legislation which provided for the adoption of the therm being equal to 100,000 B.T.U. When the Bill was introduced certain men who are experts in the gas business, and who are themselves practical men, pointed out to me

that there would be difficulty in using the therm here, that it was the Australian practice to use the gas unit which contains so many B.T.U. There is no difference in principle from using the term "gas unit", as against the word "therm." It was pointed out that if we use the word "therm" it would put some companies to unnecessary expense by their having to change their method of book-keeping etc, and no-one would derive any advantage. I saw the force of that argument. My proposed amendment would still permit gas to be sold on the heat unit basis, and it will be sold on that basis at a certain price. A unit means 3,412 B.T.U. gross. So that alteration will simply mean that later on the Bill, instead of prescribing a basic price for 100,000 B.T.U. will prescribe a basic price for 3,412 B.T.U. simply reducing the number of B.T.U. to be sold in one unit, using the term "gas unit" instead of "therm." That gas unit is used in New South Wales today and also by the Perth city gas supply. I move an amendment—

That the definition " 'therm' means one hundred thousand British units" be struck out and the definition " 'gas unit' means three thousand four hundred and twelve British thermal units gross" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Price of gas:

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Following the amendment made in the definition clause, it is necessary to make a similar amendment in this clause. I move an amendment—

That in line 2 the word "therm" be struck out and the words "gas unit" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Provisions relating to basic price:

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Following the amendments already made, it becomes necessary to amend this clause to provide for an alteration in the limits of divergency permitted with regard to the basic price. When the quantity of gas to be sold was to be the therm, which meant 100,000 B.T.U., the limit was to be .4d. But, as we have now reduced the quantity of gas to be sold from 100,000 B.T.U. to 3,412, it would be quite inequitable to provide that the limit of divergency should remain at .4d. I have worked it out that the necessary figure to be inserted so that there will be scarcely any alteration in the limit, should be .014d. Certain companies sell gas at so much per thousand cubic feet. This figure of .014d. will permit the company to increase its price to just under 2d. for 1,000 cubic feet. So, if the price is, for the sake of argument, 8s. 11d. for 1,000 cubic feet, supposing that is the basic price, it can go to 9s. 1d. without any penalty being incurred, that being the limit of divergency prescribed. I assure members that what I intend to move with regard to this matter gives practically the same limit of divergency as the provision now in the Bill, which sets out that that limit shall be .4d. It is a sum in simple proportion, and the average person who knows anything of arithmetic can quickly arrive at the necessary figure. I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of Subclause (2) after the word "decimal" the words "nought one" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I move an amendment—

That in line 7 of Subclause (2) the word "therm" be struck out and the words "gas unit" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Alterations are necessary to Subclause (3) to conform to the amendments previously made. I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of Subclause (3) the word "therms" be struck out and the words "gas units" inserted in lieu.

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

Clauses 7 to 15—agreed to.

Clause 16—Gas undertaker to pay interest on deposits:

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: On the second reading I made a statement that people in Perth paid no meter rent. The Honorary Minister made an interjection, the nature of which I learned subsequently, that she paid meter rent. We have now found out that she had half a win, since inquiries disclosed that a few people do pay meter rents. They are those who live in flats. But those with homes of their own pay no

meter rent. Because the Honorary Minister is living in a flat she pays meter rent.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am glad the member for Fremantle spoke on this clause because he has drawn my attention to some words that I think should come out. However, I am in a quandary. I am not entitled to anticipate what the Committee will do with a later amendment. If the Committee agreed to that later amendment, there are certain words in this clause which should not remain. Would they be removed, as a consequence, by the Clerk?

The CHAIRMAN: If they were consequential.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think they would be. If the Committee decides later that no rent shall be paid for meters, then it would be quite wrong to retain in this clause the words "where a person is required to give security for the payment of the rental for a meter." Those words could have no bearing at all because, if no rent could be charged there would be no necessity to give security for its payment.

The CHAIRMAN: I think that in those circumstances it would be necessary for the hon. member to recommit the Bill.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I think that is safer. With regard to the point mentioned by the member for Fremantle, what happens is that the Perth Gas Co. is a supplier of gas to certain premises, and installs a meter therein for which it does not charge any rent; but if the owner of the premises sublets different portions and requires separate meters in the different parts that have been sublet, so that he will know how much gas is used by the different tenants, meter rent has to be paid for the extra meters, and that is only right and proper.

Clause put and passed.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Clause 17—Publication of charges for gas:

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I move an amendment—

That in line 6 of Subclause 1 the word "therm" be struck out and the words "gas unit" inserted in lieu.

This amendment is purely consequential.

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

Clauses 18 to 20—agreed to.

Clause 21—Meters, prepayment:

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (2) be struck out.

Proposed new Subclauses (4) and (5) deal with prepayment meters, to which Subclause (2) refers. I am prepared to take the risk of striking out Subclause (2) at this stage.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I move an amendment—

That new Subclauses be added, as follows:—

(4) No meter shall be issued for the use of a consumer by an undertaker until it has been first tested and stamped by a gas examiner in accordance with the regulations. Within twelve months, or such further time as the Minister deems necessary, after the commencement of this Act, every meter in use on the premises of any consumer at the commencement of this Act shall be so tested and, if found accurate, stamped.

All meters issued by an undertaker and in use shall be again tested and, if found accurate, restamped at intervals of not more than seven years.

(5) Except as provided in this section, a gas undertaker shall not make any charge, whether directly or indirectly, and by whatever name such charge is designated, for the hire of any meter.

Where more than one meter is installed on any premises, a gas undertaker may charge for the hire of all meters in excess of one.

Proposed new Subclause (4) is designed to ensure that only efficient meters are supplied by an undertaker to a consumer. If the meter supplied is not accurate, the consumer will be charged for the quantity of gas shown by the registration of the meter and will be asked to pay either too little or too much, according to whether the meter is registering over or below the correct amount. The British legislation has, for many years, embodied provision to ensure that meters shall be tested and stamped. In the area over which the Perth municipal gas supply has the franchise the custom is not to charge meter rent where the meter is installed on any premises, except where the owner sub-lets part of the premises to tenants and it is necessary for him to have extra meters installed to know how much gas is consumed by the tenants. Those ad-

ditional meters are supplied for the convenience of the owner and it would be wrong to provide that they should be supplied free of cost, as that would not be fair to the company. Proposed new Subclause (5) will bring the law into line with the position obtaining in relation to the Perth gas supply. It will not alter the position of the Perth City gas supply at all, but will provide for general application of the principle now applying to that area.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out proposed new Subclause (5).

I have no objection to proposed new Subclause (4), but take exception to proposed new Subclause (5). If meters are not to be charged for a portion of the income of the company or council will be taken away, as there is a good deal of invested money involved in meters. I would not have minded if the words "directly or indirectly" had not appeared in line 3 of proposed new Subclause (5). I take it that the word "indirectly" may be interpreted to mean that the loss of meter rents is not to be recouped to the company or council by an addition to the price of gas. Therefore there would have to be an undertaking, in the body of the Bill, intimating plainly that the sum referred to would be chargeable to working expenses or some other account. A larger sum of money is involved than the Committee is aware of.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There is very little substance in the Minister's objection because he has not a grip of what is intended. In effect he wishes to ensure that users of gas shall pay meter rent to the company in perpetuity. I am endeavouring to provide that users shall not pay meter rent. The Minister says he interprets the word "indirectly" to mean that the company would have to bear the full cost of the meters without having an opportunity to recoup itself. Had the Minister read the Bill carefully, he would have realised that when the price was fixed, it would be the price fixed by the Electricity Commission and would be such a price as would enable the company to earn the standard dividend.

The Commission would take into consideration that a company must invest a certain amount in meters and in the servicing of them without receiving any rent. That would be allowed as an expense of running the business and would be taken into account when the basic price was fixed by the Commission. The meters form part of the reticulation system. A company is not permitted to charge interest on the cost of gas mains or service pipes, and the meters and pressure gauges should be included with that equipment. What is wrong at present is that a company may supply a meter costing perhaps £3 and charge a rent of 9s. a year for it. In 10 years the consumer would have paid £4 10s. rent for it and the charge would continue in perpetuity, even though the meter required no servicing at all. The charging of meter rent was abolished in Perth 12 years ago.

The Minister for Works: All meter rents?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Except for flats or office suites. A gas undertaker should not be required to supply an unlimited number of meters free of rent but, where only one meter is required, there is no justification for charging rent. Some people use gas fires for warmth and hire gas stoves and gas bath-heaters from the company and it is only right that rent should be paid for them, but that is entirely different from hiring a meter. A meter is not hired because the consumer wishes to use it; it is necessary in order to get a supply of gas. Gas consumers have long protested against the charging of meter rents and have asked why they should continue to pay for the meter over and over again.

The Chief Secretary: What difference does it make when you are limiting the profit of the company?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The object is to have the whole of the charges included in the basic price. If the meter rent were charged for separately, a company might increase its revenue from that source and thus the object of my amendment would be defeated. The Minister's amendment should not be accepted.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member has improved his position somewhat by his explanation, but appears to be rendering it much more difficult for the company to make the profit that will go to pay the dividend. If the cost of the meter rent is added to the cost of the gas——

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: No, it would be the actual cost to the company of supplying meters and having them serviced.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That might be a point. I could not see what the hon. member hoped to gain for the consumers. I take it that he will gain something.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Definitely.

Amendment on amendment put and negatived.

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

Clause 22—agreed to.

Clause 23—Price on compulsory purchase:

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This clause in my opinion is not the proper way out of the difficulty. Provision is made in the Public Works Act by which, if the local authority takes over the undertaking, the company will secure a fair value for its property, plus 10 per cent. for severance. The clause will not give the company a fair deal and I hope the Committee will vote against it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The provisions of any other Act such as the one mentioned by the Minister, do not apply to this point. My clause is necessary because Section 50 of the parent Act sets out the terms upon which the local authority may purchase the assets of the company. The clause provides terms which are quite fair.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not think the Public Works Act applies to the acquisition of an undertaking such as that of the Fremantle Gas Company's works. The terms upon which the local authority may acquire the company's assets are set out in the parent Act. The clause under discussion would apply to and affect the wording of the relevant section in the parent Act. The clause relates to the method of determining the price to be paid, but it would not affect the other parts of the section in the parent Act. I have not examined the Act very carefully, but it means that, although by this clause a direction is given as to the estimation of the price to be paid if the parties do not agree, they would still need to go to arbitration as prescribed in the parent Act.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I think so, too.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: This clause will not advance the matter much further from the point of view of saving argument. The parties may agree, but they will agree just as much under the parent Act as they will under the clause. If they do not agree and decide to go to arbitration, they will argue just as much under this Bill as they would under the parent Act. Section 50 of the parent Act provides that the local authority may purchase the land and other assets of the company; in other words, the local authority may purchase at their value all the physical assets of the company, but I do not think the company could claim payment for goodwill. I would like the member for North-East Fremantle to give some attention to this point, because I think it possible under his Bill that the Fremantle Corporation may pay a great deal more for the undertaking.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Let us take the risk.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I do not want to take risks. The local authority should pay a fair price, neither more nor less. Under the parent Act I think it is clear enough that the local authority would pay for the physical assets, but under the clause we are now considering the purchase money to be paid for the undertaking—which is a much more comprehensive term and might include the value of the privilege of franchise—would be that required to purchase an established plant of equivalent capacity. As I read the Bill, it means that the company could be paid the amount which it would cost today to acquire all the physical plant needed for the undertaking. Under the Act I doubt whether the local authority would pay as much. I suggest to the hon. member that he might have the clause examined in order to ascertain whether it might not do something which he does not intend.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am satisfied that it will not do something I do not intend. In setting out that the assets shall be taken over at structural value, I know that there is a measuring rod to be used by the arbitrators in arriving at a price. They will have a direction, as to the assets, and what it would cost to put them there. That is a matter of getting prices for material and making a computation. It is possible, under the Act, that we could never get a decision because there has to be agreement all along the line. Section 50 provides—

In case of any dispute or disagreement arising between the directors and the corporation respecting such purchase as aforesaid, then it shall be lawful for the directors of the corporation if they or either of them shall think fit—

What happens if they do not think fit?

—to require that it shall be left to arbitration to determine what amount of purchase money shall be paid to the directors; and in the event of such arbitration being required, the corporation shall name one person and the directors another; and if such two persons cannot agree upon the amount to be paid to the Company, then the same shall be referred to the umpirage of some third person to be appointed by such two first-named persons previously to their entering upon the arbitration; and the determination of such arbitrators or umpire, as the case may be, shall be binding and conclusive on the said parties.

There could be a lot of difficulty before getting to that stage. If there was something to guide the arbitrators so that they knew what was to be the basis of their valuation, then a solution would be much easier. The weakness of this provision is that there is nothing to guide any arbitrator. We could select 20 groups of two persons and each would have a different idea as to what price should be paid. That is where the difficulty arises under the section. There is no question of goodwill at the end of a certain time with a monopoly, because a monopoly is there on sufferance. In America a limited franchise is provided for. When a monopoly is granted to a gas undertaking, it is not told it can remain in business until it sells out at some future time and reap the benefit of goodwill. It is told that it can function for 15 years, with the knowledge that it might not get a renewal of the franchise.

The Attorney General: Then it would charge so much more.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes.

The Attorney General: That would be a bad thing.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes. I am not advocating that. I am endeavouring to show that we should not give too much consideration to the question of goodwill. I admit it is not an easy matter to decide as to what basis should be adopted.

The Minister for Education: It is the stickiest part of the Bill.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I believe it is. We should clarify the position. Although this is not in support of my line of argument I will read what the Gas Industry Committee of Inquiry has to say. The committee recommended that the whole industry should be nationalised, and on the question of price this is what it said—

Acquisition of existing undertakings: The Boards will require the compulsory powers to purchase all the existing undertakings. We do not regard ourselves as a competent body to lay down a basis for determining the price. We consider it essential, however, that the terms should be agreed by an impartial body as fair to the existing owners (private or municipal).

This body did not feel competent to lay down a basis, and I do not feel particularly happy about my competency on this question, but I am unable to get around this position in any other way. This Committee would not regard the provision in the existing Act as satisfactory because it is not an impartial body that is suggested. There is to be one person from each side to come to an agreement. What an impossibility!

The Chief Secretary: That is the usual arbitration clause.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: On different matters from this.

The Chief Secretary: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: There can be so many divergencies of opinion about the basis of valuation that it could lead to all sorts of trouble. That has happened where this mode of determining a price has been resorted to. It is unsatisfactory. We should be in a position to say whether we think a certain basis is fair. Is the basis I am providing, unfair?

The Chief Secretary: It is probably unfair to the public.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: No. If it were there would not be this opposition. It might be regarded as being unfair to certain shareholders, and that is why the battle is going on.

The Minister for Education: I think it is unfair to the council.

The Attorney General: I would advise you to buy the shares.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Would it interest the Attorney General to know that the shareholders think it is unfair?

The Attorney General: They have not told me that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: They have told some of the hon. gentleman's colleagues. If it is unfair to the shareholders, it cannot be unfair to the consumers and the municipality. As a matter of fact, it is not unfair to the shareholders; they only think it is.

The Attorney General: I think this is unfair to the corporation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Does the Attorney General think it is unfair that anyone should pay the market price for land?

The Attorney General: No.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: What about the undertaking?

The Attorney General: It should be the replacement price.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: If the Attorney General were to purchase a farm as a going concern he would say to himself, "There are so many acres cleared. What would it cost me to do that? There is so much machinery on the place. What would it cost me to put it there? What would it cost me to buy the land?"

The Minister for Education: The sub-Treasury would cut his figure in half.

The Attorney General: I would pay £1,000 for a tractor worth £500.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Because of the difficulty of getting one.

The Chief Secretary: You would be well advised to get legal advice.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not want the Chief Secretary's advice. The question is whether this provision is unfair.

The Attorney General: Why not use the Commonwealth Constitution term, "on just terms?"

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: One would expect a lawyer to suggest that. It would provide a wonderful field for lawyers to say what are just terms.

The Attorney General: This is just as plentiful.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am endeavouring to simplify the matter so as to make it possible to get a decision with regard to price within a reasonable time. If we lay down a fair basis, then we should accept it.

The Chief Secretary: If it can be understood.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I am not responsible for what the Chief Secretary can understand. Surely the average man can understand what is meant by the present market price, and surely anyone who is establishing a business will understand what it will cost to do so. He would set about having costs taken out, and that is what I am trying to provide for here.

The Chief Secretary: The pipes in the ground, and things like that?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes. The present company should not expect to make a profit out of the purchaser in these circumstances. If there were no gas company in Fremantle, and Parliament were giving a franchise to the municipality to establish a works, would not the municipality arrive at a figure?

The Chief Secretary: It would cost the municipality a lot more to do that than to buy the existing organisation, under the Act.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Then it is only fair for the company to get that money. I want to be generous to the company and see that it does not lose. I want to see, too, that the municipality is induced to take this step, and, as I am convinced that this provision will do that, I am asking the Committee to accept it.

Mr. YATES: I have carefully studied this clause, and can see no objection to it. The parent Act gives the Fremantle City Council an opportunity to purchase the undertaking, and has done so for the last 41 years. That right has never been exercised. Throughout the period, the company has supplied gas to the residents of Fremantle and the surrounding districts. The time has arrived when this undertaking should be in the hands of the local authority. There need be no fear that the clause will benefit or injure one party or the other, and I support it.

Mr. READ: I do not wish to be unjust to the company and I support the clause. This is a public utility of increasing value to the people in the districts it serves. The clause contains provision for the fixing of a fair price for taking over the concern, and I cannot see that any injustice would be done to the company.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 24 to 28, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

RESOLUTION—BANKING, NATIONALISATION.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had concurred in the Assembly's resolution.

BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Mr. Graham in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3: Insert after the word "months" in line 13 the words "providing the supply authority has made current available to the building."

Mr. GRAHAM: I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

The effect of the amendment would be to make the proposition contained in the Bill quite unworkable. The Council evidently does not appreciate the effect of its amendment. The practice of authorities supplying electricity is not to supply current until such time as the building has been wired and the wiring inspected. I appreciate why Sir Hal Colebatch moved the amendment and what it was he wished to achieve, but he overlooked the fact that the Bill, as originally drawn, was amended in this Chamber at the instance of the Minister for Local Government. His amendment was to the effect that electricity supply through a main should be available; in other words, the local authority would refer the case to the supply authority and if the latter authority could supply the current and was prepared to do so, then the local authority would give consideration to serving an order on the owner of the premises requiring him to have the premises wired. Upon that being done to the satisfaction of the inspector of the supply authority, the current would be supplied. It is not necessary to dilate further on the point.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Mr. Murray Mr. Read and Mr. Graham drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendment.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILLS (3)—RETURNED.

1, Child Welfare.

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

With amendments.

3, Rural and Industries Bank Act Amendment.

Without amendment.

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

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Mr. Graham in charge of the Bill.

Clause 3—Insert after the word "months" in line 13 the words "providing the supply authority has made current available to the building."

Mr. GRAHAM: My remarks on the Council's amendment to the Municipal Corporations Act Amendment Bill (No. 2) apply to this measure and accordingly for the same reasons I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Mr. Murray Mr. Read and Mr. Graham drew up reasons for not agreeing to the Council's amendment.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

BILL—STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS.

Council's Amendments.

Schedule of three amendments made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Mr. Leslie in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 4, page 3—Insert after the word "district" in line 3 a proviso as follows:—

Provided that not more than one license shall be granted to any street photographer, but if such street photographer be a person firm or corporation employing any person to carry out the actual photographing, then such license may be used by such employee for the purpose of compliance with Subsection four of section three of this Act.

Mr. LESLIE: This amendment merely makes a little more secure what is already provided for in the Bill. So far as I am aware, the Committee agreed and I understood the Bill provided that only one license should be issued to any one person, firm, or corporation. The Council was not satisfied that that was definitely set out and so inserted this amendment. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: Does the amendment mean that if a license is granted to the proprietor of a street photography business and he employs half a dozen men, any one of them can use the license?

Mr. LESLIE: A person, firm, or corporation licensed as a street photographer has only one license. If there were two partners they might work in relays. One would be on the street for three or four hours. This is an arduous occupation and a man cannot be on the street all the time. The one who had been taking photographs would return to the studio after a while and prepare the photographs for sale, while his beat would be taken over by his partner or by an employee of the business. That person takes the license. There would not be two people from the one establishment operating on the street at the same time. The measure contains a provision that any person operating as a street photographer must have the license in his actual possession.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Then Brown can use a license in the name of Jones.

Mr. LESLIE: Yes, provided he is an employee of Jones.

Hon. A. H. Panton: There will be a great job enforcing this.

Mr. MARSHALL: I subscribe to the convictions of the member for Mt. Marshall on this amendment, but it seems to me that a number of employees could use the one license and operate at the one time.

Mr. Leslie: Look at Subclause (4) of Clause 3, and at the last part of the amendment, which is the important part.

Mr. MARSHALL: That being so, I have no further remarks to make.

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

No. 2. Clause 4, (1), page 3: Insert after the word "authority" in line 6 the word "two."

Mr. LESLIE: This amendment means that two testimonials will be required. I see no objection to it. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 4, page 3:

Add a further proviso to Subclause (1) as follows:—

Provided further that any applicant whose application for a license has been refused by the local authority shall have the right of appeal to the Minister for Local Government against such decision.

Mr. LESLIE: This amendment is to add a further proviso to Subclause (1) of the same clause. I am quite happy about the amendment. It may have the effect of making a council more fair. An applicant, whether he actually appeals or not, will feel that he has not been victimised if his application is refused. If his appeal is not upheld by the Minister, he will at least get some indication as to why it was refused. I do not think the amendment affects the essential provisions of the Bill. I move—.

That the Council's amendment be agreed to.

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: I object to the amendment for two reasons, firstly, because I think the Legislative Council ought to have had more sense than to have included it, and secondly, because I think, even if it is agreed to, it will mean virtually nothing. Dealing with the first objection, this seems to me hardly a suitable case for reference to any Minister or

authority at all. When I addressed myself to the second reading of this measure, I said I was willing to support the principle contained in it were it not that I was unwilling further to derogate from the powers of local authorities. This amendment does not suggest that there shall be a right of appeal from the basic decision of a local authority not to grant a license, but against the view that a local authority takes of testimonials. On the second point that I think the amendment, if carried, will have little or no effect, it does not say what the Minister will do for the applicant who appeals. That is a fatal objection. I hope this Chamber will return the amendment to the Legislative Council.

Hon. A. H. PANTON: As the Bill left this Chamber it provided for a license to be issued to proprietors. Another place has suggested that the applicant for a license must forward two testimonials. If they are accepted and the applicant obtains a license, can he hand it over to some partner or perhaps to employees, who have not provided testimonials of their own? I take it the reason why it is suggested that testimonials should be forwarded with the application is so that the Council may satisfy itself that the person undertaking this work is above reproach. Apparently he can then hand the license to someone else. If that is the position it is a foolish amendment.

Mr. LESLIE: Any firm or employer is responsible for the actions of its employees, and we do not withhold a license from a firm because we have not had testimonials from its employees. If an employee is guilty of unsatisfactory conduct there is always a remedy. If an employee in this case was guilty of unbecoming conduct the local authority would have recourse against the holder of the license. I point out to the Minister for Education that the Council's amendment provides for appeal to the Minister for Local Government against the decision of the local authority. It clearly indicates what the appeal is against. The person holding the license would hardly appeal to the Minister to take away the license.

The Minister for Education: There is no provision that the local authority shall abide by the Minister's decision.

Mr. LESLIE: It is not desired to take away from a local authority its right and prerogative—

Mr. Graham: Then why waste the Minister's time?

Mr. LESLIE: Under the measure a local authority will have power to license one street photographer. If there were 10 applicants the local authority might say that none of them was satisfactory, and the amendment provides that in such circumstances the applicants could appeal to the Minister.

Hon. A. H. Panton: How would the Minister decide which one was to get the license?

Mr. LESLIE: I do not know how Ministers decide many things, but feel confident that any Minister could arrive at a suitable decision.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: Has the local authority the right to cancel a current license?

Mr. LESLIE: There is no power in the Bill to cancel a license, but that applies also to other of our licensing laws, except in the case of the liquor license, and even there reasonable warning is given before a license is cancelled. This provision is simply to meet an eventuality that may or may not arise. I do not think there would be an appeal to the Minister unless a council decided to defy Parliament in the matter. Local authorities have no powers of their own, but only powers delegated to them in the first instance by Parliament.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: Some provision should be made in the event of the Council's amendment being agreed to. I move——

That the amendment be amended by adding after the word "decision" the words "and whose decision shall be final."

The MINISTER FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT: I am still opposed to the Council's amendment, but for the present am prepared to support the proposal of the Leader of the Opposition. If I am going to have liability, I should have some authority.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: If an affirmative vote be cast for the amendment, will that connote approval of the Council's amendment as a whole?

The CHAIRMAN: If the amendment be passed, a further vote will be taken on the Council's amendment as amended.

Mr. NEEDHAM: With the addition of the words proposed, the amendment will not read satisfactorily. The Leader of the Opposition should move to delete the words "against such decision" and insert the words he has mentioned.

The CHAIRMAN: I can deal with only one amendment at a time.

Amendment put and passed.

Mr. MARSHALL: I agree with the Minister for Local Government. If six individuals applied for licenses and the local authority could grant only one, the remaining five being disgruntled would appeal to the Minister.

Mr. SHEARN: I wish to dissociate myself from the amendment, which I consider to be ridiculous. From my experience of appeals from decisions of local authorities, I am well aware of the invidious position in which they may be placed. I suggest to the member for Mt. Marshall that even at this late moment he should, out of respect for the Minister, seriously consider disagreeing to the amendment.

Mr. LESLIE: In reply to the member for Murchison, I point out that if the local authority wishes to defeat the purpose of the Bill, it can do so by saying that no suitable person has made application. In that event, the applicants could still appeal to the Minister, who could say that the council had made its choice.

Mr. MARSHALL: But Clause 4 provides that the local authority shall grant the license; it cannot refuse. The member for Mt. Marshall has little sympathy for the Minister who has to hear the appeals.

Question, as amended, put and negatived; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of the Minister for Education, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Leslie drew up reasons for not agreeing to amendment No. 3 made by the Council.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1947-48.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Perkins in the Chair.

Vote—Department of Native Affairs, £65,293 (partly considered).

MR. WILD (Swan) [9.45]: As a new member, about four months ago I decided, in company with the member for Irwin-Moore and the member for Middle Swan, to visit the Moore River settlement to see for myself the conditions under which the natives were living. Although I had been warned that they were not too good, I was shocked at what I found, and that is the only word that I can use. That we as white people, who consider ourselves to be to a certain degree educated and emancipated, should allow such conditions to prevail as we saw at that settlement is an absolute disgrace to the things we have been taught and bred to in our life in this country. I found that the settlement was subdivided into a general institute, a school, a hospital and a farm. But the better way to describe it would be to declare that it was a conglomeration or a general mix-up of both sexes of all ages. The place is considerably understaffed but the staff are doing a magnificent job under terribly difficult circumstances.

There are at Moore River men who have been sent there from some of our prisons down below. There are hospital cases, and quite a number suffering from V.D. There are young girls reaching puberty and boys of the same age and little kiddies up to school-leaving age. For the sisters in the hospital I have the greatest admiration. I understand that they are the wives of the men employed at the settlement and their readiness to endure the conditions which we saw there is a testimony to the great work that our nursing services will perform for the sake of humanity. The school teacher also has a most embarrassing job. She did not tell me, but I understand that due to the mix-up to which I referred, not so many weeks before we were there two of the little girls were found to be pregnant while they were still at school. They were below school-leaving age. At the hospital two four-roomed wards are provided for the V.D. cases sent from down below.

At the time we were there, six males and 13 females were undergoing treatment, and, as there were only those two four-roomed wards, it meant that some of them had to mix with the remainder of the natives living at the settlement. I can therefore leave members to imagine what is happening at that settlement in regard to these sick natives. The children are being well cared for in school hours by a teacher, but when they leave they are allowed to mix with the rest of the natives, some of whom, as I have said, suffering from diseases which should be kept thousands of miles away from little kiddies. An attempt has been made to segregate the natives at night by locking them up in compounds. But practically every compound had a hole big enough for a human being to get through, so the attempt was only a farce. We also visited a farm—a matter of eight or ten miles from the Moore River settlement—where young boys were sent to work. The conditions there were much better. The man who was in charge, and his wife told us quite freely that the boys they had to do the work were quite satisfied and did not want to return to the unpleasant conditions at the settlement.

We moved on from there to the New Norcia convent, and I can think of no greater contrast than was to be observed between the treatment meted out to the children there and that which obtained at the Moore River settlement. The place at New Norcia was absolutely spotless. We could have eaten our food from the floor. Every bed was equipped with a pillow case and sheets. The kiddies looked just the same as we would wish ours to look. At the Moore River settlement, the bedding and the clothing of the children amounted to an utter disgrace; they were not even fit for a pig. In conversation with the sisters at the convent and one or two of the brothers and some of the staff, I gathered that this state of affairs has been going on for years. I am not blaming the previous Government. Everyone has pushed this big problem aside and said, "It is not my worry; let someone else worry over it." I do not pretend to be a moraliser, but we must stand to our obligations and do something for these unfortunate people.

Some years ago I had the opportunity of meeting Dr. Basedow, an eminent South Australian anthropologist. I also had a number of conversations with Mrs. Daisy Bates who as members know looked after the natives at Ooldea on the trans. line. Neither of these two eminent people seemed able to give any constructive advice to overcome this great problem. I think myself there are two big things we have to do. Firstly we must overcome the racial prejudice that has been our lot for many years. I would like to quote a small section of the report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs in this regard—

> In some places there have been criticisms of the actions of natives in occupying houses in townsites, and against their children attending State schools. These instances of criticism are few, and this would indicate that the public is not so colour conscious nowadays. Many natives occupy houses in the metropolitan area, and they seem to be able to observe the requirements of hygiene, and there is no reason to believe that they are not able to do so elsewhere as well. However, complaints have been made in a few instances of natives occupying houses here and there, but these have been matters for attention by health authorities. There were also requests against the attendance of native children at a few State schools. They attend over 100 State schools and their conduct is generally satisfactory. In a few instances, however, attempts have been made to exclude native children due to antipathy to colour, but the Education Department has directed that no discrimination is to be exercised against native children for colour reasons.

We have to break down this barrier which has stood between the native population and ourselves for many years. That is the first thing we have to do and the second, which is a far greater task, is to get hold of the children. It is useless doing much with the grown natives, but if we get hold of the young children we can do as Hitler did—inculcate into them the ideals and traditions that have come to us from our parents. Probably not in our time, but within two or three generations, we will have absorbed the children of the children to whom I refer so that we will be proud to receive them in our homes.

In this regard I wish to mention Sister Kate's home, portion of which is not very far from where I live at Kenwick. I would say of that institution, in support of my contention that we should do something for the kiddies, that the work done there is a magnificent effort and something we should look up to in connection with the safeguarding of the interests of the children. The 30 odd boys in that home are some of the best mannered and best behaved that

it has been my pleasure to meet. I see quite a lot of them because they are not more than 100 yards away from where I live. I have never met the manager but, whoever he is, he must be a man of exceptional qualities because he has inculcated into these children very high standards of discipline. I understand that Mr. Bateman is making a report on the conditions of the natives in Western Australia. I await that report with much interest as I feel it is our duty to do something for the native kiddies. It is not fair to allow the question to be disregarded. It is our baby and we should stand up to our obligations and do something for these children.

MR. ACKLAND (Irwin-Moore) [9.59]: I do not intend to take up very much time, because the member for Swan has dealt with much of the ground I intended to cover, and he has done it so well that repetition would be of no benefit. I do want to congratulate the Minister on the general tone he introduced into the debate. It was heartening to listen to the sympathetic approach he made to the subject. Some three months ago, when speaking in this Chamber, I referred to the Moore River Settlement as being a festering sore. So well has the member for Swan covered that point that I have no intention of repeating my remarks. It is heartening to know that there is to be a reorganisation of that settlement and a prospect of the children being removed from the unsavoury environment that at present exists there. Since speaking on that occasion, I have had opportunity of enlarging my outlook on native questions.

While not an authority on the subject, I have seen some of the main settlements that are being conducted by religious bodies in this State. They compare more than favourably with the only State-run settlement that I have seen. The people of this country cannot throw off their responsibility and the Government, representing the people, must face the problem fairly. While giving all possible encouragement to other bodies that are doing such work, we must carry out our own job in this respect. I have little faith that much can be done with adult natives, but we should concentrate on the children, and the half-caste children in particular.

Hon. E. Nulsen: We should be fair to the adults.

Mr. ACKLAND: I do not for a moment suggest that we should not, but, as a long-term policy, I believe we should concentrate to a greater degree on the children. While seeing that they receive a primary education, it is not sufficient to leave them there. We must select the best of them to be trained in trades, and as teachers and nurses, so that they may look after their own people. If given that training I am confident that they will do that work well.

I recently had the privilege of meeting a gentleman named Robert Powell. In his home I met three or four young natives—in their late 'teens—who showed promise of what can be accomplished with such people. One was a correspondence pupil of the Training College, being prepared to go out among the natives as a teacher. Another was being trained as a nurse, and yet another as a kindergarten teacher. A young man was apprenticed to a carpenter in the city. What they are doing should be an incentive to the Government to see to it that many more such persons are given the opportunity to prepare themselves to look after their own people. At New Norcia, mentioned by the member for Swan, an excellent job is being done. The same remarks apply to Mt. Margaret and Roelands. There may be still other settlements that are doing equally good work. What is being accomplished at the places I have mentioned can be done also at the settlements conducted by the Government, if the matter is approached sympathetically and with the idea of instilling into the natives principles of self-reliance and self-help.

HON. A. A. M. COVERLEY (Kimberley) [10.5]: I listened attentively to the introduction of these Estimates by the Attorney General, and to say that I was disappointed is putting it mildly, because both leaders of the composite Government mentioned the matter during the elections, and this item was further mentioned both in His Excellency's Speech and during the Address-in-reply. Also, after reading articles in the Press, written by the Minister in charge of native affairs, and listening to the eulogistic remarks of members supporting the Government in its intentions, I am sorry to think that this question can be made a political

football. On analysing what has been done, or what the Attorney General, when introducing these Estimates, suggested had been done, I find that he has done two things only in favour of the natives during his eight months' administration of this department. He has appointed a commissioner to make inquiries into certain aspects only of the Department of Native Affairs. Do not let us be misled by what the Minister has done in that regard. He has also introduced an amendment to lift the proclamations that have in the past been law in this State. I believe that in the long run that will be of benefit to a large section of our half-caste population in the metropolitan area.

During the Address-in-reply debate, a statement was made by the member for Geraldton and the member for Irwin-Moore which—at least in the case of the member for Geraldton—was a vast display of ignorance from one who has been a member of this Parliament since 1928. I do not think such statements should be allowed to go unchallenged. As they were not challenged by the Minister, I propose to spend some little time on them. It will be remembered that the member for Geraldton, in a plausible and patronising way, criticised the Government's appointment of Mr. Bateman. In a mild and plausible manner he questioned Mr. Bateman's ability to carry out the duties of the position to which he has been appointed. I wish to dissociate myself from those remarks. Having been given information by the Minister in control of native affairs, I believe that Mr. Bateman is quite a fit and proper person to conduct the investigation. Mr. Bateman holds a very high reputation in this State as an administrator of justice and I think he is a fit and proper person and quite able to do the job he has been called upon to do. The member for Geraldton, in his castigation of the Government for this appointment, concluded his remarks by saying that it would have been much better had the Government put into operation the report of the Moseley Commission.

In 1942-43 I devoted some time to analysing Mr. Moseley's recommendations—those that were put into operation and those that were not. At that time the member for Geraldton occupied a seat in another place. Further, he introduced to me a deputation of meddlesome women and made the same statements. At that time I explained for his benefit, as well as for the benefit of the others, that all the recommendations possible had been put into effect. Once again I shall occupy the time of the Chamber for a few minutes to deal with those recommendations. I have a copy of Mr. Moseley's report and, rather than spend too much time on going through those recommendations, for the benefit of new members, who are evidently displaying some interest in the native question, I would refer them to "Hansard" of 1942-43, Volume 2, page 1973, where they will find my analysis of the recommendations.

Mr. Moseley placed 26 recommendations before the Government and of them No. 2 suggested a reduction in the number of honorary protectors and the abolition of police protectors. That recommendation was not carried out for the reason that it was impossible from an administrative and financial point of view to abolish police protectors through the State. Members realise that this is a very vast State and the natives are spread over the greater portion of it. In parts they are 2,000 miles distant from the centre of administration, and need to be looked after by somebody. Naturally the local policeman is the person to represent the Department of Native Affairs and the Government in the issue of rations and in the many other ways where the natives need help and assistance.

That recommendation was not put into effect and the suggestion to reduce the number of honorary protectors was not adopted either, because the vast majority of these protectors are superintendents and mission workers of the various religious organisations. Such a reduction might be misconstrued if the Government did not make each worker, including the superintendent of every mission, an honorary protector. There are approximately 126 honorary protectors and, strange to say, not one of them to my knowledge has ever taken a case on behalf of a native. In spite of that, it would be very undiplomatic to cancel their honorary protectorships, and to put that recommendation into operation would be unwise.

Recommendation No. 8 was the establishment of a leprosarium for Western Australian native lepers at Sunday Island or

similarly isolated area suitable to medical requirements. There is a leprosarium which is approximately 16 miles from Derby, but this is not situated on Sunday Island. I cannot claim that this recommendation was put into effect, but I can assure the Committee that the leprosarium catering for natives is second to none in Australia.

Hon. A. H. Panton: A very fine place.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The Attorney General mentioned this fact, and I support his remarks. It represents a wonderful effort on behalf of the natives and is something to which we are entitled to some credit. While the leprosarium was built and financed by Commonwealth funds, it was assisted in many ways by the State Government. Through the activity of the State, the Commonwealth built the leprosarium and transferred a few Western Australian natives, who had been sent to Darwin, back to the State, and so we can fairly claim that that recommendation was put into effect.

The only other recommendation made and not put into operation was No. 19, providing for the establishment of an island settlement for delinquent natives. That has not been adopted because it would be a very expensive matter to find an island suitable for the location of such a home. It would be expensive because these people would require medical as well as other attention. It is difficult enough and has been for the last eight or nine years, to get medical officers to meet the requirements of our white population, without expecting to get a doctor to go to such an island settlement. Thus, out of the 26 recommendations, only two have not been in operation for many years. People generally do not comprehend the position and cannot be expected to follow politics closely, and we can understand their making such foolish and unreliable statements, but when we find a member who has been associated with the Parliament since 1928 repeating such statements on the floor of the Chamber and not meeting with any contradiction, we can excuse the general public for any conclusion it draws.

When the member for Geraldton was speaking, I could not help thinking that there was probably a skeleton in the cupboard. He did not bother to ascertain the reason for Mr. Bateman's appointment or what he intended to do and, having a skeleton in the cupboard, he thought that Mr. Bateman might be embarking on a fishing expedition and would probably make inquiries about a certain Mr. Hall of Geraldton and his dealings with the natives in the Geraldton district. I hope that the Minister will not take any offence at the remarks of the member for Geraldton about the appointment of Mr. Bateman. I do not consider that appointment was necessary, but I disagree for an entirely different reason from that advanced by the hon. member.

The member for Irwin-Moore cast aspersions on the Moore River settlement. He commenced his remarks by admitting that he was not an authority on the subject; in fact, he said he was not very well informed, but he immediately set out to criticise the settlement and his criticism was based on what he had been told. That criticism has been agreed to by the member for Swan and, owing to his innocence, I do not intend to say very much about his remarks. There was something in the place that shocked his humanitarian nature as he had not seen anything of that sort before, and he felt very peeved about it. For the benefit of both those members, I would state that the Moore River settlement was a legacy handed to the Labour Government. It was established by a Government of the political colour of the present Government.

It is unfortunate that the settlement is situated in the worst class of country in Western Australia. The land is of the poorest kind and so the settlement was handicapped from its commencement so far as making it self-supporting was concerned. Up to the time that the Labour Government took office, every mouthful of vegetable and every mouthful of mutton supplied to the settlement to feed the natives was purchased in the metropolitan area and trucked to the settlement. The Labour Government did buy some better class land which could produce vegetables, carry a few sheep and grow a crop, but unfortunately that land was situated 11 miles from the settlement. Therefore members, particularly Country Party members, can realise the handicap to the settlement owing to the distance of that land from the homestead.

Another point is that the Moore River settlement is isolated. It is some distance from the Mogumber siding, so that when the staff get a half-holiday or a day's holi-

day, they have nowhere to go except to Mogumber, which consists of one hotel and a railway siding. One can readily imagine the highly amusing time the staff would have on a half-holiday at that siding! The members of the staff owing to the isolation, get tired of one another's company and have no desire to stop at the settlement. There are no amenities and there is no shop at which the staff can purchase their requirements. Consequently, it is very hard to keep a staff. During the past nine years, particularly during the war period, it was exceptionally hard to get staff of any description. The department had to accept what staff was offering; there was no picking or choosing, good, bad, or evil.

Mr. Ackland: There is a darned good staff there now.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I am prepared to agree; so far as I know, there is a good staff, but the hon. member's colleague indicated to me that it was slipping a bit. The hon. member's colleague also said that the linen at the Moore River settlement was not fit for a pig. That indicates to me lack of enthusiasm on the part of the staff. We have a Government department that supplies linen and good food and the staff must be depended upon to see that it is obtained. If the remarks made by the member for Swan are correct, I suggest to the Minister that he make an inquiry as to why all this filth is in the dormitories. I want the member for Irwin-Moore to bear in mind that we know—and I think everybody else knows—that the Moore River settlement, by virtue of its geographical position, is an utter failure and will remain so until such time as another property is purchased to separate the young from the evil natives. Until then it will always be a blank. The Labour Government at one time had an artisan at the settlement to teach manual training to the half-caste boys; but when war broke out he enlisted in the Air Force and we were not able to get anyone to take his place, so the manual training just vanished.

The Minister for Native Affairs: It has started again.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes. I understand the Minister has re-established that class of work, for which I am very grateful. I want the member for Irwin-Moore to realise that the Moore River settlement, with all its drawbacks and difficulties, has provided many decent domestic servants for farmers' wives and has also supplied many decent native labourers. If it had not been for them there would have been a lot of wool on the sheep's backs at this time. While it is well known that every effort was made by the past Government to secure a new settlement area in order to overcome the difficulties that were pointed out by the two members to whom I have referred, the effort was not successful. The present Government has been in office for about eight months and knew, or should have known, by reading the files what the policy was and what should have been done, but it has not been successful in its eight months of office.

The Minister for Native Affairs: It very shortly will be.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I am convinced in my own mind that when the Minister can find what may be classed as a suitable area, he will do what the previous Government would have done. He will purchase it. But it must be borne in mind that it is not easy to secure a settlement suitable for the purpose. It is simple enough to buy a farm which would be self-supporting for a family, a farm that would provide stock, water and firewood for the family. But in an institution of this description, there are 300 souls to cater for and so it is a different story. The main thing is the water supply. If that can be obtained and guaranteed, the Government will be wise in making the purchase. The members to whom I have referred have said that we owe a debt to these native people and they want to know what we have done for them.

The Labour Government secured the passage of legislation covering the main things that concerned the natives. The Labour Government altered the Native Administration Act to give a right of appeal to any native against any decision of the Commissioner of Native Affairs or the Minister for Native Affairs. The native has a right of appeal to the magistrate in the district in which he lives. If the natives have been imposed upon it is entirely their own fault, as they have this right of appeal. It was left to the Labour Government to abolish the compellable witness provision under which native women gave evidence against their husbands.

The Labour Government also introduced the measure giving natives who have at-

tained the age of 21 years full citizenship rights provided they do not live a tribal life. What else could the natives ask for? If they are prepared to live in accordance with white standards, all they have to do is to make application to the magistrate of the local court where they live and get full citizenship rights. They can then live in the same way as the member for Irwin-Moore or myself. They can obtain a license to run a hotel or contest a seat in Parliament. In fact, the member for Irwin-Moore had better be careful! By way of administration, the previous Labour Government has carried out the recommendations made by Mr. Moseley, as Royal Commissioner. It was a Labour Government who appointed Mr. Moseley to that position and it was a Labour Government that carried out his recommendations, with the exception of two, which it was not possible to put into operation.

Mr. Ackland: Why is it necessary to defend them? No-one attacked them.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: It is necessary to place on record what the Labour Government did, because the Minister in charge of this department introduced a Bill. He made a very nice speech and pointed out what had been done. Comments appeared in the Press. For that and other reasons, I am of the opinion that he is misleading the public politically. I point out that both leaders of the Government mentioned this during the electioneering campaign, but they have never expounded their policy in this connection. The Minister is leading the public to believe that something serious has happened or is likely to happen. I am of the opinion that nothing serious is going to happen for a long time and I want it placed on record that that is my opinion now. I do not want it to be a case of "I told you so!" in another five or six years' time.

The longer the member for Irwin-Moore is associated with the natives the more he will learn that very few men understand them. I pointed out that the Labour Government had carried out the Moseley recommendations. We appointed a travelling medical officer and assisted in the building of the leprosarium. We built four new up-to-date hospitals, controlled by certificated nurses in the North-West. We established Cosmo-Newbery which was eulogised the other evening and we re-opened Carolup. We have heard a lot of the good work that has been done for the natives there; but it was the Labour Government that re-opened Carolup—against quite a lot of influence, too! As a matter of fact, it was a Nationalist Government that closed the settlement.

The Minister for Native Affairs: When was that?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: In 1922. I am not blaming the Minister.

The Minister for Native Affairs: I was not born then.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: When I have something for which to blame the Minister, I shall not hesitate to tell him and I will give him due credit when he does something worthy on behalf of my black brother. We re-opened the Carolup settlement and nobody will blame us, because we have received evidence that it has been a boon to the natives of the Great Southern area. We purchased Udialla. That is a new site in the West Kimberley district. We also purchased a new site for the East Perth Girls' Home. We agreed to the opening of six new missions—I mean missions controlled by religious organisations—and we placed the education of all institutional natives under the administration of the Education Department. They now receive the same education as white children. By regulation we prohibited the colour bar at State schools, which was mentioned tonight.

The member for Irwin-Moore is rather new to politics and has not been a very close student of "Hansard." If he had been, he would not have made the statement he did. He is likely to embarrass the present Minister for Railways, the Minister for Education and the member for Beverley and a few others. I am not going to inflict "Hansard" on the Committee tonight, but I want to remind the hon. member of the hullabaloo that occurred at Pingelly when white people refused to allow their children to go to school on account of the half-castes who were attending. I suggest to him that he read "Hansard" before involving his colleagues in these arguments. We also made possible the appointment of the four travelling inspectors for the out-back districts mentioned by the Minister. I think

they will do a lot of good if they are the right type of men. If they have some milk of human kindness flowing in their veins they will do a power of good. If not, it will be the Minister's job to get rid of them. We increased the area of reserves for natives in Western Australia to 38,000,000 acres.

Unlike my friend, the member for Swan, we never encouraged anthropologists, and I hope the present Minister will not do so either. National Labour extended social service benefits to the value of over £5,000 per annum to the natives in this State, and we increased the number of honorary protectors instead of reducing them. We also increased the expenditure by the department from roughly £27,000 or £30,000 to £75,000 or £80,000 a year. Many other things were done by Labour. We found useful employment for the natives, and when we left office approximately 6,000 were so employed. We did not permit them to stay idle on missions, drawing rations and refusing work. We saw that they were employed, mostly with farmers or pastoralists, under reasonable conditions; and appointed a travelling inspector to see that those conditions were observed. When we went out of office 6,000 were employed, a vast number of them in the metropolitan area; and practically all of them were working under Arbitration awards.

I want it to be understood that the Labour Government has nothing of which to be ashamed concerning what it did for the natives of this State. We did all in our power to deal with them reasonably and fairly; and I hope that the next time someone wants to throw bouquets at the present Ministry, he will not do so, thus leaving the inference that these things were not done by the Government's predecessors. Now I want to come closer to the Estimates with which I am supposed to be dealing, and I desire to know first of all what this Government has done to carry out the promises made at the election by both leaders of the Coalition Cabinet; that is to say, what it has done apart from the two things I have mentioned—that is, the appointment of Mr. Bateman to inquire into native matters, and the amendment to the Act that was recently passed. While I have said unhesitatingly that Mr. Bateman has the ability to do a good job, and am positive that he will, yet he is permitted to make only certain inquiries on certain lines, which indicates to me what would be the nature of his report. It will be one very suitable to the present Government.

I think that the Government from the records on the files could have done exactly what it wanted to do without appointing Mr. Bateman. That was a waste of money and a stay of proceedings. It was even bad political tactics. Mr. Bateman has been three months on the job up to date, and will be at least another three months, which will make a total of six months; and that is not justified because the appointment was not justified. I can assure members that a lot of the opinions expressed both in this Chamber and outside concerning the natives are very much astray. I do not pretend to be an authority on the subject.

I sat alongside natives at school at Bridgetown 40 years ago and they never contaminated me. But still I do not understand them, though I have been associated with them in some way or other ever since. They are a peculiar race, with peculiar characteristics, by virtue of their tribal breeding from time immemorial. While I believe that this Government or any other Government can, and should, assist them in many ways by education and a training in hygiene, they are a race that has to be kept under control like children. It is a problem that must solve itself. I am positive that the department which has been controlling them for so long has the full facts and knowledge to supply all the information necessary to enable this or any other Government to make up its mind what to do without incurring the expense of appointing a commission. I hope that in his reply the Minister will give us an undertaking that Mr. Bateman's report will be available to this House or to any member interested enough to want to read it.

I know that the appointment was a Government one and it will be a Government report. Mr. Bateman will report to the Government and the taxpayers, who will be footing the bill for the report, will know nothing about it unless it is placed on the Table of the House, or given publicity of some description. I hope, whatever the recommendations are, that they will be in the interests of the natives. This Government has been in office long enough to have made up its mind, without the appointment

of a commissioner. This is a commission to stay proceedings only.

The Chief Secretary: You have admitted you do not know much after 40 years.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes, but I have the courage to do what I think is right. I do not want someone else to tell me.

The Chief Secretary: It is a good idea to try to learn.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I always do, but I have not learnt much from the Chief Secretary.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You never will.

The Chief Secretary: You do not listen.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I would like the Minister to give some explanation, when he is replying to this debate, of a statement which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 2nd June, 1947, as follows:—

> The former Government, he said, had in view the extension and reorganisation of native settlements and institutions, and the present administration was anxious to make early progress in this direction. Acquired some years ago, five acres on Albany-highway, about four miles south of Perth, would be considered as the site for a new native girls' home to replace the home at East Perth. An alternative site for such a home would be a location in the hills.

For the benefit of this Chamber, I would say that the Labour Government purchased a five acre block on the tramline in Victoria Park. It is a glorious business site. I know various business people who would be only too anxious to purchase it. I gather from this Press report that there is a possibility that this site will not be used; that the girls' home will be shifted to the hills. I hope that is not contemplated, although it is what the Minister is reported to have said. The block on the tramline is particularly accessible for the girls who work in the city. They are able to get to their work and home again very easily. It is also in close proximity to a fire brigade station, and to the medical attention which is so necessary. Nothing but disadvantage would accrue from shifting this home to the hills.

I hope the Minister will remember what I have said. It was a hard battle to get Treasury approval for this site because it was such a particularly good one. The previous Labour Government purchased it for the benefit of the native girls in East Perth. Many of them are doing an excellent job in the metropolitan area, working as domestics and cooks. It would ill-become this or any other Government to advocate their transferance so that they would have to go to the hills at the end of each day's work. Another point I would like the Minister to explain is the necessity, if it be true, for two senior officials of the department using a special aeroplane for a trip north. I would like to know first of all why they had a special aeroplane and what was the especial urgency. I would also like the Minister to tell me the cost of the trip and the benefit that accrued to the natives from it.

I want the Minister to give an explanation why the Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs gave evidence before the Royal Commission dealing with workers' compensation. To me, that is a waste of money and time. If there is any necessity to do anything in the way of providing compensation for the natives, it is a simple enough matter to introduce a short amendment of the Native Administration Act. I am wondering why the time of the Royal Commission and that of the Acting Commissioner of Native Affairs was taken up in giving this evidence.

The Chief Secretary: The Commissioners have the power to call what evidence they like.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The Commissioners did not call the evidence. I took the precaution of asking a question of the Minister who does understand his business. The Chief Secretary need not go to the assistance of the Attorney General. He is well able to look after himself and can give all the explanations necessary when he replies, without the assistance of junior counsel. I am satisfied there was no need for this evidence. Was it given because the Government lacks the courage to implement its policy, or because there is a difference of opinion between the two sections of the Government? Does the Country and Democratic League refuse to support this proposal, or do the employers of native workers on farms object to natives receiving compensation?

Why does this Chamber have to be assured by a Royal Commission that it is right to give workers' compensation to natives? I suggest that the Minister immedi-

ately have a look at Subsection (5) of Section 36 of the Act. Whilst there is unwarranted expenditure of this type, I find the Minister has committed the greatest sin by providing for a reduction in the amount of the Native Affairs Department Vote. He has taken credit for the appointment of four new inspectors and said that there was a slight increase in the general Vote of £400 per annum.

The Attorney General: I was reporting on the expenditure for nine months of your year of office. Those figures were supplied by the department to show how the extra expenditure was incurred. I mentioned that you had appointed the four inspectors.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: I did not lead the electors to believe that by waving a magic wand I could solve all the problems involved in native affairs, if I were returned to office. I have never tried to lead this Chamber to believe that I had a particular way of overcoming all the difficulties in the course of a few months. I have always had the courage to say that, owing to the shortage of manpower and materials, it was impossible to do all I thought should be done for the benefit of the natives. I am not concerned with the increase in the salaries of staff, and so on. When they are due for salary increments, the process is automatic, and they have the Civic Service Association to look after them.

The staff of the Department of Native Affairs have that organisation to look after their interests but, unless someone in this Chamber takes up the cudgels for the natives, there is no one to see that they receive fair treatment. The main item in this expenditure is that which provides for stores, provisions, clothing and other expenditure incidental to the promotion of the welfare of natives, and that item is reduced by approximately £800. I am sorry to see that money can be expended by senior officials, who are permitted to travel round the State in aeroplanes and give evidence before Royal Commissions, and so on, while the natives pay for it through a reduction in their Vote. I would ask the Minister, when replying, to explain why that Vote has been reduced in a short period by approximately £800. I come now to the Udialla native settlement, which was purchased by the previous Government for the establishment of an up-to-date institution for the coloured population of the North. It was pointed out to the Minister that the Moola Bulla native cattle station has been a huge success and is more than self-supporting, as it subscribes some thousands of pounds per annum to the revenue of the Government.

It would be wrong to establish an institution at Moola Bulla, as it would only finish up like Moore River. Moola Bulla is the place to which natives who have broken the law are sent, and in my opinion the native children should have been taken from there to some other area. Udialla is an exceptionally good piece of country on the banks of the Fitzroy River, in an area that will produce all classes of tropical fruit and vegetables, which have been grown there successfully for some years. If we are to train and educate the natives, both physically and mentally, they must be in an area where they can produce most of their own needs. This area would offer advantages for the training of female natives in the work necessary to fit them for domestic service. The boys would have opportunity of learning all classes of agricultural work, and both body and mind would be built on healthy lines.

It is not posible for the Minister immediately to obtain the materials, and ship them to the North to build that institution, but I am dissatisfied that no plant or machinery has been provided for the officials in charge of Udialla, in order that they might get on with the developmental work that is so essential. Onions are scarce in the metropolitan area each year from April onwards. Onions larger than a cricket ball can be grown successfully in the Udialla area. They are a large hard brown variety that will keep for 12 months. If Udialla were supplied with a tractor, a plough and harrows, with which to do the work, 20 or 30 acres could be utilised for the production of onions which, when shipped to the metropolitan area, would return a reasonable price. They could be grown without irrigation, under natural conditions, and there would be no restrictions on the sale of the product. At present only about 1½ acres of onions are grown and they are either used locally or shipped to Cockatoo Island, where they find a ready sale. A tractor and machinery should be there already, as it is no use

trying to grow a large acreage of onions with only a few natives with spades to dig the ground.

I ask the Minister to do his utmost to supply the director of Udialla with a tractor and machinery before the beginning of the wet season, so that he may get to work. Experiments in the growing of sisal hemp have been carried out at Udialla and if it can be grown successfully—as I have no doubt it will—without irrigation, the possibilities will be enormous, as there are hundreds of acres of land available and suitable for its growth. If it can be grown successfully there will be great possibilities from the production and manufacturing points of view. There are two or three hundred half-caste children in that area who will have to be catered for in the course of time and the institutional, production and manufacturing sides must be considered. The sooner the superintendent can be supplied with the necessary machinery the sooner will he be able to proceed with the planting of large areas of sisal hemp. This hemp takes four years to mature and some that I saw last September was about eighteen inches in length and as broad as the palm of my hand. When it can be planted in large areas we will see whether it can be grown successfully.

The Minister, when introducing the Estimates, pointed out that the general expenditure was only increased by a few hundred pounds, and, when it was permissible for materials and so forth to be made available, he was certain the Treasurer would provide the finance to increase his expenditure. There should not be any need for that because there was at least £14,000 in a trust account from General Loan Funds for such purposes, and unless the Minister has disposed of this amount during his eight months, it should be still available.

When the Minister was referring to the Munja cattle station, I interjected, "You would not call that a cattle station." I desire to qualify that remark, because it might be interpreted that things were not fair and aboveboard, but that was not my intention. Munja Station is situated on the Walcott Inlet, between Derby and Wyndham, in, I should say, the wildest part of the Kimberleys. The natives along that coast are all tribal people and have had very little contact with white civilisation. They have probably drifted into the Kunmunya or Drysdale Missions a couple of times, and into the Munja Station once or twice, and that is all. Coming as they do from the country which is bounded by portion of the Leopold Ranges, they never go short of meat. Natives of that type cannot be handled and they are killing the cattle as fast as they are bred. This is no fault of the administration, because it would be impossible to deal with these natives, and there is not much chance of increasing the herds there.

Munja has produced up to 30 tons of peanuts in one season, so there is a bright outlook from that point of view. I read in the Press recently that the British Government was talking of spending £1,000,000 in Nigeria for the purpose of producing peanuts. Peanuts were first introduced into this State by my colleague, the member for Gascoyne, and were grown very successfully, although we were not helped by any of the firms in this State. Munja in one season produced 30 tons. The first three or four tons that arrived in the metropolitan area were sold at the rate of £60 per ton to Plaistowe's. When the rest of the nuts arrived from the North, the Chinese and Queensland nuts were on the market, and the local nuts were not wanted. The explanation given by the firm was that our nuts were too large and were unsuitable for its requirements. It offered the Government 2½d. per pound for the remainder.

At the same time, the Drysdale Mission grew some small Spanish nuts and received 6d. per pound for the first two or three tons, but in course of time was informed that those nuts were too small and were not wanted, but an offer of 2½ per pound was made for the balance. That has been the experience of the primary producers in the North. It is one of the things they have to put up with. Quite a number of other white people grew peanuts in the North, but their experience was similar and they went out of the industry. The native station at Munja still produces peanuts but, instead of depending upon the local market, it now supplies the native institutions, and particularly the leprosarium. I understand that the peanut is a good food, and the leprosarium takes the bulk of the peanuts being grown.

The Minister informed the Committee that a Premiers' Conference was to be held on this national question before very long, and expressed the hope that, as a result of the conference, the Commonwealth Government would provide money for native affairs in this State. My experience is that the Commonwealth Government is as hard as goats' knees where money is concerned. The opinion of the previous Government was that the Commonwealth Government should be asked to spend £2 for every £3 spent on the natives under our Annual Estimates. In making that request, I consider that we asked for no more than a fair thing. I hope that the Minister will be successful in getting some financial assistance, because I realise how necessary it is.

The member for Kanowna made some assertions in his speech about what the natives had to put up with at the hands of the whites. While I might agree that, in the early days of settlement, many atrocities did occur, from my own knowledge and experience I do not think anything of that kind has happened for the past 25 or 30 years. It might be true that, in the early days, when natives were raiding and robbing prospectors' camps of tucker, etc., an odd one may have been shot, but that sort of thing does not happen now. The majority of policemen, so far as I know, deal reasonably decently with the natives, and I am aware of no bushman that is guilty of such behaviour nowadays. As a matter of fact, bushmen are generally sympathetic to the natives, and in many ways work in harmony with them.

The member for Swan, apart from his criticism of the Moore River settlement, said he hoped that we would live down the racial prejudice. I suppose time alone will tell, but from the attitude of many road boards and the attitude of many members, indicated by their speeches in this Chamber during recent years, I would say that racial prejudice will continue for a very long time. I should like the opinion of the member for Swan in reference to a family marriage of this sort. I can understand the point of view of country people, particularly farmers, and why they do not want native children to attend school with their children. During earlier years there is not much harm, but the native children mix with the whites to play football, cricket and other games at school and, as they grow up, the fear of parents is that intermarriage might occur. I think that is the reason why the majority of country people do not like the mixing of these children in their towns and schools.

I should like the Minister, when replying, to give me the information I have requested —that is, the reason for the decrease in the Estimates, and the necessity, if it is intentional, for the references in the Press to the East Perth Girls' Home being transferred to the hills; also the reason for departmental officers using special aeroplanes to fly around the North, and the necessity for a Royal Commission's comments upon compensation for natives when provision can be made by a short amendment to the Act.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Have you got Violet Valley now?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The Government sold it. I tried to give Munja away also to a mission station, but the mission refused it.

MR. YATES (Canning) [11.11]: I listened with much interest to the long and informative speech of the member for Kimberley. He went back for 40 years, to the time of his first association with natives at Bridgetown. He also had a great deal to say about the seven years while he was Minister for Native Affairs. I do not claim to be possessed of anything like the knowledge which he has gained over so long a period of years, but I do claim to have taken great interest in our native problems. I have also been closely associated with natives during the recent war and I intend to say a few words about citizenship rights for natives who were concerned in World War II. Before I do so, I wish to make a few comments on portion of the speech of the member for Kimberley. He referred to the innocence of new members. It seems to be a habit of most of the older members to have a dig at the younger members when they make a speech in the House.

The member for Kimberley said that in all innocence the member for Swan went to the Moore River settlement, but he cast aside the fact that that member had enough interest to travel 200 miles at a week-end when he could have been employed doing

something for himself in his own electorate. He made that journey to see for himself the conditions at the settlement. I did not visit the settlement myself, but I have heard much about it. In the course of conversation I did hear that last year—and I believe this to be authentic—a health inspector visited the Moore River settlement and wrote at the end of his report, "A second Belsen." Members can take that for what it is worth, but I believe it to be authentic although I cannot vouch for it. If that report is true, then there must also be some truth in what the member for Swan, the member for Irwin-Moore and other members have said about the conditions at that settlement. The member for Kimberley did say that recently, and for a period of years, the conditions were bad so far as the class of country at the settlement was concerned and that therefore it would be advisable to remove the settlement.

I say quite frankly that the present Minister for Native Affairs is taking not only a keen interest in that settlement but also in native questions generally. I have approached him on many problems affecting the natives not only in the near metropolitan area but in the farming districts as well. I say, without any fear of successful contradiction, that the present Minister is doing as good a job as the previous Minister for Native Affairs did and I am certain that he will exceed what the previous Minister did. This he will do by tackling the problem in a different manner. The member for Kimberley was at pains to explain or defend the previous Government's attitude towards the natives over a period of years.

No member on this side of the Chamber, to my knowledge since I have been a member, has derided the efforts of the previous Government. I am quite satisfied that that Government tackled the job in a very commendable manner; but, as time goes on and conditions alter, there must be a change in policy. If it is necessary to change the policy, and an inquiry similar to the one instituted by the Labour Government is warranted, when Mr. Moseley acted as a Royal Commissioner, then such an inquiry should be held. The member for Kimberley made no mention of the cost of that Royal Commission.

Hon. A. H. Panton: A lot of other people did. They said we knew nothing about it.

Mr. YATES: That may be so. Mr. Bateman's report will most likely be before us in the near future and will doubtless be of great benefit in solving many of the problems dealing with native affairs. It is not reasonable to expect that any member should criticise the actions of Ministers who, in all sincerity, try to improve the conditions of our natives. Recognising the calibre of the Minister for Native Affairs as I do, I am quite certain his intentions towards the natives of this State are most worthy. He proposes to improve the conditions of our natives by providing better homes and better settlements for them. The Minister can discuss these matters when he replies to the many questions asked by the member for Kimberley. I shall now deal with the citizenship rights of natives.

I mentioned that I had had dealings with natives while on Service. I met many of them. We had a number in the battalion I was associated with for a period of four years and, without exception, every one of them, whether full blood or half-caste, was an excellent soldier. Their discipline was of a high standard. While on leave they played the game and acted as one would expect a white Australian to act. Many full-blooded aborigines in the Armed Services of Australia managed to gain N.C.O. rank; in one or two instances they gained commissioned rank.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Would they be mission boys, or educated boys, on enlistment? I suppose they would be.

Mr. YATES: Yes. They definitely did have education. It would be impossible for a full-blooded aborigine without education to reach the rank of lieutenant.

Hon. E. Nulsen: Were they Western Australian boys?

Mr. YATES: The officers I am talking about were Eastern States natives. I do not think there was a native officer from this State, but several from this State reached the rank of corporal. I believe that 2/16th and 2/11th battalions had their quota of full-blooded and half-caste natives. I shall now give the Committee a brief report on what happened to a returned soldier who was a full-blooded aborigine and a member of the 2/11th battalion. As members are aware, these native Australian soldiers while on Service enjoyed the same privileges as

any other Australian soldiers. They received the same rate of pay, the same leave and were able to drink liquor in the canteens and to purchase it at hotels in the same way as the other men did.

This native had been in the Service for four or five years. He came back to Western Australia and purchased liquor. He knew he was breaking the regulations under the Native Administration Act. He was caught by a policeman with a bottle of beer in his possession. The policeman happened to arrest him near a drunken Australian who was lying either in or near the gutter. The native was perfectly sober, but he had the bottle of beer in his possession. As the policeman arrested him, he said, "What about this man lying on the ground?" The policeman replied, "I am not concerned with him, he is a white man." That is the point I wish to bring home. These men, who were good enough to go away and fight for this country and who enjoyed the same privileges as other Australian soldiers while on Service, are denied those privileges now they are back in civilian life.

Mr. Styants: Do you think it is a privilege to sell alcohol to a native?

Mr. YATES: No, it is not.

Mr. Styants: It is certainly not for their benefit.

Mr. YATES: That is quite so. Alcohol was given to the natives when they were in one or other of the Services because there could not be any discrimination. The man I have referred to, who served his country honourably, now finds it difficult to get citizenship rights. I will read to members a paragraph contained in the recently tabled annual report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs—

> During the war it was easier to discern the good soldier types from those that were indifferent or unsuitable for soldiering due to their native disabilities. These latter classes were easily distinguished from the good native soldiers who served honourably oversea with their white brethren. It will be interesting to watch the effect of this association. Some people believe that the association will not endure into full social companionship, as doubtless the native soldiers will mostly return to their native friendships and social circles. There is some evidence of this already. Unquestionably, too, the good types of native soldiers show traits of mental development from their companionship with white soldiers. This is a pleasing aspect as regards the observance of civil standards, and it supports the view expressed in my last report that the social outlook of our southern natives is changing to white standards.

That bears out what I say, that the association of those natives who served as members of the Armed Forces was to their advantage, and that those who served honourably and were discharged with good records should at least be given an opportunity to acquire full citizenship rights and have the same privileges that we, as whites, enjoy today.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Submit an amendment to the Bill before Parliament and we will help you in that regard.

Mr. YATES: I suggest to the Minister for Native Affairs that he should do all in his power to see that the position of the men I refer to and also of other natives who have proved by their way of life, mode of living and friendships they have entered into with whites, should be taken into consideration so that they will have an opportunity to acquire citizenship rights.

Mr. Marshall: The law is available for them to do that now.

Mr. YATES: But we do not find the natives acquiring their rights.

Mr. Marshall: They can apply to the court.

Mr. YATES: While the law is already available for the purpose, as was observed a little while ago, and the natives have the right of appeal to a local magistrate, how many natives are aware of the fact? They do not know they have that right.

Mr. Marshall: They should be told.

Mr. YATES: The man whose case I have cited is still not able to get his full citizenship rights although he, as a soldier, had a great record and is living six miles from Parliament House and dresses and works as do white men.

Mr. Triat: Why do you not tell him of his rights?

Mr. YATES: The man knows, but cannot avail himself of them because he has been convicted of having been in the possession of liquor. In common with other members, I feel that the future of the natives of Western Australia will be brighter because of the standards set in the past, which will be carried on and improved upon. The member for Kimberley mentioned a report furnished by the Royal Commissioner, Mr. Moseley, and indicated that about 20 of the

items he submitted had been dealt with. That indicates that the Royal Commissioner's report has borne fruit. In the circumstances, I think the report that will be submitted by Mr. Bateman may convey vital information for the benefit of the Minister and that further improvements will be effected as a result of that Royal Commissioner's findings.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You missed my point. I said he did not hold a general Royal Commission for his inquiry.

Mr. YATES: It may not be so extensive as that furnished to Mr. Moseley but still it covers a wide field, and I feel certain that the report will be of interest to members on both sides of the House.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Will it be tabled?

Mr. YATES: I certainly hope so. The native problem should be tackled by members on both sides of the Chamber in a spirit of friendship, because it affects us all vitally.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. YATES: I listened to the member for Kimberley with great interest because he has had a wide experience of native affairs and knows the subject from A to Z. He knows the haunts and habits of the natives of the North-West better than most of those who have dealt with the subject.

MR. RODOREDA (Roebourne) [11.25]: I doubt whether any member who has given much deep consideration to the matter, can, generally speaking, cavil at the treatment of natives by various Governments, considering the very limited resources available to the State for the purpose. It is well known that the bulk of the native population of Australia is to be found within this State, which possesses the smallest revenue of any of the States and is presented with a tremendous problem. It is most difficult for any Government to provide the necessary finance to deal with it adequately. When I say "deal with it," I do not mean in the way suggested by the members for Irwin-Moore, Canning or Swan. What they suggested is not dealing with the problem at all. All they did was to point out a few instances where the organisation has fallen down on its job. They said that something has to be done to solve the problem—but they did not suggest anything. What has to be done?

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is the point.

Mr. RODOREDA: There is one phase that no Government in Australia has tackled, and it is not a matter of policy with regard to the aborigines. The problem we have to solve before tackling anything else is to determine what is the ultimate destiny of the aborigines as a race. Once we decide that, then we can start making plans. I submit that the ultimate destiny of the aborigines as a race is outside the control of this or any other Parliament. It rests in the hands of the citizens of Australia. For us to do any good for the natives, it is certain that they must be assimilated into the white race—or else they must die out. I do not think there can be any question about that. All we are doing now is to endeavour to improve their conditions as natives. If we do that and if, as suggested by the member for Irwin-Moore, we get hold of the children and educate them, if we give them the best education possible and equal to any white standard, even putting them through the University if we like—after all that, what is to become of them?

Mr. Mann: They will get back to the track.

Mr. RODOREDA: That is the problem for solution. We merely intensify the difficulty by educating them and then refusing to accept them afterwards. That is the problem, and nothing else. We must assimilate the race or let it die out. It is all very well to talk about natives who served with distinction in the Army or elsewhere. Would the member for Canning, who is quite disturbed about what is happening to a certain lieutenant who served in the Army, allow his daughter to marry that native officer or his son? Of course he would not. That is what is meant by associating with them. That is what we mean when we talk about assimilating the natives into the white race.

While that prejudice exists, as it undoubtedly does and will, I think, as long as there is a white race in Australia, it is nonsense to talk about associating with and assimilating this native race. We can talk glibly about it here, but which one of us would be prepared to have his child marry

a full-blood native or a half-caste? None of us, of course! It is all right to talk about it as a policy for the other fellow and the other fellow's children, but not for our own. So while we refuse to accept that fact and define our policy accordingly, we are talking a lot of nonsense about ameliorating the conditions of the natives, because we are making them realise how very unsatisfactory their position is; and the more we educate them the more we will make them realise that. I think we are doing them a disservice by trying to educate them when we will not accept them afterwards.

All we are doing is breeding a race within a race, and with each generation that goes by, the problem will be intensified. The member for Pingelly and the member for Beverley know what a problem this is, in the closely settled areas, and it is one that is being intensified now in the North. All the talk that has taken place in this Chamber ever since I have been here, has not put one more pat of butter on the native's bread, or improved his position in the community one iota, and it never will. This Government has no policy in regard to the future of the natives. No Government in Australia has a policy, nor has any Government in Western Australia had a policy up to date in this regard, a policy that matters. So all we are doing is spending money to make the lot of the natives a little better, and to make them realise how very unsatisfactory their position is; and to get the viewpoint of the natives under this Citizenship Rights Act, we will have to get one to stand for Parliament, win a seat and have him appointed Minister for Native Affairs, so that we can find out what he thinks this Parliament should do for the ultimate regeneration of his race.

MR. REYNOLDS (Forrest) [11.34]: The hour was fairly well advanced when the Minister for Native Affairs gave a very interesting talk on this subject last night. I think he said it was the intention of the Government to purchase a farm in the York district so that children from the Moore River native settlement, together with some of the better-class natives could be moved there and be given a fresh start in life. I thought that was rather a good idea. Many years ago I was of the opinion that the native question was difficult of solution; but after visiting the Roelands native mission I realised that it was not so difficult. This mission farm was donated to the Church of Christ, some seven or eight years ago, by Mr. Albany Bell, who was well-known for his generosity and benevolence. On the property are some 70 to 80 native children and 14 to 16 men and women. The children are being taught school subjects, and stock husbandry, the growing of vegetables, fruit and crops, and the care of plant and machinery, and they are given a good religious training.

The general appearance of orderliness and the condition of the stock were a revelation to me, as was the general appearance of the natives, who were well-clad, well-fed, happy and well-mannered. I could not help contrasting those natives with others I had seen in a camp at York, along the Avon valley, some two miles on the Beverley side of York. At Roelands the natives were being taught citizenship and Christianity, and how to live their adult life in dignity and independence; whereas at York the young men and women—most of them fine physical specimens—were just frittering away their lives, quite content to receive hand-outs from the Government and from the residents around the district.

I would like to see the Minister go to Roelands to discover what is being done for the natives there. He would find it very interesting. The people are doing quite a good job for the natives and I hope he will have a chance to see how they are responding to the decent and humane treatment rendered by this fine body of men and women who are doing their best for these natives. The former Minister for Native Affairs made a very comprehensive survey of this subject. There were many matters on which I intended to touch but with which it would be superfluous for me to deal, seeing that he has explained them fully.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [11.39]: Tonight the member for Roebourne delivered one of the best speeches I have heard during the many years I have been in this Chamber. He made an honest contribution to the discussion of the native problem. I would advise the Minister in charge of the department not to be carried away by illusions. This is a problem that will not be solved in this generation or for many generations to come. We are dealing with

a people who for many hundreds of thousands of years have lived a life of their own. It is a nomadic life. Our idea is to Christianise these people so that they can assume our ways. That cannot be done.

Last July I went to the Mount Margaret Mission where I saw the natives well cared for and taught the principles of Christianity. What was the result? The moment the children left school they went native. I have seen the same thing occur in my own district of Beverley. The Minister and I were at a camp at Badjeling, where a rabbit could not survive, and we saw a half-caste come in from shearing. His daughter had been doing domestic work for six or seven years. She had been looked after in the homes of white people, but back she came to her father's filthy hovel, and immediately a young buck wished to marry her and drag her back again to the native state. I say all these pious ideas of the missions, and even of members, are impossible.

The member for Roebourne has said that not one member of this Chamber would allow his son or daughter to marry a half-caste girl or boy, no matter whether educated or not. We would shudder to see these people brought to our households. There is more hypocrisy shown in regard to these unfortunate people, both inside and outside of Parliament, than in most other matters. I have tried to solve this problem in my own small way. The idea of citizen rights is farcical. Even a quadroon still has coloured blood, which has come to him over thousands of years. Once he has citizen rights he is allowed to go into an hotel. A half-caste chiefly desires two things of life, one is drink and the other is gambling.

When a native who has citizen rights gets into an hotel he buys beer for other natives who have not citizen rights, and so loses his own rights. The Commonwealth has influenced the position with child endowment, because the half-caste population is increasing enormously. The women do not receive the money. I have seen as much as £300 in a gambling ring on a Sunday morning. What happens in the country towns? The natives come in from shearing and clearing contracts on a Saturday afternoon and assemble at some house, with their dogs, women and children. I do not believe there is a man in Australia who can solve the problem. America also has the colour problem. In that country any man who attempts to have carnal knowledge of an American negress or to marry one, is barred. We hear talk of the idea of assimilating the Australian race with our own. Great ideals will not solve this problem. The member for Irwin-Moore has said that if we assimilate them in our race, they will die out. Let me tell members that they will not die out.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What do you suggest should be done?

Mr. MANN: The hon. member would be horrified if I put forward my ideas, which may be extreme. The half-castes are breeding at a terrific rate. Probably the only solution is that they be given an area of country where they can live their own lives and maintain themselves. Recently in Beverley, the husband of one of these girls—a smart young woman—had been in gaol for a certain time. While he was there she remained at the mission, with her kiddies, and she was well looked after and well clothed. Within a fortnight of her husband's coming out of gaol she was on the track again, barefooted and with hardly a rag to her back. That girl was brought up and trained in domestic life, but back she has gone to the bush.

I do not think the Minister understands the problem. I warn him not to be carried away with the idea that he can solve it. It is too big. All he can do is help. In York, Beverley, Brookton and Quairading, the suggestion has been made that the natives should have small houses in which to live and raise their children. I agree with that scheme. But after a child has been educated, even to the eighth standard, who wants him? Does the Minister know? There are some half-caste girls in Perth who have lived since babyhood in domestic life. Today they ask themselves, "Whom can we marry? We have lived so long with the whites, we feel we are white people, and cannot marry these boozing and dirty half-caste men." They admit they want to marry but the white men will not marry them. The man who does so is either a sexual pervert or a low type. There are half a dozen or more of those women, who are excellent types, but no-one wants them.

I warn the Minister against being carried away by Utopian ideas. I can offer no solution to the problem and can see for the half-castes only a dismal future. With the

white man's ideas on birth control and the rapid breeding of the half-castes, 50 years hence the coloured portion of the population will have a considerable say in the affairs of this country. As time goes on—particularly in Western Australia—we will be faced with a problem similar to that existing in America. America knows that 50 or 100 years hence the negroes will control the destiny of that country. Our white civilisation may eventually be absorbed or overwhelmed by the coloured races, and the rulers of the earth in another 50 years may well be the Asiatic races. Perhaps our great grandchildren will see Australia controlled by the descendants of the coloured people that we are now discussing.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 11.55 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 20th November, 1947.

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

QUESTIONS.

TRAMWAY TRAFFIC.

As to Report by Town Planning Commissioner.

Hon. E. NULSEN (on notice) asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Has he received any report from the Town Planning Commissioner regarding tramway traffic?

(2) If so, when will it be made available to the House?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The report is a departmental one, and not intended for publication.

HOUSING.

(a) *As to Tenants of Seaside Homes.*

Mr. FOX (on notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that some tenants living in seaside homes, and who have been in occupation of such premises during the off season, have received notices to quit, in order that owners may let the said premises at holiday rental rates?

(2) What action will he take to prevent this practice?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes, in one case only.

(2) In the case in question the tenant occupied the house knowing that he had a limited period of tenancy, and the landlord's rights in this connection are governed by the Commonwealth Landlord and Tenant Regulations, and, in the absence of State legislation, no action can be taken.

The tenant in question has been offered alternative housing accommodation by the State Housing Commission.

(b) *As to Permits for Erection of Homes.*

Mr. GRAHAM (on notice) asked the Minister for Housing:

Will he make available the full names, addresses and occupations of all persons to whom permits for the erection of houses have been issued for—

(a) the three months ending the 31st December, 1946;

(b) the three months ending the 31st March, 1947?

The MINISTER replied:

The matters involved in the hon. member's question during the periods mentioned by him have, as a consequence of charges made by him, been referred to a Royal Commission now sitting, and should therefore be regarded as *sub judice*. It is felt, therefore, that any request for the information desired by the hon. member should come from the Royal Commissioner.