

whereby we can dispose of the goods which the nations produce in a manner likely to be profitable to the producers and at the same time bring them within reasonable reach of the consumers. After we have done that there may be time for some international agreement with respect to currency as applied to the internal economies of the nations concerned; for, after we have done that, that is to say, found the means of providing payable prices on reasonable consumption terms, we may be justified in believing that there is a need for international agreement, meant for the benefit of the people of the nation and not for the profit of isolated factions.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 9.38 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 28th September, 1944.

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

QUESTIONS (3).

PIG MARKETING.

As to Losses in Transport.

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware of the fact that unnecessary losses are sustained when consigning pigs to market during the summer months?

(2) If so, will he endeavour to have restrictions modified during these months so that pigs may be transported to market by farmers by road?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied:

(1) Losses have been reported during extreme summer heat conditions.

(2) The cause of the losses is under review and the possibility of improving facilities is being investigated.

WOOL TRANSPORT.

As to Rail and Road Facilities.

Mr. BERRY asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is it a fact that wheat haulage has priority on wool haulage on State Railways at present?

(2) Is he aware that the shortage of wool trucks last year is again embarrassing wool producers this year?

(3) If this position cannot be rectified immediately, will he arrange for permission to be granted to enable wool growers to cart their wool from their farms direct to brokers' stores as there is inadequate storage space for this commodity on the farms?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, there is a partial priority, but it is of a temporary nature only, as it is necessary to accentuate the flow of wheat, also flour and urgent defence traffic, to ports to avoid delays to shipping.

(2) No.

(3) Answered by (1) and (2).

ARTIFICIAL LIMBS.

As to Civilian Needs.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is he aware that there are inadequate facilities in this State for the supply of artificial limbs for civilians requiring them?

(2) Can he take steps to overcome this difficulty—possibly by arranging that any artificial limb factory or factories supplying Service personnel, should reserve a quota for civilian needs?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Yes. Normal civilian requirements are too small to justify complete facilities within the State.

(2) The Repatriation Department has always readily co-operated in respect to civilian requirements. At the moment, however, Service needs are very pressing.

MOTION—PUBLIC UTILITIES.*As to Facilitating Efficiency.*

Debate resumed from the 13th September on the following motion by Mr. North—

Since public utilities are here to stay everything possible should be done to facilitate their efficiency, in particular the public should be able to put their money into such concerns as the Railways, Electricity, and Tramway and Trolley systems.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS [4.34]:

I have not had any chance to study this motion. It asks that everything possible should be done to facilitate the efficiency of public utilities and that in an endeavour to do this the public should be able to put its money into the Railways, Electricity and Tramway and Trolley systems. I suppose the answer of most members of the public would be that they have already put their money into those undertakings.

Mr. Watts: The answer of most people would be yes—no.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think that is the way the public would prefer to put its money into such undertakings. I doubt very much whether many members of the public would, outside of their general contribution as taxpayers, be prepared to put money into these undertakings. It might not be desirable that they should do so. It is generally understood that undertakings of this character are established largely for the purpose of assisting the development of the State and therefore are established and operated, not for the purpose of returning profit, but more for the purpose of making it possible for the State to expand, for production to be increased and for additional facilities to be made available for the general public. I know that on private members' day there is at times a tendency to support a motion of this kind without any argument or debate, out of a kindly spirit towards the mover.

Mr. North: Pious resolutions!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: But I think this motion is one that perhaps should not be passed in this form because it seems to me that it is not at all practicable, and I am inclined to think that the Government would not be prepared to act in any way upon the motion if it were passed. The House would be well advised not to pass the motion, but to express privately to the member for Claremont verbal appreciation

of his action in working out a motion with such wording and putting it on the notice paper and subsequently making a speech in support of it. Now that the member concerned has given the idea an airing he should be satisfied with that. I suggest that he might consider withdrawing the motion, should there be no other speakers, and if he is not inclined to do that I ask the House not to support it.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison): To an extent I subscribe to the Minister's contention in regard to the motion, and support his utterance concerning the occasion which brought most of our public utilities into existence. They were inaugurated for the purpose of assisting the development of the country and in consequence have never been so administered as to warrant producing dividends or profit. However, I want to remind the Minister and the Government that some of these utilities are absolute monopolies of the State and, so far as they are monopolies and so far as the public must rely upon them for service, the first sentence in the motion should receive the endorsement of every member of the Chamber.

Mr. Watts: Hear, hear!

Mr. MARSHALL: The first sentence reads—

Since public utilities are here to stay, everything possible should be done to facilitate their efficiency.

I doubt whether there is a member in this Chamber who will not take that sentence seriously, having regard to the inefficiency of many of our public utilities. Particularly do I argue along those lines where a utility claims a monopoly, an exclusive right to perform a service against all competition. I reiterate that it is an obligation on the Government to give immediate attention to the efficiency of many of our public utilities, and particularly does that apply to our railways and tramways. When we realise that people have practically to live in a train for two days and two nights when travelling from Wiluna to Perth, or vice versa, the justification for something more up-to-date and more effective than the present service is apparent. We should be able to ask the Government, with some degree of confidence, to give consideration to that part of the motion, at any rate. I am inclined to vote for the motion, notwithstanding that the last

sentence could not, in my humble judgment, be given effect to. As the Minister for Works rightly pointed out, it is impracticable and could not be given application. No person would venture to invest money in any of our public utilities, having regard to the basic principles on which they are established, and that is that at no time will they pay dividends or profits.

Mr. Smith: They pay interest on the loan.

Mr. MARSHALL: Yes, I agree with that, and that is a big enough burden now.

The Minister for Justice: The members of the public are all shareholders.

Mr. MARSHALL: As the Minister points out, every member of the community is more or less compelled to be a shareholder by virtue of the public money invested in these utilities. But, while we know that that part of the motion is impracticable, may I respectfully suggest to the Government that the earlier sentence is one to which the Government should give very serious and immediate attention? It is a deplorable state of affairs that, when members constantly rise, as opportunity presents itself, in this Chamber to awaken the Government to the very urgent and lively need to do something, they are invariably told on the one hand that there is no money, and on the other hand when they rise to explain why it is that there is no money they get interjections from the Treasurer to the effect that this State is getting more than its share of money, implying that everything is all right.

There is nothing all right with public utilities in the main that I know of; nor is there in the public buildings in which they are housed. None of those buildings is modern in structure, and it is not possible to give efficiency within their precincts. The very environment is a deterrent against efficiency on the part of an officer exerting himself in administration of the matters over which he has some jurisdiction. I am inclined to support the motion though I subscribe, to some extent, to what the Minister had to say. I rose to remind the Government that we are not going to allow this state of affairs to exist very much longer. It is deplorable to see travellers leaving Wiluna at 3.30 p.m. on a Sunday and arriving at Perth about midday on the following Tuesday, after having spent all that time in the train—and what a train it is!

Mr. Withers: Those trains take their time.

Mr. Mann: They are a public disgrace.

Mr. MARSHALL: That is so; there is no doubt about it. I suggest to the Acting Premier that even the factor which is said to be next to godliness is not apparent. They are not even clean! At times, in the hot weather, in that part of the State the odour from the lavatories is putrid in the extreme. Yet we ask people to utilise those utilities. Well, they have to use them; they have no alternative. Therefore, I want something done about them. As it is policy of this party, I hope the Government will give immediate consideration to doing something more effective than has been done since I have been here, and that is for 23 years. I hope the Ministry will realise how important it is, when the Government has a monopoly of these utilities, to make some effort to give a fair return for the expenditure which the public is obliged to incur, under compulsion, because of the monopolistic state of the utilities concerned.

Point of Order.

Mr. Watts: Are members under the heading of "public utilities" at liberty to discuss matters other than railways, tramways and trolleybuses, such as electricity, water supplies, and so forth?

Mr. Speaker: I should say that the fact that the member in moving the motion mentioned three utilities in particular at the end of his motion does not preclude members from discussing other public utilities.

Debate Resumed.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): The member for Claremont, by this motion, has raised a matter of wide general interest and one which will become a question for determination in the not very distant future. All I want to say about his motion is that, in one sense, it might be a little early. The principle, however, which he raises is one that is before very long, going to be presented for solution not only to the people of Australia but to the people of other countries. The reason I say that is that some of the nations of the world—the Allied Nations, at all events—have developed vast manufactures during the war. They have been created out of public moneys, and they belong to the Commonwealth or to the Government of Ame-

rica, or the Government of Great Britain, as the case may be. When the war is over it will not be desirable to scrap them and, while some will be retained for the production of munitions, others will be suitable to be turned over for the production of civilian goods. That applies, as I said, to England, America and also to the Dominions, including Australia. The matter of moment is this: Are these great installations to be retained and operated as Government-owned instrumentalities? Are they to be sold to private enterprise? Or are they to be operated on some basis midway between? The National Resources Planning Board of America was referred to the other night by the Minister for Lands. It has been considering this subject, and its conclusions, as regards the United States, have been stated in this way—

Then there is the problem of all the plants (a quarter in value of all American industrial plants) which belong to the Government, and the consequent problem of the security of those who work in them. There is the further important factor that much of this Government-owned plant is the newest and best in the country, and makes up a large part of the capacity in many industries vital to United States' national security. In these cases the board offers the suggestion that "public interest may be served better by the use of mixed corporations than by either wholly private enterprise or outright Government ownership." The board lays down no hard and fast rule as to the proportions of Government and private shares.—

That refers, of course, to the proportion that might be turned over in each case.

—"On the one hand, the Government's proportion of investment in the corporation might be so great that the corporation would be operated essentially as a public enterprise. On the other hand, private stockholders might own a majority interest and Government representation be concerned solely with matters relating to public policy."

The board goes on to say that it is quite definite on one thing and that is its insistence that monopoly and restriction of output must be curbed. With that last observation we will all be in agreement.

The Minister for Works: The report deals with Government-owned industries, not public utilities.

Mr. McDONALD: But the principle, to a large extent, could be applied to public utilities. It might well be a development of the future that the public will be allowed, and even invited, to put money into

the departments that are not only engaged in public trading concerns but serving public utilities. By that means the public, instead of being bondholders as they are now in effect, seeing that the Government borrows money to finance these public enterprises, would be more directly concerned with the working of those interests. They would be shareholders—no doubt, limited.

Mr. North: That is the point. They could then take some risks themselves.

Mr. McDONALD: It would mean that a large number of people, because of their small holdings, could be induced to forward the interests of public enterprises and public utilities in a manner that is not possible at present. It is strange—perhaps I may be permitted to mention this without pursuing the matter too far—that public utilities such as, for example, the railways, are said to belong to the people. In one sense that is true. The railways belong to the State and the State represents the people. But when we consider the railways, which are said to be the property of the people, how much say has the individual in them? We, as the people, have little more say in the railways than we would have if they were owned by a private corporation.

Mr. Marshall: Of course, we have an ineffective say!

Mr. McDONALD: But if we had a large number of the people interested in the public concerns, we would find them taking over the position of bondholders as the people who have financed the undertakings. The people then, through a public holding, would then, in effect, say to the Government, "You can have our money in such a form that we shall have a direct interest in the enterprise or utility." It may well mean that the voice of the people—individually those persons would have small, not large, holdings—would be heard, with results that might be beneficial to the operations of the utility with regard to the services rendered to the public by it. I suggest that the member for Claremont has raised a question which will be of moment in relation to the factory and industrial installations that are now owned by the Government in consequence of the war. He raises an issue in respect of those installations that will have to be considered in the not far distant future.

The Minister for Works: But the motion does not deal with that question!

Mr. McDONALD: No, not directly, but it deals with a principle that could be applied, I think, not only to public industrial concerns, but could be developed by extension to public utilities. I imagine that the House would not feel disposed to commit itself to a direct recommendation that the public should put their money into the utilities concerned, and with that in mind, I move an amendment—

That in line 3 after the word "particular" the words "the question should be examined as to whether and to what extent" be inserted.

That simply means that, without committing the House to the principle, the whole question can be surveyed at the time when it comes up for examination as to the basis on which the Commonwealth Government is to dispose of or retain the war-created factories and installations that will be on its hands when hostilities conclude.

MR. BERRY (Irwin-Moore—on amendment): In my opinion, the member for West Perth has suggested that we shall procrastinate, that we shall go into the matter and examine it. Who will examine it? Does this mean another Select Committee, another Royal Commission, or does it mean that the matter shall be left in the hands of the Minister and the Government? If it means the last-mentioned, then we will hear nothing more about it. Personally I think that if today we were to ask people to subscribe to our railways in order that they may become shareholders in the concern, they would laugh at us. They would consider it as suggesting the quickest method of financial suicide that they could possibly be asked to indulge in. As the member for Murchison said, the condition of our railways today is absolutely deplorable. They are harassed—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member must speak to the amendment, which is restrictive.

Mr. BERRY: Then I have no objection to it.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (on amendment): The amendment moved by the member for West Perth proposes that an examination shall be carried out by someone or by some authority.

Mr. Watts: Perhaps by you.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The examination will be to ascertain whether and

to what extent private individuals might given an opportunity to invest their money in public utilities such as the railways, water supplies, trolleybus system, the power house and so on. The policy of the Government is that public utilities should be owned absolutely by the people and that there should not be any investment of private capital in them. So I think it can be made clear to the member for West Perth at this stage that the Government, in any examination it might be called upon to make as to whether and to what extent private individuals or private companies should be permitted to invest their privately owned moneys in public utilities, would come to the decision that they should not be given any such opportunity whatsoever. We can easily visualize a situation in which private companies and private individuals might have far too much of their private capital invested in public utilities, and in return for their investment we would have to give them some say and some control in the management, and that is against the policy of this Government. Therefore I suggest that if a majority of members want to have a motion passed expressing their strong view and conviction that something new and effective ought to be done to place our public utilities on a far better basis so that they will give more efficient service to the public, the amendment, and for that matter the motion, ought to be held over.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister is not in order in discussing the motion at this stage.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Then I say the amendment ought to be held over until such time as members generally have been able to give the whole question much deeper consideration than it has yet received. It might well be that a suitable motion could be framed to give the Government a lead in the direction of having something effectively done to improve those public utilities which today require a good deal of improvement in more than one respect, but the amendment, and the motion it seeks to amend, would do very little if anything along those lines. I suggest that it would not be advisable to try to get a decision on the amendment today. If we did so, the motion would come forward for decision, and I think it would be unwise to proceed until the members most interested are able to give the matter more thought with a view to bringing forward

some practicable suggestion for effective steps that could be taken to bring about improvement in public utilities which are not giving the best possible service.

MR. SPEAKER: I think the Minister is again getting away from the amendment.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: The question as to whether and to what extent the people should be invited to invest in public utilities is one that requires much more consideration than we can possibly give it at the moment, and consequently I suggest, for what the suggestion is worth, that the debate at this stage be adjourned.

On motion by Mr. Needham, debate adjourned.

MOTION—HARBOURS.

As to Formation of State Board.

Debate resumed from the 13th September on the following motion by Mr. Hill—

That in the opinion of this House a State harbours board should be formed for the purpose of providing the State with a co-ordinated and efficient policy of harbour and port development, administration and control.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [5.5]: I congratulate the member for Albany on having brought forward a motion for the establishment of one harbour board for the development, administration and control of harbours in Western Australia. I intend to support the motion, but for reasons other than those advanced by the members who have spoken so far. This question has exercised the minds of people connected with transport and waterfront work for a long time. A few years ago some of the stevedoring firms desired to take over the whole of the sheds of the Fremantle Harbour Trust and do the whole of the work that is at present done by the Trust. That proposal was not favoured by the Harbour Trust authorities and consequently nothing more has been heard of it.

For the benefit of those who are not au fait with waterfront work, I may state that the stevedores do all the work of handling cargo on board ships. The Trust takes the cargo as it comes from the ships' slings and is responsible for its storage and delivery to the consignee. When a ship is being loaded, the Trust is responsible for the storage of the cargo while it is awaiting shipment, and it takes the cargo to the wharf and puts it in the slings, and then the steve-

dores take charge on board the ship. If we had one authority controlling shipping in all the ports of Western Australia, I am sure the work could be done much more economically than it is being done at the present time.

Some members might recall that in 1931 or 1932 a move was made by the farmers to introduce the bulkhandling of wheat with a view to saving about £450,000 annually on the cost of bags. The introduction of bulkhandling not only saved the cost of bags but also had the effect of cutting out six expensive and unnecessary agencies on the Fremantle wharf that had operated for a very long period. If the wheat farmers had gone further at the time and concentrated on cutting out the stevedores as well, they would have done a good job for themselves.

From long experience on the waterfront, I can say with the conviction that I am perfectly right that the stevedores get a very large amount of money out of the industries of this State for a very little service rendered by them. At the time of which I was speaking, 1931 or 1932, the executive of the Wheat Growers' Union had a conference with the executive of the Fremantle Lumpers' Union with a view to seeing whether something could be done to reduce the cost of handling the wheat. The executive of the union put forward some proposals, one of which was that the union should contract for the stevedoring of the wheat as well. At present all the work is done by members of the Fremantle Lumpers' Union. They do not require any supervision at all. Members of the union, with foremen in charge who are also members of the union, are doing the whole of the work on the waterfront without any supervision whatever from the stevedores. They are quite competent, and they do the work.

Unfortunately, at that particular time we found that the Wheatgrowers' Union had very little control over the shipping of their wheat, and no power whatever to enter into a contract. Evidently somebody else had a greater interest in the wheat than the actual growers had. As a result, nothing more has been heard of that suggestion. The Fremantle harbour is one of the best-equipped waterfronts in Australia, if not absolutely the best. Stevedores use the cranes and other loading and discharging devices of the Harbour Trust, and thereby make large

profits, as I have already said. They have no responsibility for making repairs or replacements. If all these services were carried out by the Harbour Trust on the waterfronts of all Western Australian ports, a very great saving would be effected for the primary producer. Moreover, it would be a long way better for all the people of the State. However, my main reason for supporting the motion is—and I speak from an industrial standpoint—that it would enable the Harbour Trust, which derives very large profits from the operations, to provide a canteen for a large body of workers who have been denied the social services that are being given to large bodies of workers throughout Australia and, indeed, the world.

Nothing whatever has been done on any Australian waterfront to provide any social services for the large bodies of men who work on those wharves throughout Australia. Nothing has been done in Fremantle with the exception of providing hot water for the men to make their tea. Hot water is provided for everybody on the waterfront. In most large industrial works throughout the world, canteen services operate, and employees can obtain cheap meals whenever they require them. Being in the Eastern States last January or February, I visited some of the big works in Victoria and found canteens in operation there, the workers being supplied with a three-course meal for 1s. and sometimes for 1s. 3d. They were also provided with facilities for washing; change rooms were available, as well as shower baths, and lockers in which the workers could place their clothes while engaged in their occupations. Thus the workers were enabled to travel to and from work in clean clothes. Consider the position of men working on bulk cargoes such as sulphur, phosphatic rock, coal, and the like! Their clothes get into a very dirty condition and, unless the men have other means of transport, they are compelled to travel to their homes by the trams. That is much against their grain; they do not like, with their clothes in that state, to rub up against people who work in more congenial surroundings and are able to go to their employment and return from it in clean garments.

If we had one authority able to provide hot and cold shower baths on the waterfront, the workers also would be enabled

to travel to and from work in clean clothes. Moreover, they could be provided with meals and given various social services. If it not very convenient for men, nor is it desirable for them, after putting in a long shift on a sulphur, coal or phosphatic rock boat, to come home after midnight and then have to prepare a hot bath before going to rest. Those conveniences should be provided on the waterfront, and if we had one authority that could be done. At present six or seven authorities operate on the waterfront, and the men work for different firms and at different times; in fact, they may work for three or four firms during the week. It would not be possible for those half-dozen firms individually to do much for their particular workers; but if there were one authority, it could be done without any trouble at all. Another reason why I should like to see one authority established is that the waterfront work, because of its casual nature and in normal times the unfair distribution of the amount of work offering has been a very unsatisfactory occupation for the majority of those who follow it for a living. That position does not exist at the present time, because there is any amount of work offering; members now following the waterfront work can work for even more hours than they want to.

But when we revert to normal times the same conditions as prevailed in pre-war years may return; and it would be necessary then to have some system of allocating the work. Such a system has never been introduced here, but one authority could place the industry on a much more satisfactory footing than has been achieved up to the present. For instance, a guaranteed weekly wage could be paid to those who have to follow the waterfront for a living. It is necessary to have the men there; and if they have to wait for employment, they ought to be guaranteed a weekly wage. They should also be given annual holidays on full pay; that concession should be granted to all instead of as at present a favoured few. The waterfront workers should also receive long-service leave after completion of, say, seven years' work—a concession most workers in governmental or semi-governmental enterprises enjoy. At present on the waterfront only a very few men are given long service leave. These are usually the bosses, who are also members of the Lumpers' Union but are employed permanently.

The workers could also be given the benefit of superannuation, so that they could retire on pensions when they became too old to work. After long experience on the waterfront I am of opinion that the utmost the men following that occupation can look forward to is the old-age pension when they are unable to stick it out any longer. These men perform a service of national importance, and superannuation is only what they are entitled to receive. These things could be brought about by placing all the waterfronts of Western Australia under one authority. The activities there include more than the loading and unloading of ships. Many carpenters and maintenance men are employed, as well as men who work in connection with building and repairing of ships. All these could be taken over by the contemplated single authority with benefit to the country and with great benefit to the men themselves.

The Fremantle Harbour Trust pays into Consolidated Revenue about £100,000 annually. The increased earning capacity which would accrue, if a sole authority on the waterfronts of Western Australia were established, would enable all the social services I have enumerated to be provided, and also furnish extra profit for the people who have to use the wharves. Besides doing the work on the waterfront, a sole authority over this State's harbours could be given power to enter the shipping business. This would be of great assistance to the primary producers in marketing their products. The former Commonwealth line of ships kept down rates and saved a large amount of money to the primary producers.

Mr. Marshall: The primary producers sold them; gave them away.

Mr. FOX: In 1926 the Commonwealth line of ships effected a saving of £576,000 in carrying beef, mutton, lamb, and apples and other primary products to Melbourne.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member going to link up the Commonwealth ships with the harbour?

Mr. FOX: I am going to connect them with the sole harbour authority establishing a line of ships. I am showing what a good thing it would be for the Harbour Trust to run a shipping line, that is, from the point of view of the primary producers as well as from the point of view of the people of Western Australia. Shortly after the Commonwealth line was established, its ships were carrying cargo to London

at £7 10s. a ton, while at the same time £13 a ton was paid on British ships and £15 a ton on foreign ships. At present the shipping companies of Australia have the trade of the coast cut up between themselves and they charge what they like. In the absence of complete socialisation the general trend is to own or regulate public utilities upon which the people depend.

If we had a fleet of ships, then—and then only—could we say at what ports cargo could be lifted. The big shipping companies now direct to which ports our cargo shall be sent for shipment; and, independently of any Government railway decentralisation policy, the shipping companies will incur penalty rates in order to bring cargo to Fremantle to suit their own convenience. That is one reason why Albany does not get the shipping to which its geographical position entitles it. It is also a reason why a port like Esperance has not in the past had the shipping to which its geographical position entitles it. If we had a line of ships we could say at what ports the cargoes should be picked up, and we would be able to give all the ports in Western Australia a fair deal. For this reason I support the motion. I hope it will not prove to be merely a pious resolution. I trust that a Bill will be brought down shortly to provide that one harbour authority shall control all the waterfronts of Western Australia and that such authority will be able to establish a new order for its employees, giving them security of employment and a decent retiring allowance.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin): The member for South Fremantle said, I think, that the cost of shipping wheat to London was £13 a ton.

Mr. Fox: I said £7 10s. a ton.

Mr. DONEY: I think he said that in respect of British ships the cost was £13 a ton.

Mr. Fox: Yes.

Mr. DONEY: If that is correct, it means that the cost was 7s. per bushel. The member for South Fremantle said, I think, that it was in peacetime that those rates were charged. The rate charged today, even with war conditions prevailing, is only 4s. 6d. per bushel, which would make it plain that the member concerned is likely to have made a mistake. I notice that the member for South Fremantle, quite properly, regards this question from the point of view of the wel-

fare of the men engaged upon the wharf; whereas what the member for Albany had in mind was its general economic effect. I agree it is quite proper that the hon. member should be concerned for the welfare of the men with whom I know he has been very closely in touch for many years. He also said that Fremantle is, in his opinion, one of the best-equipped waterfronts in Australia. I do not know whether that is so, but I dare say it is a proper claim to make and I am not disposed to dispute it. The handling costs at Fremantle, however, are without doubt extremely high—the highest in Australia, as my colleague the member for Pingelly reminds me. I recall that during a recent debate on this matter in another place, a member called attention to the fact that someone had brought over from Adelaide a subterranean clover cleaning plant. He said that it cost 18s. to load at Adelaide, but that the unloading charge at Fremantle was £6.

Mr. Fox: You cannot compare the conditions, because the loading and unloading are done under different conditions. There might be 30 men employed in one port on the job.

Mr. DONEY: The fact that the loading and unloading are done under different conditions can be accepted; but the point is that here £6 was charged for a job which in Adelaide cost only 18s. That means that the position at Fremantle certainly stands in urgent need of improvement, and that it is an argument strongly in favour of the bringing about what the member for Albany suggests. There is this, too, undoubtedly, that almost precisely the same type of work is done at all the ports in Western Australia. There is very little difference indeed, and it is natural, therefore, to expect a unified control instead of the amazing hotchpot of control mentioned by the member for Albany. It might not be inappropriate to repeat that the port of Perth is responsible to the Premier, the Harbour Trust to the Chief Secretary, the Bunbury Harbour Trust to the Minister for the North-West, the jetties at Albany, Esperance, Busselton and Port Hedland and the wharves at Geraldton to the Railway Department, and the jetties at the South-West ports to the Harbour and Lights Department, which is controlled by the Minister for the North-West. Cold storage facilities and bulk-handling are

under the control of the Minister for Agriculture. That, on the face of it, seems senseless as of itself to constitute an argument for the change recommended by the member for Albany.

Mr. Fox: But the Harbour Trust does the work at Fremantle under the control of the Minister for Agriculture.

Mr. DONEY: I hope that close attention will be given to the submissions of the member for Albany and, if the debate does not by chance close this afternoon, members will take "Hansard" and re-read the advice given by that member. He is, I think, accepted by this House generally as being this State's expert on matters in Western Australia affecting ports, railways—

Mr. Withers: Question!

Mr. DONEY: — and transport matters generally.

The Minister for Works: I think he has a bit of a prejudice against Bunbury!

Mr. DONEY: I do not think it is altogether prejudice, but he certainly has a great deal to say on occasions, and rightly so, against the inefficient methods in vogue at that port. I had not intended to speak at any great length but merely wished to express the hope that this most desirable change may be made. I trust that other members will support the views put forward by the member for Albany.

MR. NORTH (Claremont): I support the motion and congratulate the member for Albany on bringing it forward. It seems to me that if there were a central authority in Western Australia for all these ports there would be a better chance for the expenditure of sufficient funds to enable big changes to be made. At present there are several authorities looking after the different ports and naturally these have restricted points of view so that the whole State's outlook is affected by the views of the individuals concerned. There is an old saying that "there is nothing new under the sun." A few years ago I came across a work dealing with Western Australia. This was 100 years old. In those early days the pioneers in this State had enough initiative to visualise developments for the port at Fremantle, which I am sure the member for Albany would not begrudge being put into effect in connection with the scheme he has propounded.

In the work to which I have referred, his early settler or pioneer suggested that a channel should be cut between the sea and the river at Peppermint Grove so that the Fremantle Harbour would then assume the shape of a big "U," through the channel made by which ships would pass on their way in to the port and on their way out again to sea. Anyone who has lived in the district must realise what it has cost during the years that have passed and what delays have occurred in the turning of ships in the port of Fremantle. Those delays must have cost many thousands of pounds in a year and represent money that could have been saved by the adoption of the proposal to which I have just referred. One can visualise a great advantage to be derived from the establishment of a central harbours authority. The idea of the early pioneer has been passed over. Since then other ideas have been propounded by experts, but have not been carried out. There is no doubt that the present system of ships having to be turned in the present port is an exceedingly costly one. I commend the hon. member for bringing down the motion and trust that the Government will carry it into effect. I think the National Party has a policy similar to that, if I am not mistaken.

MR. WATTS (Katanning): I support the motion, because I consider, not only on the ground mentioned by the member for Albany but on the ground mentioned by other members, including the member for South Fremantle, that there is a great deal to support it. We have been sadly lacking in a co-ordinated policy for our waterfronts in Western Australia. Indeed, the whole business has resembled a patchwork quilt. For many years, unless some such change as is suggested in the motion is made, the position is likely to continue in that form. I think that no one wants to see a continuation of those conditions. I feel that one of the main objects to be achieved by having one authority to deal with all the ports in Western Australia would be to ensure that each and every one of them received treatment not on an individual basis, but on a basis which took into consideration the needs of that portion of the State which each of our ports would serve. I am inclined to think that under the existing system of management the evidence shows that there has been far

too much centralisation. I believe that would to a large extent be obviated were the control brought under one authority, and that authority were directed to view shipping affairs in Western Australia, so far as development and administration are required to deal with them, on a face, and instructed to provide the facilities necessary either great or small for the harbours that are essential for development for the despatch of goods from the areas they should serve.

The member for South Fremantle mentioned the port of Esperance as not having received that measure of development to which it was, I think, entitled. In fact, for a considerable time it was left completely in the doldrums, and did not even have any share of the transport of the hinterland which lies behind it. To some small extent I understand that position has been improved, but I do not think it has yet reached the stage it could reach were there no favouritism or system of centralisation being applied to the methods of harbour development and administration in Western Australia. We have, and there is no one who is honest with himself who can deny it, a similar if not worse state of affairs at the port of Albany. There we have a harbour which I think, like Esperance, is under the control of the Railway Department. The facilities there are controlled and managed by the Commissioner of Railways, and I think there can be nothing more futile than that in any port in this State.

It is beyond my understanding how the Commissioner can be expected, in combination with all the other activities that he and his officers have to control, to deal with a port situated at Albany or anywhere else where the work to be done and facilities offered and the methods employed have no relationship to rail transport and its ramifications. So, there is an immediate need for the removal of the control of ports such as this from the Commissioner of Railways. There is on the statute book the Albany Harbour Board Act, which has never been proclaimed. The alternative to the proposal that has been brought forward by the member for Albany in his motion would be to ask this House to remove from that Act the section relating to the necessity for a proclamation being issued, so that that legislation could come into effect forthwith, and then provide harbour management

of an individual character for other ports similarly situated. As I see it, that would simply mean building up a series of small administrations which, although probably able to deal fairly easily with the problems they have in mind, would merely work along parochial and separate lines without any policy of co-ordination; and except that that would be better than the existing state of affairs I do not think such a system would be likely to give satisfaction. It seems to me that the question is one which has to be tackled in the near future. I therefore agree with the member for South Fremantle again, and trust that if the motion is carried, as I believe it will, it will not be treated as a pious resolution merely.

The Minister for the North-West: Do you not recollect my saying, when speaking to the motion, that investigations were already being made?

Mr. WATTS: I was about to come to that aspect of the question. I said I hoped this would not be treated as a pious resolution merely. It is true that the Minister for the North-West observed in the course of his speech that investigations had been conducted into the question. I have gathered from him—I may say in private conversation since—that these investigations have been going on for a long period of years. They are now it appears in a state of revival, which I think is a straightforward way of stating the position. I hope that that state of revival will not be allowed to disappear again. From the information I have been given it would appear that in the course of the years it has had its bright moments and its dead moments. Now again we have a period when things are brightening up and I hope that the brightening up now taking place, with the assistance of the honourable gentleman, will result in some action being taken.

There is no question that the primary producers, as mentioned by the member for South Fremantle, and other sections of the community, are suffering losses and disabilities of one kind and another owing to the centralisation which, to a very considerable extent, has been allowed to come about not only in Western Australia but also all over Australia in regard to port development. We have made great and considerable difficulties for our producers by that policy of centralisation in this State. We have brought goods down to what is known

as the "bottleneck," which has resulted in congestion of traffic and demands for another railway line to be built on the south side of the river in order to relieve it. I am not in a position to say whether or not those demands are justified. They may be justified by the existing traffic. They might not have been justified if there had been a proper system of port development and spreading out in suitable places of the transported goods and the facilities made available to ships.

The Minister for Justice: To a certain extent the Shipowners' Association of Australia is to blame for that.

Mr. WATTS: I hold the opinion—and I believe there is a good deal of evidence to support it—that shipping will go to places where there are suitable conditions for the conduct of shipping business and in consequence, because there has been little, if any attempt to make those conditions suitable in the out-ports, there has been an increasing inclination for shipping to go to a central port.

The Minister for Justice: They go where they can load a full ship. It is more economical.

Mr. WATTS: There have not been lacking many occasions when full loads could be obtained at the outer ports of this State. It has been impossible for ships to deal with these loads at any of the ports in some cases. It has been impossible for them when they got there—if they could get there—to handle goods that could have been available. Reports have been made to this House of the circumstances that have existed at Albany when attempts have been made to handle substantial cargoes. There is not a crane at that port which would lift a reasonable weight. That is well known. As a matter of fact when one goes on the jetties—the antiquated remains of an attempt at port administration—one wonders whether it is safe for human beings to walk along them let alone for men to work on them and for rollingstock to travel over them. This is one of the questions that have to be answered by people who make the excuse that shipping will not go to places. Would anyone with any intelligence at all make any attempt to go to a port of that character? Yet there have been returns from the Government Statistician showing that within a very reasonable distance of that port—and the same remark applies to other ports; I am merely

alking of one about which I know something—within a distance that is less than the distance to any other port, there have been tremendous quantities of production that has had to be despatched oversea.

The Minister for Justice: The Shipowners' Association of Australia has had a tremendous monopoly.

Mr. WATTS: In a few minutes I shall be subscribing to the observations of the member for South Fremantle. If that is the only way to overcome the problem, let us get to work and do something about it. If one solution will not work, let us find two that will. The policy of the Minister is to say, "The present position is bad and I will not try to improve it."

The Minister for Justice: No. Nothing of the sort!

Mr. WATTS: I can place no other construction on the Minister's remarks. He will not admit that port administration is the trouble. We must find a cure for that. He speaks of the shipping companies being responsible. If that is the trouble—though I am not convinced that it is—we must find a cure for it.

The Minister for Justice: It is one of the troubles.

Mr. WATTS: If it is, I am prepared to take any action that will put an end to the position. If the Minister will establish what he has said, I will be prepared to help him to the best of my ability. There is a substantial production in those areas which cannot be shifted from those ports. Although the number of ships that called at Albany for the wheat of the Albany zone were formerly comparatively few, there are now none. Nor is it possible for any to handle wheat at that port and it was not possible for them to do so in the preceding war. It is not possible unless there is a readiness to re-bag bulkwheat, because there are no facilities whatever at Albany for the handling of bulkwheat and there is no bagged-wheat worth the name in that zone. So the few ships—six or eight of them—that used to call at that port—sometimes there were perhaps one or two more—for the purpose of handling that product in bags, can no longer anticipate receiving a load if they want to take wheat in bulk, which they must do unless it is to be re-bagged because there are no facilities, no means of any kind of getting bulkwheat from the land to the ship and stowed in the hold.

We have reached a state of affairs in that port and others in this State to which a period must be put. I believe the solution is one controlling authority set up by Act of Parliament, empowered and directed so to manage the harbour and port facilities of Western Australia, without fear or favour and without parochialism, that they may deal with the real needs of the areas which those ports should serve. That is probably as good a cure or as good a move in the direction of improvement as could be found for this problem which has been exercising our minds for a considerable time; and because I think that, I am prepared to give this motion my wholehearted support.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury): I am not opposed to an investigation of this matter but the motion expresses the opinion that a State Harbours Board should definitely be formed. I listened to the debate and I have read the speech made by the mover of the motion, but I find it most difficult to analyse that speech because of the references made to other ports throughout the world. Those ports have no analogy with Western Australian ports. It is remarkable that this afternoon about four speeches have been made on this very important matter, and they have not taken longer than about 25 minutes. On a topic of this description, so all-important to Western Australia, any member who takes an interest in it and who wants to justify it should be able to put up a much stronger case than we have yet heard.

Mr. Thorn: What about giving it a go?

Mr. WITHERS: I am not here to do that. I want to see those who have brought it down do so. I am agreeably surprised to see our friends opposite supporting a State trading concern. For the first time we have the Country Party, or as it is now called the Country and Democratic League, and the Opposition in general, coming forward with a scheme for the nationalisation of our harbours—that is to say, a State trading concern. I shall go one better and say, "Why not one port authority for the whole of Australia?"

Mr. Seward: That would be silly.

Mr. WITHERS: It is possibly no sillier than is the motion. I want to ask members opposite, and others supporting the motion, who is financing the harbours and rivers projects today, other than the Fremantle Harbour Trust? We have only to look at this

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year's estimated expenditure of £44,000 on harbours and rivers, from the North-West to the south, to require an answer to that question. Who will find the money for these harbours if one harbours board is formed? It will come from the State's finances. If a new jetty has to be built at Roebourne or Cossack, or elsewhere, the State will have to pay for it.

Mr. Seward: What about the profits that go into revenue?

Mr. WITHERS: The Fremantle Harbour Trust is the only authority doing that. If a new harbour were needed at Bunbury or Esperance, or a jetty at Port Hedland, the cost would be borne by the State Treasury. The fact that the railways control many ports, the harbour board of Bunbury controls one port and the Fremantle Harbour Trust controls another, does not make a scrap of difference in that direction. The money will come from the same source even if we have one harbours board for the State. If this motion asked for an investigation or examination into the possibilities of creating one harbours board for Western Australia—

Mr. Doney: Would not that necessarily precede any such change?

Mr. WITHERS: Yes, it would, but this makes it very definite that we stand for one authority. I am not prepared to tie myself down to something about which I know very little. The Leader of the Opposition mentioned the disadvantages. Good God, Mr. Speaker, we have known them all our lives! Someone should tell us the advantages to be derived by the alterations suggested in the motion. In the first instance there must be established a State Harbours Board, and then it must have offices in Port Hedland, Roebourne, Albany, Esperance, Bunbury and Fremantle in order to complete its organisation. I have heard it said that the railways will still do the work at Albany, and the Harbour and Lights Department will do it somewhere else, and the Bunbury Harbour Board at Bunbury. If that is so, why alter the system?

Mr. Doney: Has anyone said that?

Mr. WITHERS: It has been said, but not in the House. When a new industry is established, and this would be such, or a new control—

Mr. Doney: It is an administration, not an industry.

Mr. WITHERS: Where would the administration have its head?

Mr. Rodoreda: In the clouds.

Mr. WITHERS: It would not be in Esperance, but in the metropolitan area. The administration would be centralised in the first instance, and who are we going to appoint to that board who will take the unparochial view, if I might use such an expression, that we desire in connection with a uniform harbours board? Let us know the men who are going to do this, and in what manner they will do it. I am not going to support the motion blindly because someone says that anomalies and disadvantages exist. I want to know more than that before I shall support it. As regards the charges, I do not know that they are any greater in one port than in another.

Mr. Doney: You do not know much about it if you do not know that.

Mr. WITHERS: The shipping people control most of the activities of any harbour. I know that from my many years experience of representing a port. It is not the harbour board that has that responsibility. The board merely functions and so do the railways when the shipping comes to the port. The harbour authorities cannot send out a sprat to catch a mackerel. The shipping people practically control the shipping traffic at the ports. I am not altogether opposed to the motion, but I do not want to carry a resolution without knowing some of the conditions. We have not heard what they are. We have been told that there would be advantages by having one port authority, but what are they? I would like the member for Albany, if he replies, to let us know what are the advantages and what type of organisations should be set up, and not simply talk about the port of London or the port of Durban which have no analogy to the port of Western Australia. We have a coastline different from any other in the world, and it will be very difficult to control an organisation of this description. If we can do something to better the conditions of the outback people, I shall give the motion my wholehearted support. I want to know that there is some concrete proposal behind it and something better than we have been told in connection with the alteration of the system.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, debate adjourned.

BILL—NATIVES (CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS).

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST [5.59] in moving the second reading aid: This Bill while being quite a small one, s, in my opinion, very important. It consists mainly of one principle, contained in one clause. The rest of it is composed of machinery clauses. It is a measure that will be much easier explained in the Committee stage than on the occasion of the second reading debate. The main principle underlying the Bill is to provide an opportunity for adult natives to apply for full citizenship as Australians. Other clauses in the Bill embody the machinery setting out what is necessary to be done in order to take advantage of, and comply with, the new law. The qualifications that are necessary to enable an adult native to convince a magistrate that he is entitled to consideration respecting full citizenship are set out. There are also precautionary measures indicated whereby a native will lose his citizenship if he does not live in accordance with the standards of white people or fulfil the obligations imposed upon him. Applications can be made to the magistrate at the local court in the district where the applicant native resides, and it is necessary for the native to provide some evidence that he has ceased from observing his tribal habits for at least two years and has lived since in accordance with the standards of the white race.

As members will readily understand, a percentage of natives will not be able to qualify for the privilege that the Bill seeks to make available, but I should imagine that many will qualify. I hope that the House will pass the Bill and so provide an opportunity to those natives who are prepared to adopt a higher standard of living, to satisfy a magistrate that they are entitled to full citizenship. The introduction of the Bill is in conformity with the policy laid down by the Labour Party over the past ten years. It will be remembered that when the Labour Government took office in 1930, the expenditure on the Native Affairs Department was about £27,000 a year. During the past ten years, despite war conditions, the expenditure has increased to £57,000 a year. Members will also recollect that this House passed the Native Administration Act

in 1936, under which a new set of regulations was promulgated. At the time, there was considerable opposition and much adverse criticism, particularly on the part of outsiders, with regard to both the new legislation and the new regulations. Results have shown that Parliament acted wisely when it passed that legislation, for it has done much to uplift the native population.

Mr. Seward: That has not occurred in the southern portions of the State.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: That is a matter of opinion; I think it has occurred in the southern portions of the State. In fact, I can prove that the conditions of the natives there have improved. I ask the member for Pingelly to view this matter broadly and not from the viewpoint that a particular native may not have carried out his contract with a farmer. I would remind him that the department carries out inquiries regarding such matters, and not always is the native found to be blameworthy.

Mr. Seward: I do not suggest that he is.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: In what other directions has the amended law not improved the conditions of the natives?

Mr. Seward: This has nothing to do with that.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: It has a lot to do with it because the amended legislation, together with the regulations, empowered the Native Affairs Department to oversee agreements between farmers and natives, to secure better conditions and generally to supervise the actions of the natives so as to ensure that they spent their hard-earned money on the purchase of better clothes, food supplies, better clothing and schooling for their children.

Mr. Watts: So that they could play two-up down there!

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I do not know that we can blame the whole of the Army or Air Force because a few soldiers or airmen play two-up. We admire both the Army and the Air Force, yet many soldiers and many airmen play two-up. It is no argument at all to say that because a couple of natives may have developed the art of twirling the pennies in the air, we can blame the whole of the natives for wasting their money.

Mr. Doney: I think you can establish that the amended legislation has improved the health of the natives.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: If we were able to accomplish that alone, there is virtue in the new legislation and the new regulations referred to. If the hon. member peruses the annual report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs, he will find that there has been a big improvement in the health of a majority of the natives.

Mr. Seward: The Commissioner wants to hand them over to the Commonwealth.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No, he has suggested that we should receive financial assistance from the Commonwealth to the extent of £3 from the Commonwealth for every £2 expended by the State. The Commissioner has not lost faith in his own administration, and I have not lost faith in it, either. I claim that he has done a very good job. I do not know where in Australia we could get a man who has more knowledge or a better understanding of the natives than has our Commissioner. I am not prepared to accept biased criticism levelled through the Press by people who have little or no knowledge of the subject but merely talk platitudes and exaggerate conversations they have heard. I am of opinion that the Act of 1936 and the regulations have enabled us to do a great deal for the natives, and the time has come when we should make some further advance in their interests. For this reason I have presented the Bill for the consideration of the House.

I did not introduce the Bill without first considering the whole question of the natives and the problems associated with them, and I am satisfied that if this measure becomes law, it will give great encouragement to a percentage of natives—and probably a larger percentage than I would care to state—to uplift themselves and apply for this privilege. It will be well to give for the information of members the number of half-castes or coloured people with whom we are dealing. We have approximately 6,000 half-castes and other castes that are deemed to be natives under the Act. Of that total, a very large percentage is at work in various essential industries, including the farming and pastoral industries, and are doing a very good job in many parts of the State. We also have many natives doing essential work in industries in the

metropolitan area. Quite a number of them are not harassed in any way by the department, but they are still natives in law. Therefore they are handicapped in many ways. For the sake of such people, I hope sympathetic consideration will be given to this Bill.

Mr. Watts: What is the difference between the citizenship rights proposed under this Bill and the certificate of exemption they get now?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I intend to explain that. Under the Act the Minister has the power to grant exemption to any native who is qualified and who substantiates his claim that he is living according to the standards of a white person, but that certificate of exemption is really of no use to a native. On several occasions natives holding such certificates have been arrested for supplying liquor to other natives, which is not permitted, and all the accused had to do was to plead that he was a native in law and the case was dismissed. Although a native has a certificate of exemption, he is still by law deemed to be a native. Although a native may hold a certificate of exemption under the Act, he is not entitled to the privileges of the Electoral Act, to take up land, or to hold a mining lease, though he has certain exemptions under the Prisons Act. In actual fact, however, the exemption is of no use to him; it is merely a ticket entitling him to visit hotels and obtain liquor.

Mr. Seward: A native with an exemption certificate is not permitted to enter a native reserve.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: No. The Bill provides that if he holds a certificate of citizenship, he will not be debarred from privileges under the Electoral Act, the Land Act or any other statute. He will be given full citizen rights, just as if he were a British-born subject or a naturalised British subject. For those reasons I say there is no comparison between the proposals in this Bill and the privileges granted under a certificate of exemption. While a native may have a certificate of exemption, he is debarred from associating with his own relatives. A native with a certificate of exemption may be a member of a family, but he is prohibited from associating with or speaking to other members of the family.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: I think it will be understood by members that the certificate of exemption has served a useful purpose in somewhat training the better class of natives towards full citizenship. In my opinion it has served that useful purpose, and a percentage of natives is now prepared for a further advance. It may be well for me to give a few figures showing exactly what percentage has received the certificate of exemption, and how that percentage has responded to the privilege. To date, 275 natives have received exemption certificates—that is since the inception of that certificate—and the 275 certificates cover approximately 600 people, because a certificate of exemption issued to a native usually covers the family, including the wife and children. Out of the 275 certificates, only 75 have been revoked; so it is apparent that a large percentage of those to whom it was granted during the past 10 years or more have lived up to the requirements of the certificate. I anticipate that, if the Bill becomes law, there will be a percentage that will not live up to the requirements of the certificate if granted; but members will find that the Bill includes precautionary conditions applying to any or all who receive the privilege and do not fulfil its obligations.

During the short period of the past three or four years, there have been 429 unsupervised claimants for child endowment. Out of the 429, up to date only 14 endowments have been revoked because of unsatisfactory expenditure. It can be seen, therefore, that a large percentage is making good when some particular privilege is granted. I have heard, and read in the Press, idle statements as to what natives do with the child endowment; but this particular aspect has been very closely watched by both the Native Affairs Department and the Commonwealth authorities. Of the 429 cases, only 14 have proved to be cases of mal-administration of the money. I do not take much notice of idle statements made in the Press or by word of mouth. In the case of half-castes, registration of births is not compulsory, but they do register. The statistics show that very few half-caste parents do not register births. A strict watch has been and is being kept on the registration of births, deaths and marriages among the native race. That has been done during the last few years, at any rate.

Besides the 429 supervised child endowment cases, many have been paid under the supervision of missions and institutions. I do not want, however, to leave the wrong impression that child endowment is paid only in those 429 cases. There are many more cases, though I have not the figures at hand, scattered throughout Western Australia. Further, last year 140 womenfolk claimed the maternity allowance, and it was paid to 126. The 14 women who were refused the maternity allowance were refused it on the ground of a preponderance of native blood.

Under the Commonwealth pension scheme a certain preponderance of native blood debars half-castes from receiving the maternity bonus. Latterly the Commonwealth has taken a more sympathetic view in cases where the applicant furnishes a satisfactory case to the Deputy Commissioner of Pensions. In those circumstances the Act is stretched. The Deputy Commissioner of Pensions is very liberal-minded, within the four corners of the Act. He assists, especially where there is some supervision either by the department or by some organised mission. Under those conditions he seldom hesitates to pay. The report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs shows that marriages with white men have increased during the last 12 months to the extent of five. Also during the last 12 months two white women have married coloured men. Last, but not least, approximately 400 young coloured men have enlisted in the Forces. I think members will realise that that class of coloured men is entitled to some encouragement. We do not want to send such men back to the native camps upon their discharge from the army.

Members: Hear, hear!

THE MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: Because of the shortage of manpower and industrial labour, people of this class have been given an opportunity to obtain work. A large percentage of the class is employed throughout the rural districts, and many of them are working under industrial awards as shearers, surface workers on mines, and drovers in charge. They are also employed in the metropolitan area in foundries and other industrial establishments. The people to whom I refer are in what might be termed a transition stage. They have lifted themselves above the ordinary run of the half-caste working in the rural industries, and surely we should encourage

them to enter upon a higher sphere in life by giving them the opportunity that this Bill provides for them. I have only quoted the few instances and facts I have given so that members may know the trend of events during the past three or four years so far as our natives are concerned. I have not much more to say on the Bill. I frankly admit it is something new in Australia; it will probably be termed experimental legislation, but I point out that Western Australia has led in native legislation and regulations. Practically every other State in the Commonwealth has copied both our legislation and our regulations. That in itself is an indication that our State is paying more attention to native affairs than is any other State. We have led in up-to-date legislation and I sincerely hope that this House will pass the measure, and that once it has become law we shall again find that the other States of Australia are following our lead. Even if only a small percentage of the natives will benefit by this legislation, then I say, in the interests of that small percentage, it is up to Parliament to give the legislation a trial. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Leslie, debate adjourned.

BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 5th September.

MR. MANN (Beverley) [7.43]: I support the Bill, but in my opinion it is essentially a Committee Bill. I desire to pay a tribute not only to the wonderful staff nursing the patients in our mental hospitals, but also to all the nurses in Western Australia. In common with other members, I consider nurses to be among the greatest of the workers in the world today, whether they minister to the mentally affected or nurse children or adults. Yet we find that it is the lowest-paid profession in Australia. I also pay tribute to the Minister for Health for his efforts to provide better conditions and shorter hours for the nurses. Quite a number of people have approached me with respect to the training for this profession. A girl of 18 years can commence her training as a Government nurse at the Wooroloo hospital; but she must be 19 years of age before she can

commence training at the Perth or Fremantle hospital and one or two other centres. Before she trains, she must have an eighth standard certificate or a junior certificate. She then receives, as a start the wonderful sum of 10s. per week, while her parents must find her uniform for the first year. In addition, her parents must also provide finance for the girl during her first year. When the girl advances to the position of a trainee, she receives the marvellous salary of 17s. 6d. per week, upon which she is taxed.

Mr. Cross: She pays as much as other workers pay who receive those wages.

Mr. MANN: Yet we find that girls who go into the Army, Navy and Air Force or into a munitions factory are paid on a much better basis. It has been said that the trainee has a future in the nursing profession; but after having passed through a course of training extending over three or four years, she finds that as a qualified nurse she receives a very small salary in comparison with salaries paid in other walks of life. Wages at present are pegged, but in many industries the workers are also paid a war loading; yet we find that in this most essential profession nurses are paid a very low salary indeed. I was hoping that some attempt would be made by Parliament to give these young trainees—and the nurses also—a better chance with a view to encouraging them. The Commonwealth Government allows entrants to the Army Medical Nursing Service to train for two years in a military hospital and for one year in a general hospital, where they become fully qualified nurses.

I remind members that the Australian nurse is recognised and accepted in any part of the world, and I am afraid that any attempt further to reform legislation will break down the principles of a profession which has recognition throughout the British Empire as one of the best in the world. I noticed that the Minister, in moving the second reading of the Bill, said he thought it would be a good idea if mental trainees could be given an additional six months' training in a private or a Government hospital. Let us consider the mental nurses! I understand that the Claremont hospital is the place where people are detained who are mentally unfit and not likely to recover, although I understand there are some recoveries. I also understand that Heathcote is an institution

in which it is sought to build up the sick mind so that the patient can be released altogether.

The Minister for Health: They are making a good job of it, too.

Mr. MANN: I think so. I would like to know the difference between the nursing staff at Heathcote and the nursing staff at Claremont.

The Minister for Health: There is no difference.

Mr. MANN: It seems rather extraordinary to me, because the nurses at both these institutions have the same qualifications, and I would presume that at Heathcote the patients would be more likely to be suffering from bodily, as well as mental, afflictions than would the patients at Claremont.

The Minister for Health: No more than at Claremont.

Mr. MANN: I should think that at Heathcote there would probably be cases of illness such as pneumonia. What happens to such cases?

The Minister for Health: Those patients who are not certified as insane would be sent to the Perth Hospital.

Mr. MANN: There is another aspect of the position at Claremont. I refer to the T.B. patients. I have known of some parents who would not permit their daughters to go to Wooroloo because of the danger of contracting T.B. I understood the Minister to say some time ago that there were more T.B. cases among the trainees at the Perth hospital than among the trainees at Wooroloo.

The Minister for Health: A bigger percentage.

Mr. MANN: What is the position at Claremont? I understand that at Claremont the T.B. patients are not segregated from the mental cases.

The Minister for Health: Yes, they are, but the segregation is not as effective as we would like.

Mr. MANN: We hear so much about it outside. I will be candid. I have not been to the Claremont hospital.

Mr. Cross: You are lucky.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. MANN: We hear a great deal at present about the conditions at Claremont. I think the time is ripe to appoint a Royal Commission not only to inquire into the Claremont institution, but into the whole of

our nursing profession. I have not seen the place, but I have heard of T.B. cases; in fact, there have been reports on every hand. We ask these girls to go there and face the possibility of infection, and a girl who spends three years at such a place is marvellous. Women have worked for years attending these people who can never possibly recover. This is a Bill for nurses, and I claim that in such a measure those vitally concerned are the ones who should have the say in the administration. The measure has been introduced for the benefit of nurses, and they are the ones who should decide its main principles. I support the second reading.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth): I desire to say a few words in support of the Bill. It relates to the nursing profession in this State. I believe there are about 2,000 nurses, so that the Bill covers a very wide field of people who are pursuing a very important vocation. The Bill really comprises the formation of a new board.

The Minister for Health: And the registration of mental nurses; that is the principal item.

Mr. McDONALD: The bringing together of the mental nurses with the general nurses and midwifery nurses is contemplated; that is to say, the amalgamation of the three into one composite professional body which will be supervised by a board more or less representative of the various branches of the profession. It is an advance that through this Bill it should be proposed to bring the nursing profession into an organised whole for the purpose of the administration of their vocation. It is also a great advance that we propose now to give full recognition to the status of mental nurses because, as the member for Beverley said, they pursue a very difficult and arduous occupation and one which should receive adequate public recognition. The success of the new organisation of the profession will depend upon the composition of the board. There may be differences of opinion as to how that board should be constituted, but on the whole I think it can be said that the Minister has made a reasonable attempt in this proposed board to provide for representation of the various interests involved, including the general public, represented by the Government. It is of the utmost import-

ance—and I am sure the Minister is seized of this—that the board appointed shall be one which will have the confidence of the nursing profession.

I do not think too much care can be exercised in securing the best possible appointees to undertake the laying of still stronger foundation for the work and status of the profession in this State. That is particularly desirable because I suppose the main duty of the board will be the training of incoming nurses. The Minister knows that the nurses are apprehensive of anything in the way of training that may affect their standing when they go abroad. It is most important that we should have a standard of training here which will enable our nurses to go to other States and countries and enjoy equal status in their profession to that enjoyed by nurses in the places to which they go. This Bill and the board appointed will be judged to a large extent by the care given to the system of training which is to be set up for the different classes of nurses in this State. I mention this because, from conversations I have had with members of the nursing profession, it is clear to me that they are hoping much from this Bill. They are hoping it will assist in raising the status of their profession by prescribing a course of training which will mean that our Western Australian nurses will have prestige equal to that of nurses trained in any other State or country. I support the Bill.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (in reply): I am very pleased at the reception accorded the Bill. There were a few points raised to which I desire to reply. The member for Subiaco seemed somewhat disturbed about the changing over from the words "Principal Medical Officer" to those of "Commissioner of Public Health." I wish to assure her that I have looked a long way back through all sorts of Acts of Parliament, and the only one in which I can find reference to a principal medical officer is in the Hospitals Act. How it got into the Nurses Registration Act I do not know. The hon. member can rest assured there is no such person in Western Australia to my knowledge carrying that designation. The person who originally had it and was meant to have it was the Commissioner of Public Health. What we are really doing is to change the words "Principal Medical Offi-

cer" to "Commissioner of Public Health." The hon. member was worried whether it could mean that at some time the Under Secretary for Health might be made the Commissioner for Public Health. That would not be done, because in the Health Act it is specifically laid down that the Commissioner of Public Health must be a duly qualified medical practitioner. Consequently, those fears can be allayed. In regard to the question of the nurses' representatives on the board, there are two nurses on the present board, nominated by the registered nurses. If more than two names are submitted, a ballot is taken and the successful nurses are the nominees of the registered nurses.

Provision is made in the Bill for the same procedure except that there is to be one representative of each section; that is, one for the registered general nurses, one for the midwifery nurses and one for mental nurses. The member for Pingelly was rather worried about the increase in the membership of the board. I am afraid I did not make myself plain when introducing the Bill, but I think the hon. member will appreciate that that was the last night on which I spoke here before being absent for a month. The present position is that we have a Nurses' Registration Board comprising five members—three ladies and two gentlemen. Then there is a midwifery nurses' board, also comprising five members; that is to say, there are two distinct boards with a total membership of ten persons. I was faced with the alternative of bringing in a Bill establishing another board for mental nurses, which would have comprised at least five more members, and thus there would have been three boards, with a total of 15 members, operating for similar purposes; or bringing in a Bill which would co-ordinate the whole three services under one board. Actually, instead of having three boards with a total of 15 members, we propose to bring the three sections of the nursing profession under one board of nine members.

The matters mentioned by the member for Beverley do not come within the scope of this Bill. The nurses' salaries and conditions, like those of many other workers, are controlled by the National Security Regulations. I have had several discussions on this subject. Only last week I saw representatives of the nurses' union on the mat-

ter. It, like other unions under the Arbitration Act, has to prove an anomaly which is a very difficult matter. The Government would be quite happy if the union could find any method of getting over the pegging of wages. It could then go to the Arbitration Court for an adjustment of the present conditions. I am sorry that I mentioned the matter of six months. It has caused many people a good deal of worry. I did not say that if this Bill became law six months training would be necessary for mental nurses in ordinary hospitals. What I said was that I hoped to see the day when that would happen. After all, we have something like 1,263 mental cases in our six mental homes, and of that number quite a few contract other diseases and complaints besides their mental condition. They have to be nursed for those other complaints and it would be an excellent idea if the mental nurses had some training for that purpose, but that is a matter purely and simply for the board to deal with when constituted.

This board will be in exactly the same position as the two boards operating today. It will be free from any interference, and will be the deciding factor in all matters relating to curriculum, the method of training and everything else pertaining to the nurses. Those things will not be decided by the Minister or the department. The member for Beverley mentioned T.B. cases. I regret to say that there are T.B. cases in Claremont, and although at the moment they are segregated, they are not as well segregated as we would like owing to the impossibility of getting staff.

Mr. Mann: I think I had better make an inspection.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes, but be very careful. Claremont is one of the easiest places to get into but one of the hardest to get out of. It is easier to get out of gaol than out of Claremont.

Mr. Mann: We shall try!

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: When the hon. member does make an inspection I suggest that he starts off with the first building that he comes to. That building is a very fine hospital of 61 beds. We built it for the purpose of treating sick people. We just had that hospital built—and we built one at Heathcote, too—when the Military authorities walked in and took it over. They remained there until they had

sufficient room at Hollywood, and then walked out. At that stage, instead of having 92 female nurses at Claremont, we were down to 45. Today we want about 107 and at least eight or nine fully trained mental nurses in order to re-open that hospital. So, with all the overcrowding today, we have a first-class hospital in the Claremont grounds locked up because of lack of staff. We have tried the Military authorities, the Air Force and elsewhere to get trained nurses. It is not much good sending untrained and unskilled nurses into a treatment hospital.

I can give the hon. member my assurance that if he can find the nurses these, 60 beds will be made available, and there will be proper segregation. In addition, plans are already drawn for two T.B. wards—male and female—to be erected opposite that hospital so as to segregate the T.B. patients altogether. We even went to Wooroloo and had a look, but we found it was impossible to place the mental patients there. As soon as men and material are available two T.B. wards will be built right opposite that hospital at Claremont. I can only say to the member for West Perth that I am hopeful that this composite board will be the forerunner of a great deal of improvement, not only in the nurses' conditions but in training and everything else. So far as Heathcote is concerned, it, after all, is an observation hospital. Patients go there and if they are curable, or cured within six months, they are discharged; if not, they are certified and passed on to Claremont. The member for Beverley can go to Heathcote if he wishes, and we shall not say a word about it so long as he pays his board.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Health in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Amendment of Section 2 of principal Act:

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I do not know whether the member for Pingelly is going on with his amendment.

Mr. Seward: No.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I desire to move an amendment to this clause which deals with the composition of the board. There seems to be some doubt as

to whether the second medical practitioner is to be nominated by the British Medical Association. I desire to make sure that he is. I move an amendment—

That subparagraphs (ii) and (iii) of paragraph (a) of proposed Subsection (4) be struck out and the following subparagraph inserted in lieu:—“(ii) Two medical practitioners, one of whom is practising as an obstetrician, nominated by the British Medical Association.”

Amendment put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

That subparagraph (iv) of paragraph (a) of proposed new Subsection (4) be struck out and the following subparagraph inserted in lieu:—

“(iii) Two senior registered nurses in active practice as such, one of whom shall be trained and experienced in midwifery nursing and infant welfare nursing.”

The subparagraph in the Bill sets out that two matrons or ex-matrons, one of whom shall be trained and experienced in midwifery nursing, shall be members of the board. I discussed the matter with representatives of the Australian Trained Nurses' Association who suggested that the subparagraph should be deleted and another inserted to provide that two senior registered nurses in active practice should be appointed to the board. That would not preclude matrons from being chosen.

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

Clauses 4 to 11—agreed to.

Clause 12—Amendment of Part XII of the Health Act 1911-1942:

Mr. McDONALD: I am not prepared to move an amendment to the clause at this stage, but I trust the Minister will give consideration to some of the penalties set out, and, if deemed necessary, have alterations effected in the Legislative Council. The clause sets out that no person shall, for gain, conduct or manage a maternity home unless registered as a midwifery nurse. The penalty for the first offence is £2, and for a subsequent offence, £10. Representations have been made to me that it is a very serious matter for an unqualified person to conduct such an establishment and represent herself as qualified to attend to midwifery cases when in fact she is not competent to do so. It has been suggested that the penalty is altogether too small and that one more severe should be provided

with regard to unqualified persons who undertake such a responsible service as midwifery.

Mr. MANN: I agree with the member for West Perth but at the same time there is need for care. A fully qualified nurse might neglect to register promptly or within a given period, yet she would be liable to the same penalty that would be imposed upon an unqualified nurse who conducted a maternity hospital. The latter type of offender should be subject to a much more severe penalty than a fine of £2.

Mr. DONEY: I am rather concerned about this matter because there must be a number of quite competent nurses of advanced years in various parts of the State.

The Minister for Health: What do you regard as of advanced years?

Mr. DONEY: Some of the old ladies are 60 or 70 years of age.

The Minister for Health: There are not many of that type left, although I know one who is 82 years of age.

Mr. DONEY: The nurses I have in mind could not, perhaps, qualify for registration by meeting all the requirements of the Act and yet their work is excellent in every particular. Special provision should be made to cover the aged nurses so that they will not be subject to the penal clause.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: These clauses dealing with midwifery matters have been lifted from the Health Act. The Midwifery Board had no power to deal with matters of this description which could be dealt with only under the Health Act by the Commissioner of Health. Now that a composite board is to be established, there is no reason why that board should not deal with them rather than that the Commissioner of Public Health should carry out that duty. The board will be purely professional and no layman will be on it. The medical practitioners and nurses will be fully competent to judge whether a breach of the Act has been committed and to take what action is required. If I am not correct in this matter, I shall have it attended to in the Legislative Council when the Bill is under consideration there.

Mr. DONEY: Do I understand that the new board will treat aged midwives with more or less generosity?

The Minister for Health: No.

Mr. DONEY: Otherwise those few people may be forced out of their occupation. After having been practising for a long time, they should be qualified, though perhaps unable to pass the examination.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I did not convey that generosity would be extended to anyone. If there is any law that ought to be tightened up, it is the law dealing with midwifery. Legislation was passed some years ago under which all who had been practising for a certain period and were still practising were automatically registered. I understand that there are only two of those persons still alive and that one of them is over 80 years of age.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 13, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1944-45.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 26th September on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates; Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £2,265:

MR. McDONALD (West Perth—continued) [8.24]: When progress was reported I was addressing myself more particularly to the general position in this State and to the outlook for the future. For the time being we know that financially, as regards income tax and other direct taxation, we are limited to a set annual sum. This, we believe, will come to an end, and we need to have some idea as to what our objective will be. Had the Commonwealth Powers Referendum been passed, the direction of the future of this State would largely have passed to the Commonwealth Parliament. As the Referendum was not passed, the responsibility for the future of the State still rests with the State Parliament and State Government. It is therefore essential that we should make a contribution towards the objectives and requirements of the State in future and, in particular, in the immediate post-war years.

I was saying that we had not received any guide from the Premier or his Government. These important matters have not been discussed, and I think it is essential that they should be discussed. Especially is it desirable that we as a primary pro-

ducing State should know what is going to happen to our export primary commodities, and whether any definite plans have been made by the Commonwealth Government or the State Government as to the basis of marketing in the future when the immediate post-war arrangements are concluded. In England the authorities have already made up their minds on broad lines of policy. Mr. Churchill, speaking recently, said of Great Britain, "Our own effort must be supported by international agreements." Obviously the British policy is that their economic organisation is going to depend upon seeking and promoting international agreements for the necessary exchange of commodities and manufactures. Do we in this country intend to reciprocate in some arrangement such as the one proposed by Mr. Churchill on behalf of Great Britain? So far no indication has been given as to any general marketing policy being in contemplation by this State or by the Commonwealth.

We in Australia have already entered into an agreement with Canada, Argentina, and the United Kingdom, known as the Wheat Agreement. The object of that agreement is to set up a wheat pool to supply impoverished nations as soon as they are in a position to receive foodstuffs from countries such as ours. The agreement also proposes to extend the wheat pool to control production, guarantee prices and fix export quotas for Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and Argentina for a period of at least three years after hostilities cease. So far as I am aware, that is the first international agreement to which Australia has been committed in relation to the post-war or post-hostilities period. It seems to me that it will be probable, and no doubt desirable, that this form of international agreement should be extended to cover many of our chief export primary products; but I want the Premier—and an opportunity will no doubt arise when he speaks on the Estimates after returning in a week or two from the Premiers' Conference—to give the Chamber some idea of the trend of post-war policy in the export of primary products, on which the economy of this State is almost entirely dependent. If the Commonwealth and State Governments have formed any idea of how to meet these problems, which will have to be met perhaps in a year or two, they might give

us some idea of their proposals, and the people might well be informed what the proposals are, even if they should be only of a provisional character.

I pass now to two of our major revenue and expenditure activities, namely the railways and the State Trading Concerns. It has been said that the deficits of the Australian States have been the deficits of their railway systems. In Australia we have, I believe, something like £350,000,000 sunk in our different railway systems. Now, the Government Railways Act of this State was passed 40 years ago, and I agree with the member for Pingelly in his recent remark that it is high time the basis of organisation and administration of our railways was overhauled. No Act of Parliament in these changing days of technical matters can remain valid for 40 years, nor can any system of administration be looked upon as up-to-date when based upon a statute of 40 years ago. So I say that as an important part of our financial position and our economic position in this State, the chief utility involving expenditure and revenue, our railways must—as the member for Pingelly has already said—receive urgent consideration from the Government, in order that they may play their part not only in the service of the State but also in relation to a proper financial basis of their operation.

Our State Trading Concerns rest upon an Act of Parliament passed 27 years ago. They, too, are due for an overhaul. In our State Trading Concerns, which are responsible for many losses and also for some profits, the State has embarked 2¼ million pounds of its money, a great deal of it loan money; in fact, nearly all loan money. Some of those concerns represent very large operations, and involve a very large amount of capital; but they are under the management, in the case of the State Shipping Service for instance, of an officer who is called the manager. I am not suggesting for one moment that he is not a very competent and responsible officer, but I do not think that any trading concern of such a magnitude should be left under the control of one man. In private industry it is found that it is a great aid to efficiency if there is—as there is in almost all cases where the business is of any size—a board of directors who advise in the management of the business. It is too much to rest the responsibility of direction

on the shoulders of one man, even though he may be advised and assisted to some extent by his Minister and by the Treasury. I consider that our State Trading Concerns Act is due for remodelling, and that the Government should consider setting up a board of management which will have the general direction of all State Trading Concerns. This board ought to be of the best calibre, and should be able to co-ordinate and advise and, in the final instance and subject to Government control, direct the policy of the several trading concerns which would be under its direction.

No private business of any size would proceed in the same way as our State Trading Concerns are controlled. No private business would be left without more assistance in the way of advice and more contact with the outside world. I hold that if our State Trading Concerns are to show the returns of which they are capable, if they are to show a progressive attitude, which will be needed in the post-war period, the whole basis of their statutory foundation and their administration should be reviewed and should be replaced by some up-to-date structure under which they will operate. For post-war occupation of men and women returning from the Services we are to have national or public works. That has been agreed to by every Government and by everybody concerned. But what are the national or public works to which the Government proposes to pay attention in the post-war period, when men and women expect to return to civil employment? I saw the other day that the Victorian Government announced a series of public works in which that Government might engage, and which would be the avenue for employment of their population upon its return to civil occupations.

However, as far as I know, in this State no announcement, no portfolio has yet been presented to either Parliament or the people as to what public or national works are being projected or are in hand in this State. There are a number of first importance—I do not propose to go through them in detail—but things such as water conservation, irrigation, harbour development and others of that kind are obviously national or public works of importance to the State. I suggest that the time has arrived when the Government might well announce whether it has any public works in

hand—and I believe the Government has some—might well inform the people what is the portfolio of public works which Ministers hope to develop in the post-war period, thus enabling the people to make suggestions as to any directions in which that portfolio might be improved. I want to say a few words about our secondary industries, and to repeat very shortly what I said just a few weeks ago in this Chamber on that subject. It was that we lagged far behind in secondary industries before the war, and that the whole tendency of the war has been to centralise secondary industries still more in the central States. The gap between our progress in secondary industries and the progress made by the central States has become wider in consequence of the war. I realise that that has been inevitable to a large extent, because war industries had to be established in the situations where they could be most effective; and thus our State, being an isolated State, has not had the advantage of any war industries at all—nothing comparable to the advantages gained by the central States.

I repeat that, difficult as it may be, the Government in my opinion should concentrate on the possibility of achieving some redistribution of those industries which have been set up during the war with Government money. Those industries will be demobilised when the war finishes. Many of them will be destined to go under private control; many will be assigned for civilian needs and production, and it seems to me well within the compass of practical politics that pressure should be brought to bear by this State on the Commonwealth Government to ensure that, even at some considerable capital cost, a number of the demobilised industries are ear-marked to come to Western Australia and be established here. If we can achieve that we shall have laid the foundations for more rapid progress in our manufactures and for opportunities for employment of our young people than we ourselves could achieve in a great many more years.

Mr. Cross: Why not establish iron smelting works and steel rolling mills, using our own materials?

Mr. McDONALD: Exactly! Those are among the industries I have in view. We have our iron deposits in the North and there are the ancillary manufactures in the

way of steel associated with those deposits. That is the kind of distribution of heavy industries, as well as of lighter industries, upon which it seems to me that we could embark with a fair chance of success. Is there any policy in this State regarding immigration? I know it is not easy at this stage to lay down any hard and fast lines, but I presume the Commonwealth Government has evolved some ideas about immigration. I have heard some talk by Mr. Forde, the Minister for the Army, of a population of 20,000,000 in 20 years. If he has that objective I presume he has some idea about the machinery or the organisation by which we will get all those people into Australia in that time.

Hon. N. Keenan: And find work for them.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, and not displace others from work in the process.

Mr. Needham: We know all about the last immigration scheme.

Mr. McDONALD: The last immigration system may have had its defects; but after all, it developed a very important part of our State.

Mr. Needham: It was terribly costly.

Mr. McDONALD: It may have been, but there are those who stayed and prospered. Unfortunately, pioneering is always a difficult task. What is the policy regarding immigration in this State? I suggest it should be that we should have first priority for any immigrants coming to Australia. If there is any policy at all of settling immigrants, it should be that they should go to the States where the population is least dense, and where they are required to develop the country and defend it. If there is any State which will fill those requirements, it is Western Australia. Therefore our policy, as a State and as a Government, should be to lose no time to find out what the Commonwealth Government has in view, and to formulate our own ideas so as to ensure that in any Federal policy of immigration this State, if possible, claims first priority not only for immigrants but also for the necessary money that may be required to settle them in our midst. We should press for our absolute needs in relation to additional population from overseas.

The Minister for Works: It will probably be difficult to get suitable migrants after the war.

Mr. McDONALD: I agree with the Minister. However desirable the suggestion of the Minister for the Army was—20,000,000 people in 20 years—it was very airy, and not based on great probabilities. Australia faces a major dilemma; she must have more people to defend this continent or else other people will take it from her. There must be an attempt on the part of Australia—and Western Australia in particular—to get some more adequate settlement over the vast areas we have in the western part of Australia. If we have that objective in mind, I think it is not too early to make plans for the reception and the settlement of those immigrants, and to convey our ideas to the Commonwealth Government for their co-operation. I desire to say a few words about the North-West of our State. That represents a problem all by itself. It is difficult to know how we are going to develop the North-West and get it peopled with any degree of population; but I do think we should have some definite idea—much more definite than we have today—about our policy for the North-West. I suggest to the Government that an early declaration of its views would be welcomed, not only by this House, but by the people.

The Minister for Works: What do you think of the idea of the Hon. G. W. Miles?

Mr. Leslie: He does not think very much of Mr. Miles.

Member: He is miles from the point.

Mr. McDONALD: I am not going to be led into a discussion about handing over our North-West to the Commonwealth Government. I am not very keen about condemning our North-West to the fate of the Northern Territory. I do not think there is anything which presents a more sorry history for the last 30 years, in the way of administration and development, than the Northern Territory under the Commonwealth. Even after 30 years' administration, there is not even a continuous railway from the south of the continent to Darwin, a port which perhaps is the most strategic port in the whole of Australia. I do not feel much disposed at present to assign the North-West of our State to the fate of the Northern Territory. But that does not mean that we can afford to treat our North-West anywhere near as cavalierly as the Commonwealth has treated the Northern Territory. I think the opportunity lies with us to show an example of how these northern areas can

be developed within economic and natural possibilities, an example by which perhaps the Commonwealth may later profit when it deals with the Northern Territory.

The Minister for Works: New industries are being developed in the North.

Mr. McDONALD: I am glad to hear that a number of men in a certain area of the North-West are now considering, or testing, the possibilities of water conservation and irrigation and fodder production. I think I am right in saying that that is so.

The Minister for Works: New secondary industries are also being developed.

Mr. McDONALD: I am glad to hear that also, but they are not being developed on any major scale, although I do not blame the Minister for that at the present time, because they cannot be developed owing to the shortage of manpower. But there are industries which can be developed in the North-West apart from primary industries, and when men become available after the war we shall have an opportunity to make suggestions and plans by which they can be persuaded and helped to establish industries that may do something for the northern part of our State.

The last thing I want to touch upon tonight is the matter of education. I want to know what the policy is concerning the relations between the Commonwealth and the State regarding education. It is generally agreed by students of education in Australia that the time has come for the Commonwealth to take over the actual servicing or administration of certain aspects of education. For example, physical education has already been adopted as part of the responsibility of the Commonwealth. So, also, educational research is said to be a matter which the Commonwealth might very well adopt as its responsibility. I am not one of those who think that education as a whole should be taken over by the Commonwealth. I believe in the British system of decentralisation, and that the States should retain the major part of the direction of education inside their borders. But I do think the time has come for us to have some definite ideas as to the part that the Commonwealth shall play in relation to the States in education, particularly the financial part. Can we not put up some proposition that the Commonwealth shall accept a proportion of the total education costs in this State? Can

we not submit that the Commonwealth shall, as regards the whole of Australia, accept as its direct responsibility certain features of education—permanently, not temporarily? It might be pre-school education or educational research and it might continue to be physical education, and it is possible that there is some other department of education that might well be the direct responsibility of the Commonwealth Government.

My last word in discussing the Treasurer's Budget is that I am far from satisfied that we are discharging the responsibility that we have accepted and which remains to us since the defeat of the Referendum. There has been an almost complete absence of any forward policy for the various activities of our State. You, Mr. Chairman, know that in private industry plans have been laid long ago and are still being perfected for their recovery in trade after the war. In Great Britain and America the big industries have laid down definitely their organisations to participate in the trade of their own countries and in international trade after the war.

Mr. Needham: The State Government has not been idle in that regard, either.

Mr. McDONALD: Those firms have their literature prepared. They are even now sending out trade books setting out what they will supply after the war.

Mr. Rodoreda: They are in France now trying to sell goods.

The Minister for Works: They are selling Bing Crosby in France.

Mr. McDONALD: A few Bing Crosbys might be useful here if they are as enterprising as that. In contrast to private industry, whatever plans this State may have, have not been disclosed to any serious extent to the people or Parliament. If there are plans, if there is an organisation being prepared to enable us to hold our own and to give our people a decent chance in competition with other States and the rest of the world in post-war years; if those plans have been made, the time has come to give them to us in some detail.

The Minister for Works: We should more than hold our own if big vested interests in the East do not crush us.

Mr. McDONALD: I have made suggestions whereby the so-called big vested interests shall not crush us. I have endeavoured to point out that one of the first things we should do is to get an interstate

commission established to function as the Constitution meant it to function, and ensure that the trade and commerce clause should not operate against the spirit of the Constitution. That is something which may help our State immeasurably to escape the effects of any unfair competition by highly developed and established Eastern States industries.

The Minister for Justice: Section 92 of the Constitution would have to be superseded.

Mr. McDONALD: Section 92 is a difficulty, as I have said before and as I have always agreed. But that section is not insuperable, and if we had a body, like an interstate commission, charged with watching the operations of Section 92 and with reporting whether the section is being exploited instead of being properly used, we would have had the ground work upon which to seek, if necessary, any amendment of Section 92 which would enable the weaker States to have a chance to establish themselves. Personally I think there is a lot to be said for Section 92 in the sense that we do not want tariff barriers between the States of Australia. We are essentially, or should be, one continent and one nation able to trade freely among ourselves.

The Minister for Works: That would have been very handy for you in connection with the Referendum.

Mr. McDONALD: The Referendum left out Section 92. It made no attempt to remove that portion of Section 92 which was an abuse of Section 92.

Mr. Doney: Dr. Evatt argued as though Section 92 did not exist.

Mr. McDONALD: While the section has its place for the reason I have mentioned, if we think that the section might be used to exploit the State, then by all means any constructive idea to alter that section to protect our State is something we should ask for. But we have never asked for anything. The State never has an idea in its head. The Commonwealth Government deserves credit inasmuch as it does have ideas and plans for the future and sets out to realise them. If we want the Constitution altered and want protection given to our State, and want to ensure that we are not exploited by big vested interests in the Eastern States, let us formulate a scheme to protect our State.

Mr. Cross: Why did you not vote "Yes" at the Referendum?

Mr. McDONALD: That would have given the vested interests full and final power in Western Australia. The last barrier would have gone. That would have been the result had the Referendum been carried. I will not detain the Committee longer, except to say that I do not know—the Government may—whether any member in this House outside the Government has any idea what our objectives are for the post-war period. We have never discussed them; we have never put them in writing; we have never clarified our minds about them; we have never decided what we want. Until we decide what we want we are not likely to get it because we do not know what we want to get. When we talk about the Budget and read about our revenue and our expenditure for the last year and for the forthcoming year, I think these matters should be associated with some indications of policy and development, of prospects and the means by which we are going to work in order to ensure that our State makes the progress we want it to make.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 9 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 3rd October, 1944.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Presentation.

The PRESIDENT: In company with officers of this House, I waited on His Excellency the Lieut.-Governor and presented

to him the Address-in-reply agreed to by the House. His Excellency replied as follows:—

Mr. President and honourable members of the Legislative Council—I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to His Most Gracious Majesty the King and for your Address-in-reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament. (Sgd.) James Mitchell, Lieut.-Governor.

ELECTORAL—SOUTH-EAST PROVINCE.

Seat Declared Vacant.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That this House resolves that, owing to the death of the Hon. Harold Vivian Piesse, late member for the South-East Province, the seat be declared vacant.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Electoral Act Amendment.
- 2, Constitution Acts Amendment (No. 1).

Received from the Assembly.

MOTION—ELECTORAL REFORM.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

HON. C. F. BAXTER (East) [4.39]: I move—

That a Select Committee of five members be appointed to inquire into the question of electoral reform, and to advise on amendments to existing legislation with a view to improving the representation of the people in the Parliament of the State.

The motion which I am asking the House to discuss and which I hope will be approved is very important; in fact, the Electoral Act is the most important measure on the statute-book of the State. The Act contains provisions for the making and unmaking of Governments. It gives the right to the electors to exercise their franchise in favour of the candidate whom they desire to be elected. The rights of electors generally are set out very clearly in the Act; but unfortunately those rights are not being lived up to in any sense of the word. Further, for a very long period of years there has been no appreciable amendment of the Act. Small amendments have been made occasionally; and for many years there has been in the minds of our people a desire for a thorough investigation of the whole electoral system. Apparently the Government is not prepared to make such an investigation or