

ing, will not be lost through one error. This is a reasonable amendment, and I propose to support it.

Amendment on amendment put and passed.

On motions by Mr. Cross, proposed new subclause further amended by striking out in line 10 of paragraph (b) the word "shall"; and by adding the following proviso:—"Provided that the board shall, at the request of the Commissioner of Public Health, prohibit the sale of milk from such premises until such premises are made to comply with the requirements of the Health Act."

Proposed new subclause, as amended, put and passed; clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 35 to 74, Schedule, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

House adjourned at 10.35 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 3rd September, 1946.

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

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to Supply Bill (No. 1), £2,700,000.

QUESTIONS.

AIR SERVICES.

As to Landing Grounds at Roebourne and Onslow.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary:

With reference to the air mail services to Roebourne and Onslow—

1, Has the Government drawn the attention of the Federal authorities to the grossly inadequate facilities of the landing grounds at these two centres?

2, If not, will the Government take immediate steps to have this matter rectified?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, The Government has on many occasions appealed to the Commonwealth authorities for better aerial facilities throughout the North-West.

2, The question of extension of these grounds to accommodate larger aeroplanes is now being considered by the Department of Civil Aviation, Melbourne.

PEARLING.

As to Rehabilitation of Industry.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary:

With reference to the rehabilitation of the pearling industry, has the Government—

1, Approached the Federal authorities with the object of re-introducing indentured labour in this industry?

2, If so, will the Government recommend the advisability of pegging wages in order to overcome unfair competition, and to ensure the economic stability of the industry?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, Yes.

2, This matter is at present receiving attention by the appropriate authority, namely, the Commonwealth Department of Labour and National Service.

WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Provision for Onslow, Port Hedland and Marble Bar.

Hon. G. W. MILES asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Has the Government yet taken any steps to provide an adequate supply of water to the towns of Onslow, Port Hedland and Marble Bar, respectively?

2, If so, what action is proposed to be taken in this connection?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, (a) In response to representations from Mr. Rodoreda, M.L.A., the Onslow Scheme has been overhauled. (b) In response to similar representations from Mr. W. Hegney, M.L.A., two possible sources of supply have been examined at Port Hedland and estimates of costs prepared. Necessary pumping tests will be carried out in November. (c) Proposals for improvement of the supply at Marble Bar are now being investigated.

MILK.

As to Pasteurisation.

Hon. Sir HIAL COLEBATCH asked the Chief Secretary:

1, What percentage of the milk consumed in the metropolitan area is pasteurised?

2, Is the method of pasteurisation satisfactory?

3, What percentage of milk consumed outside the metropolitan area is pasteurised?

4, What practice would it be necessary to follow to secure 100 per cent. pasteurisation in—

(a) the metropolitan area;

(b) the State generally?

5, What time would be necessary, and what cost would be involved to secure—

(a) complete pasteurisation in the metropolitan area; and

(b) throughout the State?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, Approximately 21 per cent.

2, Methods in vogue—if efficiently carried out—are satisfactory.

3, Practically nil.

4, (a) (1) Centralise treatment in strategically placed plants or depots. (2) Bottle all milk under approved methods for household distribution. (3) Instal special equipment for delivering milk in bulk to shops, milk bars, cafes, etc. (4) Instal special storage facilities in shops, milk bars, cafes, etc., for drawing pasteurised milk in small quantities as required, without risk of contamination. (5) Eliminate the producer-vendor. (b) It would be impracticable to arrange for the sale of pasteurised milk throughout the State generally. The cost probably would be excessive in all towns, except perhaps Kalgoorlie.

5, (a) The time necessary to construct buildings and obtain plant is problematical—probably two or three years. Difficult to estimate, but possibly £200,000, assuming certain existing buildings can be adapted for use of modern plant. (b) See reply to question 4 (b).

SOLDIER LAND SETTLEMENT.

As to Properties Acquired, Resumed, Etc.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE asked the Chief Secretary:

1, How many properties for soldier-settlement have been offered by private vendors to the Government, and have been valued, and/or options obtained?

2, How many have not been valued?

3, How many properties for soldier-settlement have been acquired for the Government by private treaty?

4, How many properties for soldier-settlement have been resumed under the provisions of the Closer Settlement Act Amendment Act, 1945?

5, How many properties for soldier-settlement has the Government wished to resume, but has not been able to do so owing to—

(a) lack of necessary powers;

(b) any other reason?

6, What are the particulars and localities of the properties referred to in answer to Question 5 (a) and (b)?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, Excluding areas offered and withdrawn, 787 offers to sell private properties have been received; 196 of these have been rejected and 109 deferred; 142 properties

have been valued; 142 options have been obtained.

2, 121 passed by the Land Purchase Board have yet to be valued by the Commonwealth valuers; 219 offers are being considered to determine how many of them should be valued.

3, 16 purchased and one received as a free gift.

4, None.

5, The Closer Settlement Act Amendment Act provides that if land is unutilised, or it can be shown that by resumption there would be a substantial increase in production, together with a reasonable increase in the number of people usually resident on the land, it can be resumed for closer settlement. About 50 large properties have been listed, and the Director is writing to the owners of them explaining the difficulties of getting farms for ex-Servicemen and inquiring as to whether they wish to sell their properties. To what extent resumption will be necessary or possible cannot be measured at present. Actually all available Commonwealth valuers are concentrating on dealing with the properties offered, but the services of some of them should be available for resumption valuations before the end of the year.

6, Answered by No. 5.

HOTELS, MURCHISON GOLDFIELDS.

As to Permission to Open on Sundays.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (for Hon. E. H. H. Hall) asked the Chief Secretary:

1, Seeing that on the Eastern Goldfields the Government has for some years allowed hotels to open during certain hours on Sundays for the sale of alcohol, will the Government grant hotelkeepers on the Murchison Goldfields the same exemption from the provisions of the Licensing Act?

2, If not, why not?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1 and 2, It is not thought the hon. member's suggestion should be acted upon.

BILLS (6)—FIRST READING.

- 1, State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment.
- 2, Feeding Stuffs Act Amendment (No. 2).
- 3, State Transport Co-ordination Act Amendment.

4, Electoral (War Time) Act Amendment.

5, Railway (Hopetoun - Ravensthorpe) Discontinuance.
Received from the Assembly.

6, Constitution Act Amendment.
Introduced by Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch.

MOTION—PUBLIC WORKS STANDING COMMITTEE.

As to Legislation for Appointing.

HON. A. THOMSON (South-East)
[4.48]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should introduce legislation for the appointment of a Public Works Standing Committee representative of both Houses of Parliament but on which the number of members of the Legislative Assembly shall be greater than the number of members of the Legislative Council, so that no public work to cost more than £30,000 shall be authorised unless it has first been investigated by such standing committee.

In submitting the motion for the serious consideration of members, I am sure most of the older members will recall that for many years I have been urging the appointment of such a committee. Our present system of embarking upon public expenditure is certainly open to serious objection; and that remark applies to all of the Governments since I have had the honour of being a representative of the people in Parliament. I cannot understand why the Government last year opposed a similar motion brought forward in the Legislative Assembly. The hon. member who introduced that motion has this year introduced a similar motion, which still has the opposition of the Acting Premier, who spoke against it recently. I feel that Parliament should, in a way, have more control than it has over public expenditure. At the opening of today's proceedings, a Message was received and read by the President to the effect that a Bill authorising the expenditure of several million pounds had been assented to by the Lieut.-Governor.

What is the position as far as Parliament is concerned? Cabinet, or an individual Minister, starts some project which ultimately involves the State in huge expenditure. Numbers of such undertakings have meant large losses to the taxpayer. I

propose to give a few examples of costly undertakings. Had they been referred to a public works committee, such as I am suggesting, I feel sure that many millions of pounds would have been saved to the State. Let me delve into ancient history. In 1912, a Mr. Rotherham was the engineer in charge, and Mr. W. D. Johnson was Minister for Works. A proposal was put forward that a T-jetty should be extended from the present deep-water jetty at an estimated cost of approximately £70,000.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Whereabouts?

Hon. A. THOMSON: At Albany. A large deputation waited on the Minister and requested, as an alternative, that a reclamation scheme should be adopted. Had that been done, as was suggested by the common people, a valuable area of land that could be used today would have been made available. But, in effect, that £70,000 was wasted by the Minister's insisting that it was gross impertinence to suggest that the engineer did not know his job. What actually happened was that the jetty was built and sand was dredged to secure the necessary depth of water. The sand was discharged into King George Sound, with the result that most of it ultimately drifted in to Middleton Beach and, to a large extent, ruined what was—and still is—a beautiful beach. It was much better prior to that occurrence. If we had had a public works committee it would have dealt with that matter and probably the £70,000 would not have been expended in such a way.

I come now to the group settlement scheme, which involved this State in the loss of millions of pounds in cash and caused many broken hearts among the people who came here to work and provide a future for themselves and their families. I do not say for a moment that the group settlement scheme was an utter failure; far from it. But, had the advice and the experience of many of the original settlers, who were then residing in the South-West, been availed of, many costly blunders could, and would, have been avoided. It is common knowledge that this State never profited in any way by the experience of the Eastern States, which attempted similar projects. We followed the same methods, which proved costly, and, to a large extent, resulted in failure in the

other States. Exactly the same thing happened in Western Australia.

If we had then had a public works committee, Parliament, and the people who were protesting at the time and prophesying what was going to be the cost of this scheme, would have been able to demand that the committee inquire into the matter. Parliament would have seen to that. But while strong protests were made to the Government, practically no check was placed upon those administering the group settlement scheme. I will instance an experience of my own. I toured the Peel Estate for two days. The further I travelled, the more tragic, it seemed to me, was the position of the settlers concerned, and also the future prospects of the State. It appeared that a large proportion of those who had been placed in that area would have their efforts doomed to failure. It meant, in effect, pouring money into the sea. After having spent two days on the estate, I had occasion to visit the Agricultural Bank. I was then a member of the Legislative Assembly. When speaking to the officer in charge of that area, I questioned the wisdom of the further expenditure of money there and suggested that he, as an officer, should strongly protest.

Hon. G. B. Wood: The man who owned that property and sold it to the Government told me that he advised the Government against it.

Hon. A. THOMSON: I do not doubt that. The officer in charge opened a drawer in his desk, pulled out a report, which he submitted to me, and said, "Would you like to read that?" I assure members that two years before I raised a protest, that responsible officer had drawn the attention of his superior officer to the fact that the danger point, as far as that area was concerned, had been reached. I asked him why he did not insist on his protest going on to the Minister. He said, "What is the use of my insisting? I have done my duty by referring it to my chief. That is the policy of the Minister, who is carrying out the group settlement scheme."

Members can see that what I am asking for now, and what I have for years urged the Government to give effect to, would, in that one instance, have been of great benefit to the settlers on the land, as well as to the finances of the State. We find that

the Minister starts some pet scheme or requests his responsible officer to do so. In the instance that I have quoted the officer who was under the direct control of the Minister absolutely refused to forward to the right quarter the protest concerning the particular case to which I have referred. That is ancient history, but I quote it to show the necessity for something being done in the direction of appointing a public works committee.

I now come to the Legislative Council. Even this House made a blunder. When the group settlement scheme was under way and cheap money was available, the Government of the day brought down a measure for the construction of a railway. Sir Hal Colebatch was Minister in charge in this House. The Bill submitted to this Chamber provided for the construction of a railway from Pemberton to Denmark. In its wisdom, or unwisdom, this House rejected the Bill. As railway transport was deemed advisable and necessary for the extension of the group settlement scheme a special session of Parliament was convened, and the Government brought down a Bill for the construction of two railways, one from Pemberton to Northcliffe and the other from Denmark to Nornalup, leaving a gap in between. The consequence was that the Commissioner of Railways was left with two deadends and no possible hope of handling them in a reasonable manner from a traffic point of view. If the line as originally proposed had gone through great advantage would have accrued to the fruit-growers. It would also have been of great benefit to the timber industry, because the line could have transported a great deal of timber from those forests straight through to Albany, where there is deep water and it is possible to load ships of a considerable size. That also is past history.

We are now looking forward to the inauguration of a successful tourist business. The more we can encourage people to visit this country the better will it be for all concerned, and the trip that I suggest should have been available to them would undoubtedly have been one of the great attractions because of the beautiful country through which the line would have passed. Either the Railway Department must, looking to the future, provide means of transport between these two deadends so that tourists Pemberton, Northcliffe, the Franklin River

coming to Western Australia may go through the beautiful forest country around and Nornalup and on to Albany, or the Transport Board will have to grant a permit to private enterprise to provide the necessary facilities. Undoubtedly that part of the State is one of outstanding beauty.

I quote this instance to show the blunder that was made in the past. I could refer to many other occurrences of a similar nature. We know that a large sum of money was lost in the establishment of the original State Implement Works. True, those works have now become a valuable asset to the State because they have had engineering works attached to them. When the works were established, however, it was intended to supply the farmer with cheap machinery and other requisites. A great deal of the loss incurred in the group settlement scheme can be attributed to the machinery made by the State Implement Works and passed on to the settlers at considerable cost. The money for the State Implement Works had cost the Government an average of about 3 per cent. in interest, but an overcharge was imposed on the settler of as high as 7 per cent. interest. Inevitably, however, the money had later on to be written off.

In the course of the many years that I have spent in Parliament, I have listened to several budgets and speeches on loan Bills and heard of the many projects which have been submitted for our consideration. In most instances the money involved had already been spent, so that it became a farce to say that Parliament had any control over the finances of the State. We have no such control, and you, Mr. President, know that as well as anyone. We have a Cabinet consisting of six or seven Ministers. Even members of the political party in power have no more control over the expenditure than have members of the Opposition.

I now come nearer home. I am pleased Dr. Hislop has returned, and desire to congratulate him on the statement he made in this House dealing with the appalling position in which we find the Royal Perth Hospital. I also desire to commiserate with the people of the State that that should be the position in connection with this important institution. The whole thing is a reflection upon Western Australia. It would be in-

teresting, even at this stage, if we could have an inquiry by a public works committee, that could ascertain who was responsible for starting out on the programme of work on the present site and who deemed it to be a suitable one for the purpose. In my remarks I am not directing any criticism at the Chief Secretary, because his statement was supplied to him by the Health Department, the Minister in charge of which is Hon. E. Nulsen.

Despite the excuses put forward by the Minister in another place as to alleged unforeseen happenings and the necessity of providing more accommodation for nurses etc., I say a gigantic blunder was committed when it was decided that that building, which should have been a credit to Western Australia, should be proceeded with on the present cramped site. In my small way I strongly objected at the time to that being done, and had to face a certain amount of criticism concerning the questions I was asking about the erection of the present building. I said then and I repeat now that it was a shocking example of the type of ministerial control to which I refer. Dr. Hislop has told us in this Chamber that no-one has any say in the matter, and yet before the building is even furnished we find an endeavour being made to increase the area of ground by the resumption of some land belonging to the Perth City Council. Dr. Hislop also said that in the opinion of those interested in the hospital we should, if necessary, beg the Commonwealth Government to return what is known as the Macfarlane block which has been purchased by that Government. It is a blot on the administration of the State Government that such a thing should happen in the city of Perth.

No-one knows what the building will ultimately cost. There may be a complete plan of what it is proposed to do in the future, but so far as any of us here or any member of the public can tell, something like a million and a quarter or more has already been expended on this wholly unsuitable site. When it was a question of building a new hospital and finding the money for it, steps should have been taken to ensure that it was erected on an area which would provide enough room for gardens and beautiful surroundings so that the patients could more readily be restored to health. Those

who will occupy the new wing, when it is finished, under present conditions will have the doubtful pleasure of looking over the slums of East Perth and the manufacturing centre of that portion of the metropolitan area. One is justified in quoting this case as a reason why some better means of checking public works should be brought into existence.

So far as I can ascertain there is a definite lack of co-operation between the different Government departments. There is not a thorough understanding or co-operation between the Public Works Department and the other departments, otherwise the blunder that has occurred in connection with the Royal Perth Hospital could not have been made. I am not condemning the Public Works Department. It is instructed to do certain things, and because of instructions given in this particular case we now have the Royal Perth Hospital as it is today. I can prove my statement that there is no cohesion or co-operation between the various departments by quoting evidence that was submitted by the Town Planning Commissioner to the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the standardisation of the railway gauge between Kalgoorlie and Fremantle. I hope members who were on that Committee will not think I am anticipating anything they might have to say in making this quotation. Evidence was submitted to us showing definitely that the statement I am making is entirely correct. If members will turn to page 49 of the report of the evidence of the Select Committee they will find that on further examination Mr. David Lomas Davidson, the Town Planning Commissioner, had some very pertinent remarks to make.

If ever there was a man that should have been examined and a Commission that should have been consulted, surely they are the Town Planning Commissioner and the Town Planning Commission! It will be interesting to learn whether they were consulted. In evidence before the Select Committee, the Town Planning Commissioner stated that the Commission, in planning for industrial development, had made provision for a green belt to protect the residential areas. That was at Fremantle. I asked the witness whether he would ex-

plain this matter in his own language and he replied—

It is proposed to put the Robb's Jetty power house at the jetty. There already exist there meat preserving works, slaughter yards, tanneries, fish manure works and a sewage farm. Owing to the State's commitments for the killing and chilling of meat, particularly the North-West cattle, it has been found necessary to make provision for the cattle to get through the power station lay-out. I drew the attention of the Government to the conflict of use in this locality and a special Industrial Sites Committee was appointed, of which Mr. Fernie, the Director of Industrial Development, was chairman. On the committee is a representative of the railways and a representative of the Treasurer, the Lands Resumption Officer, the Surveyor-General, myself and one or two others.

After the committee had been functioning some few months, I suggested that the power station might be shifted to Woodman's Point, and that the whole area between Robb's Jetty on the north, Woodman's Point quarantine station on the south, the high land on the east and the ocean on the west should be a noxious trades area, which would be served, and is served, by the Armadale-Jandakot railway line and a possible future Trans-continental line, bringing the trains into Fremantle along the railway as it exists.

Mr. Roche, a member of the Select Committee, referred to Mr. Davidson's mention of North-West cattle and Mr. Davidson explained—

Mr. Byfield was insistent that a ramp should be provided through the power station and the railway yards to take some hundreds of North-West heavy-horned type of cattle through for trans-shipment to Midland Junction, owing to the impact of disease.

Now here is the point to which I wish to direct special attention.

Unfortunately, when these matters are brought up by a Town Planning Commissioner, they immediately receive all the latent criticism and strong opposition of what might be termed vested departmental interests. Mr. Taylor and the Commissioner of Railways are only concerned with railways and power. Mr. Byfield is concerned solely with conserving the State's monetary investment in the chilling and killing works. The Engineer for Sewerage is concerned solely with retaining as long as possible the sewage treatment works in the middle of them, and private enterprises like Baxter's fish manure works and Shilkin's new tannery are concerned with retaining their identity in that one area.

It is the duty of the town planning authorities to try to sort them out and give them elbow room without having impact on the

functions of the others. That is why my board is so anxious that the railway system shall be conserved and extended to serve these industrial areas.

There we have evidence from a departmental officer of the lack of cohesion and co-operation between the departments. As he rightly points out, the Commissioner of Railways is concerned only with his own particular business and does not care how it affects the business of others. The same remark applies to the other interests mentioned by Mr. Davidson. At the risk of repeating myself, I stress the absolute necessity for the Government, in its own interests and in the interests of the State's finance, to establish a public works standing committee. Members will observe that the Town Planning Commissioner referred to the South Fremantle power station. I wish to ask this pertinent question: Who decided that a power station costing over a million pounds should be located at South Fremantle? Work on preparing the foundations is being pushed ahead; this was reported in the Press of Saturday last. The work is being rushed on, exactly as the work on the hospital in Perth was rushed on.

Last session Parliament approved of the constitution of an Electricity Commission, which has already started to function. It has acquired premises for offices in Murray-street. The commission is empowered to distribute electric current from Collie to towns as far afield as Albany, Mt. Barker, Tambellup, Broome Hill, Katanning, Wagin and Narrogin, including all the intervening centres. I wish to ask: Why start building a power house at South Fremantle, when all the coal to be used must be railed there from Collie? If the power can be transmitted from Collie to the towns I have mentioned, a far greater distance than it would be to South Fremantle or the metropolitan area, why establish this power house at South Fremantle instead of at Collie? I ask that question as a layman.

On the 14th January last, I saw a statement in the Press that an immediate start was being made with the levelling of the site for the South Fremantle power house. I wrote to the Premier on that date, directing his attention to the evidence that had been submitted to the Select Committee on Railway Gauge Standardisation and also

to the lack of co-ordination between the various departments, as I have explained to the House. On the 21st February I received a reply as follows:—

With reference to your letter of the 14th January regarding the evidence submitted by the Town Planning Commissioner before the Select Committee on the standard gauge railway, I have to inform you that I have now seen a plan of the area of South Fremantle to which reference was made. The proposal has received my closest scrutiny, and I see no reason why complete co-ordination between the departments will not be effected.

I must congratulate the Premier upon having penned such a skilfully-worded letter. I agree with him that nobody can see any reason why there should not be co-ordination between the departments. The unfortunate fact is that it is invisible or non-existent at present.

Failing the appointment of a public works committee, I maintain that, before any more money is expended on the preparation of the power house site at South Fremantle, a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire whether the Government is justified in spending the money on the erection of a power house there, when it would appear to be more economical to transfer to Collie the machinery proposed to be installed at South Fremantle and generate the current at the source of the coal supply whence it could be distributed all over the State, as has been planned in the scheme of the Electricity Commission for supplying the Great Southern areas.

In putting forward that suggestion, I am not indulging in carping criticism. We know what has been done in Victoria. In that State the power is generated at Yal-lourn, conveyed over a grid and distributed practically all over the State, and I have been informed—I do not claim to be an authority on the matter—that electricity is fluid, just as is water. Before one penny more is expended at South Fremantle, a searching inquiry should be made. I feel sure that all thinking people would like to know what is the use of carting the coal from Collie to South Fremantle to generate the power there when the generation could be much more easily carried out at Collie and the current transmitted to South Fremantle and thence linked up with the East Perth power house. I quote this to show how important it is that stricter control

than is possible at present should be exercised over public works.

I would like to make one or two brief references to the standard gauge proposal. Australia has been informed that Sir Harold Clapp is the man who prepared this wonderful scheme. If members turn to page 9 of the Select Committee's report they will find a reference to the subject. I want to show how necessary it is that further consideration should be given to this matter.

Speaking in this House on the 26th September, 1945, the Chief Secretary said—

Departmental officials have gone carefully into the question of the route of the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle standard gauge link and having regard to all relevant aspects, it is considered by the department that the line should parallel the Goldfields line between Kalgoorlie and Northam, except for the necessary deviations to obtain the required one in 80 grade.

For three years I tried to have a Select Committee appointed to inquire into the question of a uniform gauge. In 1944, during the closing hours of the session, the Chief Secretary was good enough to tell me he had a letter from the Commissioner of Railways saying that no good purpose would be served by the appointment of a Select Committee. Certainly no good purpose could be served by such an appointment because that gentleman had already decided what should be the route! He and Mr. Hood were the two officers who decided the matter. I cannot understand the opposition of the Government, the members of which seem to be afraid that the establishment of a public works committee will endanger their authority. That is entirely wrong. The statement made by the Chief Secretary in this House was made in good faith.

I am not going to suggest that Ministers should not accept the opinions of their responsible officers; but I know that, particularly when Governments have been in power for a long time—and this Government has been in office for close on 20 years—Ministers become somewhat autocratic in their ideas and are rather resentful of criticism. Once an enterprise has been started, they are naturally dependent on their departmental officers. I propose to quote remarks made in another place by the member for Perth, whom I would con-

gratulate for the speech he made on this subject last year. I realise that it would be absurd to contend that either the Chief Secretary or the Honorary Minister should accept the responsibility of examining every engineering or other scheme submitted to them. Naturally they must accept the decisions of their responsible officers; but I would like to refer to the report of the Select Committee of this House which inquired into the standardisation of the railway from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle. The following question by Mr. Dimmitt appears on page 6:—

That brings us to the question of route. Who recommended the route that is being surveyed?

The witnesses were Mr. Ellis and the Chief Civil Engineer, Mr. Hood, and the reply by Mr. Ellis was—

Sir Harold Clapp did not originate any routes, but got his information from the States. It was necessary to make a decision as to the route on which to make estimates, and the departmental officers, Mr. Hood and myself, estimated on that route because, in our personal opinion, it was the best.

I am not going to say that the route selected is not the best. The point is that Mr. Ellis and Mr. Hood were responsible for Sir Harold Clapp's report concerning Western Australia. In view of the various decisions which have been arrived at by responsible officers from time to time, decisions that have not always been quite correct, I feel more than justified in asking members of this House to vote on this motion in the way they think best, irrespective of party bias. The time is long overdue when consideration should be given to the request I am making.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Hon. G. W. Miles: What did Mr. Needham say?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I intend to quote Mr. Needham. Last year, when a similar motion to this was before another place, Mr. Needham, who has been a Federal member and knows the benefit the Commonwealth Public Works Committee has been, made a speech on the subject, and I do not think I can do better than refer to his remarks, since my own views coincide with his. He said—

The PRESIDENT: Order! Is the hon. member quoting from "Hansard"?

Hon. A. THOMSON: Last year's, not this year's.

The PRESIDENT: Would the hon. member kindly quote the number of the volume?

Hon. A. THOMSON: I can assure you, Sir—

The PRESIDENT: I make the request because many years ago the late Sir Henry Briggs reprimanded me, and told me to mention the volume from which I was quoting.

Hon. A. THOMSON: Mr. Needham's remarks were made on the 26th September, 1945, the debate having been resumed from the 12th September. The report appears in "Hansard" and this is what Mr. Needham said—

The motion deserves very serious consideration and is well worthy of acceptance by the House. It will be realised that our method of conducting our public works policy is open to improvement. It is certainly inefficient from the point of view of protecting the taxpayers from loss and waste. Realising that during the years of responsible government a vast amount of money has been spent on public works; and visualising the necessity for a still greater expenditure in the post-war years, I think the time has arrived when serious thought should be given to a proposal of this description. We have been informed by the responsible Minister that there is in preparation a schedule of public works for this State in the post-war years that is going to cost a considerable amount of money. Blueprints are already in existence, and we are merely waiting for the release of the manpower and a return to normal conditions to set these national works in operation.

Further on he said—

I have some little acquaintance with the Standing Committee on Public Works of the Commonwealth Parliament. That committee was in operation for about 28 years prior to the advent of this present war. The Bill authorising the appointment of the committee on public works was passed by the Commonwealth Parliament in 1913. That committee operated until Japan entered the war and commenced to attack Australia. As a result of the inquiries of that committee, vast sums of money have been saved to the Commonwealth. I can remember when the Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Cook, introduced the measure in the House of Representatives. He told the House, in the course of his speech, that as a result of the Public Works Committee in New South Wales that State alone has saved millions of pounds, because of the difference in the final cost and the original departmental estimate of differ-

ent works. I venture to say that the same thing can be said of Victoria. I know of my own experience that the Standing Committee on Public Works in the Commonwealth Parliament saved the Commonwealth millions of pounds as a result of its work.

What better testimony can we have than the experience of a man who is a member of the Labour Party? I congratulate Mr. Needham for having the courage to stand up against his own Minister, who opposed this proposal. There is the evidence, which members can read for themselves. I can assure the House that I am in entire agreement with every word Mr. Needham uttered. I have no intention of dealing with the Wundowie charcoal scheme. All I can say is that I sincerely hope the expectations of the Minister for Works will be realised. The same applies to the potash works. In all I have said, I want it to be clearly understood that I have not desired to criticise Ministers. I am criticising a system that has been in existence in this State for 50 years. It is high time we had a change. I leave the motion with members and commend it to their careful attention, feeling confident that if they show a genuine desire for a committee of this kind the Government will have to give serious consideration to their request.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

BILL—TRANSFER OF LAND ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [5.47] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals with two distinct matters, each designed to remedy a defect in the Transfer of Land Act by amending Section 126. Section 126, as at present framed, enables a mortgagor, if the mortgagee is out of the State and the time for payment has arrived, to discharge the mortgage by paying the mortgage moneys into the Treasury. Upon such payment being made, the mortgage is discharged from the title deed and the money is held by the Treasury for the mortgagee.

Because of the wording of the section, this procedure cannot be availed of by the mortgagor when part only of the principal

money remains outstanding. The Bill is designed to enable Section 126 to operate where portion of the money has been paid to the mortgagee and there is part only of the principal money outstanding. The only person who would benefit from this proposal is the mortgagor, that is, the person who borrows the money. If the mortgage has been given by two or more individuals, any one or more of them can pay the balance owing to the mortgagee if he is present to receive payment, and demand a discharge of mortgage.

Similarly, under the proposed amendment, any one or more of the joint mortgagors would be able to pay the balance owing to the Treasury if the mortgagee were absent. The proposed amendment does not in any way alter or interfere with the rights of joint mortgagors as between themselves, but merely enables them to obtain relief in the absence of the mortgagee, so that interest on the mortgage shall cease to be payable and so that the encumbrance can be removed from the title deed. The removal of the encumbrance from the title deed is often necessary so that the registered proprietor can obtain a further loan on mortgage.

The other proposal in the Bill is designed to overcome the difficulty created where mortgagors have paid the mortgage debt in full and, through ignorance or inadvertence, have neglected to obtain and register a discharge of the mortgage. In these cases the title deed is left with a "dead" mortgage endorsed thereon, and with no method of removal. Such a situation can cause embarrassment and difficulty whenever the registered proprietor of the land seeks to deal with the land by way of mortgage or sale. The amendment is to empower the Commissioner of Titles, if satisfied that payment has in fact been made and that the mortgagee is dead, out of the State, or cannot be found, whether in fact he is within the State or not, to authorise the removal of the mortgage as an encumbrance on the register book. Those are the two proposals in the Bill, and I trust that Parliament will approve of them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—BULK HANDLING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West) [5.51] in moving the second reading said: Representations for the introduction of this Bill were received from Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd., the representatives of which have requested that the Bulk Handling Act, 1935-1943, be amended in order that the company might have power to acquire its own shares up to a total of one-fifth of the paid up capital of the company. At present the company is limited by the Companies Act to the purchase of shares not exceeding one-twentieth of its paid up capital.

As required by the Bulk Handling Act, all growers delivering wheat to the company pay a toll of 5/8th of a penny per bushel or any such lesser amount as may be approved by the Governor. When the sum of tolls paid by a grower amounts to £1, he becomes eligible to receive a fully paid up share in the company. Should the holder of a share fail to deliver wheat to the company for two successive seasons, then, unless he can prove that his lack of delivery was occasioned by circumstances beyond his control, such as drought, storm, war service, lack of superphosphate, etc., he is, under the company's articles of association, deemed to have served notice on the company that he desires to transfer his share and to have appointed the directors of the company as agents for the sale. Action is then taken by the company to effect the transfer of the share to a grower whose deliveries of wheat have rendered him eligible to be issued with a share, or the company may purchase the share itself, provided, as I have already said, that the shares it thus acquires do not exceed one-twentieth of the total paid up capital.

The situation has arisen, however, where more shares have been forfeited than can be disposed of by the company by these methods, the result being that the shares have to remain for a time in the possession of persons who have ceased to be clients of the company and who are thus not entitled to membership of the company. This materially affects the whole basis on which the company is built, as it is considered essential that only active growers—those who

have not failed for two successive seasons to deliver wheat or who have a reasonable excuse for not doing so—should hold shares and thus be able to vote on any matter concerning the company. At this juncture I might state that beyond voting power the shares carry little privilege. They are really a form of membership, and no dividends are paid on them.

At the close of the 1944-45 season, 1702 shares were rendered liable to forfeiture owing to non-delivery of wheat by their holders. Of these 554 were transferred to new growers and 407 were purchased by the company. This, however, still left 741 shares in the hands of non-active growers, some of whom were able to convince the company that they had reasonable excuse for non-delivery and were thus entitled to retain their membership of the company. The position then arose that there was a substantial block of shares that could not be transferred as there was no-one eligible to receive them and they could not, owing to the restriction imposed by the Companies Act, be purchased by Co-Operative Bulk Handling Ltd. A period of 12 months is allowed for the directors to effect the transfer or purchase of these shares, but the fact that they can for a time be in the possession of unauthorised persons can lead to certain embarrassments. For instance, it is quite possible that these unauthorised persons, by virtue of their holding shares, could register votes in connection with the election of directors at an annual general meeting.

It is to remedy this state of affairs that Co-Operative Bulk Handling Ltd. has asked for the introduction of this Bill, which provides that the company shall be authorised to acquire shares up to, and including, one-fifth of the paid up capital of the company in lieu of the present proportion of one-twentieth, such shares to be available for issue when required to eligible growers and not to be cancelled nor to constitute a reduction of capital. These shares, when taken over by the company, do not bear any voting value, as the only shares which have such power are those in the hands of the growers. In view of the fact that the company has requested this amendment, which meets with the approval of the Under Treasurer and the Auditor General, I trust that it will receive no opposition in its progress through this House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. G. B. WOOD (East) [5.58]: This is a very desirable measure. Its principal advantage, as I see it, is that it takes away the right to vote of those people who have gone out of wheatgrowing. It has been introduced at the request of the people concerned, and I think everybody is in agreement with it. I commend it to the House, and hope it will be carried.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—MEDICAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [6.1] in moving the second reading said: This small Bill provides that where a doctor had been authorised under the National Security (Alien Doctors) Regulations to practise in this State, such term of service shall form part of the qualifying period entitling him to registration under the Medical Act as a medical practitioner.

Members will recollect that in 1940 an amendment to the Medical Act was passed, which states, *inter alia*, that where the Governor is satisfied that the medical or surgical services in any area are inadequate, he may, by proclamation published in the "Government Gazette," declare such to be a regional area. It then provides that, where any area has been so declared, the Medical Board can issue a certificate of regional registration in respect of that particular area to a doctor who has certain qualifications. These qualifications are particularly defined in Section 12 of the Medical Act. The Act further provides that any doctor who satisfies the board that he is a person of good fame and character, and has held a certificate of regional registration for a period or periods aggregating seven years or more, shall be entitled to be registered as a medical practitioner, subject to Ministerial approval.

This Bill applies particularly to an alien doctor who has practised in the same way as alien regional doctors, in that he has

served under the Commonwealth Emergency Medical Service authorised by the National Security Regulations, which service was devised in a national emergency to place salaried doctors in areas where there would otherwise be no medical services available. At one stage there were eight doctors practising under this emergency service, but at the time of its recent discontinuance by the Commonwealth the number of doctors employed was four. One of these was the alien doctor to whom I have referred and who was stationed at Nannup from the 1st March, 1943, to the 22nd March, 1946, a period of three years.

This doctor was recently appointed as a regional doctor at Derby, which was declared a regional area in order that the Government could take steps to provide it with an adequate medical service. The doctor's service at Derby will, of course, be included in the qualifying period of seven years entitling him to registration under the Act as a medical practitioner, and it is considered only fair and reasonable that the period he worked under the Emergency Medical Service should also form part of this qualifying period. The doctor in question is a man of considerable ability, and his services, if ensured by the passing of this Bill, should prove most useful, particularly in view of the shortage of medical men in this State. The proposal in the Bill has the hearty support of the British Medical Association and the Medical Board, and I have no hesitation in commending it to members. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. J. G. Hislop, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.5 p.m.

