

The conference agreed to delete amendment No. 2, which proposed to make it compulsory for the Bush Fires Board to hold meetings at least every two months between the first day of October and the first day of May. Amendment No. 6 was agreed to. It provides for service of notice to be made in writing or otherwise as provided in paragraph (a) of Section 19 of the Act.

Amendment No. 12 proposed to amend Section 19, and was further amended in conference by the deletion of the words "or in such other manner either verbally." The Bill now requires such notification of intention to burn to be given, personally or in writing, as will ensure that every owner or occupier or other person is made aware of the intention to burn and the date and time thereof.

Amendment No. 8 was agreed to. This amendment deals with obtaining a permit to burn. The person signing the permit is now required to secure it from a bush fire control officer. If one is not available, he can then go to the secretary of the local authority.

Amendment No. 9 was amended in conference by the deletion of the word "greater." Permits can now be issued for a width of at least 10 ft. or such width as is specified in the permit.

Amendment No. 10 was agreed to. It deletes from the Bill the provision for payment of expenses to brigades which are called out to fight fires which have got out of control. Amendment No. 11 was agreed to. It was consequential to the previous proposal.

Amendment No. 13 has been deleted. It concerned the delivery of notices to neighbours advising of intention to burn. The paragraph remains in the Bill.

Amendment No. 17 has been amended by substituting for the proposed amendment another amendment reading as follows: "Delete the word 'fifty' in line 22 and substitute therefor the word 'seventy-five.'" The Bill now limits the acreage to burn for clover seed gathering to 75 acres.

Amendment No. 19 was agreed to. It provides insurance cover for employees returning from a fire to their place of employment.

Amendment No. 20 adds a proviso consequential to the previous item; and it was agreed to.

Amendment No. 22 deals with clause 40, which concerned the duties of bush fire control officers on the outbreak of fire. Conference agreed to the amendment deleting the clause. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Assembly.

### *Assembly's Further Message.*

Message from the Assembly received and read notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

*House adjourned at 2.40 p.m. (Thursday).*

## Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 24th November, 1954.

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

**STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE.***Report Presented.*

Mr. J. Hegney brought up the report of the Standing Orders Committee.

Order: That the report be printed and its consideration made an Order of the Day for the next Sitting.

**QUESTIONS.****RURAL & INDUSTRIES BANK.***As to Cost of Checking Endorsements on Cheques.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Did he see the reference in the "Daily News" of the 18th November, to the cost of manpower used in Great Britain by banks for checking endorsements of cheques?

(2) Can an estimate be made of the cost to the Rural & Industries Bank?

(3) Can this be changed by legislation in this Parliament.

(4) If the answer to No. (3) is in the negative, will he make appropriate representations to the Commonwealth Parliament?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. For instance, the cost of checking endorsements in the Perth office and suburban branches is in the vicinity of seven man hours per day—£3 14s. daily or £1,060 per annum.

(3) No. The Commonwealth Bills of Exchange Act, 1909-1936 governs cheques generally.

(4) Such a move might best be left to the banks themselves and could be negated by a growing tendency among drawers of cheques to require endorsements for receipt purposes.

**EDUCATION.***(a) As to Annual Camp School, Broome.*

Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the very great success of the camp school held at Broome this year, would he give consideration to making these schools an annual event?

The MINISTER replied:

Consideration has already been given to the possibility of holding North-West camp schools annually, but it has been decided that it would not be possible to run one in each of the three locations each year owing to the heavy demands on specialist staff and the great cost.

*(b) As to New School Site, Roleystone.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is he aware that a decision has been pending for over two years in connection with a new school site for Roleystone?

(2) Does he know that the children have no playground facilities whatever, and with the increasing volume of traffic on the Araluen and Roleystone-Karragullen-rds., are in continual danger?

(3) When will a firm decision be made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. During the last four years, five sites have been considered, inclusive of one now under review.

(2) It is owing to the department's awareness of the unsatisfactory state of the school grounds that it proposes to establish a new school on a new site.

(3) The Public Works Department is at present considering the suitability of a fifth proposal for a site and a decision should be reached shortly.

**MEDICAL STUDENTS.***As to Venue of Study.*

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) As a number of the students who will be matriculating this year desire to train for the medical profession, what arrangements have been made for them to do first, second and subsequent years' study at—

(a) University of Western Australia;

(b) elsewhere?

(2) What is the situation of similar students who will matriculate in 1955?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Minister for Education) replied:

This question should have been directed to the Premier, but the answers are as follows:—

(1) Students matriculating this year will be able to do the first year of the medical course at the University of Western Australia and second and third years at the Adelaide University. Arrangements for the remaining three years of the course are now the subject of negotiations through the Premiers of Victoria and South Australia with the university authorities in those States.

(2) The position with students who will matriculate in 1955 is the same as for students who will matriculate this year.

**DRIVING TUITION.***As to Learners' Instructors.*

Mr. McCULLOCH asked the Minister for Police:

(1) How many learners' instructors, who teach persons to drive motor-vehicles, are registered in the metropolitan area?

(2) Are there any specific qualifications laid down by the Traffic Branch which such instructors must possess before obtaining an instructor's permit from the branch, and if so, what are the qualifications?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) These instructors are not registered, but a list of them is kept at the examining section of the Traffic Office, with particulars of their motor drivers' licences.

At the present time there are 35 professional learners' instructors operating in Perth and in the metropolitan area.

(2) There are no specific qualifications laid down in the Act or regulations that instructors must possess before commencing teaching, except that they must have held a licence for the particular type of vehicle respecting which they are instructing learners, for a period of at least one year.

**WATER SUPPLIES.***As to Corrigin Connection.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) What length of pipeline is required from the Merredin-Kondinin pipeline to Corrigin to connect that town?

(2) How much of this is within the boundaries of the comprehensive water scheme?

(3) What size pipe is required?

(4) What is the total tonnage?

(5) What is the estimated cost, excluding any town storage or reticulation?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 18.5 miles.

(2) 12.5 miles.

(3) 6-inch internal diameter.

(4) 610 tons of mild steel plate.

(5) £90,000.

**WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.***As to "Riversdale" Property.*

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

Will he lay on the Table of the House all papers dealing with the development of the property known as "Riversdale" at Frankland River, acquired for war service land settlement purposes and the personal files of K. A. Watts and J. N. McKenzie, to whom farms on "Riversdale" have been allotted?

The MINISTER replied:

Papers dealing with the development of "Riversdale" property at Frankland River will be made available.

It is not advisable to make public personal files of lessees. If individual lessees are agreeable, I am prepared to make available such personal files, for the confidential perusal of the member for the district.

**BETTING CONTROL.***As to Queensland Government's Proposals.*

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Has he particulars of the Queensland Government's proposals for the control of betting?

(2) If so, will he inform the House of the position?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

Having obtained knowledge of the hon. member's question this morning and wishing to maintain the reputation of my department for service, I sent a telegram to the Premier of Queensland asking for a copy of the proposed legislation to be forwarded to me, and just prior to leaving my office I received the following telegram from Mr. Gair:

Copy racing and betting Bill forwarded airmail today as requested, stop. Bill is at present being debated in House and of course contents of copy forwarded are not as yet final . . . . Gair Premier.

So the information should be available for the hon. member tomorrow.

**AIR BEEF PTY. LTD.***As to Treasury or Departmental Inquiry.*

Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

(1) In view of the Government decision, was there any Treasury or other departmental inquiry this year into—

(a) the basis and/or amount of charges made by Wyndham Meat works against Air Beef Pty. Ltd.?

(b) the desirability of continuing or discontinuing the limitations on charges by Wyndham Meat Works against Air Beef Pty. Ltd.?

(2) If so—

(a) was the inquiry finalised before the decision to discontinue the assistance was made by the Government?

(b) what were the recommendations arising from the inquiry?

- (c) will he lay the report on the Table of the House?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS (for the Premier) replied:

- (1) (a) and (b) No.  
(2) Answered by No. (1).

#### HOUSING.

(a) *As to Resumptions at Harvey.*

Mr. MANNING asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) Is it the intention of the Government to resume land at Harvey for housing purposes?  
(2) If so, what is the location and area of land to be resumed?  
(3) Who are the present owners or occupiers of the land?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) No resumptions at Harvey are planned by the State Housing Commission.  
(2) and (3) Answered by No. 1.

(b) *As to Houses Built and Sold, Manning Park and Bentley Park.*

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Housing:

- (1) What is the number of houses built in the—  
(a) Manning Park  
(b) Bentley Park

areas, within the Canning Road Board boundaries under the Commonwealth-State rental scheme?

- (2) Of these, what number have been, or are being, sold to the occupiers in each of the areas?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) (a) 410.  
(b) 210.

- (2) Sold: Manning Park, 41; Bentley Park, 13.

Applications pending: Manning Park, 86; Bentley Park, 18.

#### FRUIT AND PRODUCE.

*As to Additional Markets.*

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

In view of the recent inauguration of several new trade routes by overseas shipping firms, to and from Fremantle, would he ascertain the possibility of additional markets for fruit and produce from this State?

The MINISTER replied:

The Knutsen Line has commenced a monthly shipping service between Fremantle and the West coast of the United

States of America, intervening ports, being Singapore, Hong Kong, Japan and Vancouver. There is a strong possibility that an additional market for fruit, particularly apples, will be found at Hong Kong.

Other commodities shipped from this State by this line include pig iron, wool, crayfish tails and asbestos.

Possibilities for increased exports for potatoes to Hong Kong are also likely.

#### ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

*As to Transmission Line, Roleystone—Pickering Brook.*

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Works:

- (1) When is it expected that the transmission line between Roleystone and Pickering Brook will be commenced?  
(2) When will the plan be made available to local residents, in order that they may make arrangements for their houses to be wired when the power is supplied?

The MINISTER replied:

- (1) There is no transmission line planned or contemplated from Roleystone to Pickering Brook.  
(2) Answered by No. (1).

#### BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Reserves.
- 2, Road Closure.  
Introduced by the Minister for Lands.
- 3, Licensing Act Amendment.  
Introduced by Mr. O'Brien.

#### BILL—BOOKMAKERS BETTING TAX.

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR POLICE** (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [4.45] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is complementary to the Betting Control Bill, Clause 12 of which requires bookmakers to make full and true returns of amounts of money paid or promised as the consideration for bets made by them, and also requires the bookmakers to pay betting tax on those amounts at the rate imposed by the Bookmakers Betting Tax Bill. The tax was not imposed under the provision of the Betting Control Bill because, as is well known, Subsection (7) of Section 46 of the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, 1899, renders necessary a short and separate complementary Bill actually imposing the tax. That subsection reads as follows:—

- (7) Bills imposing taxation shall deal only with the imposition of taxation and any provision therein dealing with any other matter shall be of no effect.

Members will find that subsection on page 182 of the 1952 Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Assembly. This Bill imposes a tax at the rate of 1½ per centum of amounts of money paid or promised as a consideration for bets made by book-makers. Clause 12 of the Betting Control Bill is, in effect, the assessment Bill; and this Bill, now the subject of consideration, is the taxing Bill. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

## **BILL—CANNING LANDS REVESTMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [4.47] in moving the second reading said: This Bill covers the resubdivision of certain lands in the Canning district and certain rights, roads and reserves in that district, and is for other purposes. The State Housing Commission acquired, during the years 1946 to 1951, by private negotiation and resumption, two large areas of land west of Albany Highway and north of Fremantle-rd. which are now known as Millen and Bentley Park estates. After acquiring the area, the State Housing Commission conferred with the Town Planning Board, the Perth City Council and the Canning Road Board, and planned a resubdivision of the whole area into suitable blocks, providing for new roads in appropriate positions.

Under pressure of urgency, building operations were proceeded with, and homes have been provided for a large number of people. In the Millen Estate about 180 houses have been completed, and approximately 200 houses are in course of erection. In the Bentley Park Estate, 140 houses have been completed, and 100 are now being constructed. To straighten out certain legal matters, it has been found necessary to introduce this Bill, which provides for the various matters as I shall explain.

The bulk of the land had been previously subdivided but it was considered necessary to resubdivide it to modern town planning requirements. This involved the obliteration of various surveyed roads and rights-of-way in favour of new roads in better positions. Certain reserves and portions of reserves were included in the area acquired, but provision has been made in the resubdivision for adequate reserves for the same purposes.

Some of the land acquired by resumption under the Public Works Act of 1902, prior to the coming into operation of the Public Works Act Amendment Act, 1953, was affected by the provisions of Section 15 of the Public Works Act, 1902, which provided that, upon resumption of land,

the rights of the owner in the lesser minerals were not taken. The Bill provides for the revestment of the whole of the land together with the lesser minerals.

Provision is made in Clause 5 for the revestment of two narrow strips of land which had been left along the external boundaries of land in two old private subdivisions. This was an early-day procedure which had the legal effect of barring adjoining holders from making use of the roads in the adjoining subdivision when also subdividing their land. These narrow strips remain the property of the original owner, who ceases to be further interested after he has disposed of the lots in the subdivision.

Clause 6 refers to an area which is held in fee simple by the City of Perth which acquired it by transfer, free of any Crown trust, but which could not be transferred to the State Housing Commission in the usual manner because the City of Perth had executed a declaration of trust acknowledging that it held the land in trust for the purpose of recreation for the people. It is therefore necessary for the Act to provide for revestment of this land. Ample provision has been made for a recreation reserve in the new subdivision.

In Clause 7 provision is made for the obliteration of certain road widenings which are unnecessary, as the old road adjoining the lots mentioned has been closed and the streets to which the lots have frontages have been extended westerly through the adjoining new subdivision removing the need for corner truncations, the land in which is to be reincluded in the contiguous lots.

Clause 8 provides for a slight deviation of Braebrise-rd. near its intersection with Fremantle-rd. Some of the new lots in this vicinity have not been referred to in this Bill, having been excised from the plan as the State Housing Commission has not finalised the acquisition of the land.

The effect of Clause 9 will be to facilitate the dedication of the various new roads which have been provided in the resubdivision, thus ensuring a continuity of legal access following the closure of the old roads.

The whole of the land in the Millen Estate has been made the subject of Lands and Surveys Original Plan No. 6139 and thereon numbered as Canning Location 1274. The land in the Bentley Park Estate has been numbered as Canning Location 1275 as shown on Original Plan No. 6140. It is proposed to issue to the State Housing Commission Crown grants for Canning Locations 1274 and 1275. The resubdivision of the locations will be shown on Land Titles Office Plans 6412 to 6424 inclusive and 6531 and diagram No. 18217. Plans are submitted indicating the areas involved and also the manner in which they have been subdivided.

A week ago I made available to the Leader of the Opposition a copy of the file, as is usual, before presenting the Bill to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. Thorn, debate adjourned.

# **BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT** (No. 1).

## *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council notifying that it insisted on its amendment disagreed to by the Assembly now considered.

## *In Committee.*

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

No. 3. Clause 13—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I have decided very reluctantly to accept the amendment, though it will restrict the Commissioner of Health and reduce the time available to him in which to find out offences against the Pure Foods Act from 12 to six months. That is very unfair. The commissioner should have time to locate any food that is below standard. I am afraid that under the amendment there can be quite a lot of offences regarding under-standard food and that will not be conducive to the health of the people. I do not know what was in the minds of members of another place.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I explained it very carefully.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I did not agree with the hon. member's explanation. The department should be given every opportunity to locate offences, and the people are entitled to protection in the matter of pure foods. I see no reason why a manufacturer or distributor of under-standard food should have the benefit of the restricted period. Members in another place are protecting the electors they represent, who form a very small minority of the people, and that is wrong in principle. Six months is not sufficient time for the commissioner to find out whether food is up to standard and to locate offenders. I move—

That the amendment be no longer disagreed to.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I approve of the motion, but the Minister has not presented the case fairly. He spoke about pure foods. The amendment deals mainly with anything but pure foods, and I do not think the Minister can have appreciated its effect. It means that a prosecution for any offence under the Health Act could be delayed and forgotten for nine or 10 months, and then the department, on finding the file, could wake

up and institute a prosecution. Surely, if it was desired to launch a prosecution the department could wake up much sooner! Apparently the Minister supports a state of affairs where a file can lie dormant for 11 months and then the department can wake up and launch a prosecution.

The Minister for Health: That is quite an unfair statement.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not; it is just a matter of ascertaining where the food emanated.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If we give the department only six months, that does not allow sufficient time. I have known of food lying in a store—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: This deals with every offence under the Act.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I see no reason why the Commissioner of Public Health should not be given sufficient time. The provision was brought down to give him every possible scope—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is not the real reason.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: The member for Mt. Lawley wants to protect his own interests, but not the health of the community.

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

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

# **BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.**

## *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of four amendments made by the Council now considered.

## *In Committee.*

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

No. 1. Clause 2, page 2—Delete the words "substituting for" in line 3 and substitute the words "adding after."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I will first indicate to the Committee that this amendment does not worry me and I have no objection to the second one, providing the Committee will agree to the suggestion which I shall submit. It is obvious that another place has destroyed the wish of this Chamber which was, for the time being, to have a board of five, three of whom should be the existing personnel, while the two new members should represent the producers and consumers respectively. Another place reduced the number of the board again to three, with the knowledge that the term of one of the present members has expired, and has insisted on placing a producers' representative on the board, while striking out all reference to the consumers' representative, whether male or female.

There were many complaints about my suggestion that the board should consist of five members and it was said that it would be unwieldy, in spite of the fact that nearly all the marketing boards in this State consist of five members or more. I propose now to ask the Committee to agree that the third member of the board should represent the consumers. That would keep the board down to three members and indicate to another place that we feel that if it is right for the producer to be represented on the board, the consumer should be represented also. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Hon. L. THORN: The Minister should thank another place for getting him out of a mess, as when he introduced the Bill, I am sure he had no intention of including a consumers' representative on the board.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He saw the light.

Hon. L. THORN: Members know that the present board has done an excellent job and those on this side appealed to the Minister to allow the present board to remain, but he now suggests that we agree to a consumers' representative on the board of three. We pointed out to the Minister previously that one of the present members could easily represent the consumers.

The Minister for Agriculture: You said the other member automatically represented them, but that is not so.

Hon. L. THORN: The Minister could say, "Mr. Wade, you will represent the consumers."

The Minister for Agriculture: I could not.

Hon. L. THORN: The Minister says the chairman of the board has not always been interested in the consumers; but I do not believe that, as he is a fair man.

Mr. Heal: He could represent the producers also.

Hon. L. THORN: I wonder whether the Minister will be in order in moving an amendment to the message.

The Minister for Agriculture: Will you support the amendment if it is in order?

Hon. L. THORN: I say the consumer is well represented on the board now.

Mr. MANNING: I hope the Minister will accept the Council's amendments. I see no great virtue in giving consumers direct representation on the board as there is nothing such a representative could tell it. Price is the main concern of the board but a producers' representative would have a wide range of knowledge on the production side.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Few Acts have been amended as frequently as has the Milk Act. I am glad the Minister will accept the board of three as for over 20 years I have had a lot to do with the Milk Board and probably know more of its

workings than any other member present. In the last few years the board has worked smoothly and satisfactorily. When introducing the measure, the Minister said the board, as at present constituted, had done excellent work, but at the request of the Farmers' Union, it was decided that a producer should be placed on the board. Unfortunately, this legislation is always contentious when it comes before Parliament and moves are made to give sectional interests representation on the board.

I think it would be wise to accept the amendments of the Legislative Council. You, Mr. Chairman, were in this Chamber when the legislation was first introduced to protect producers and to ensure that consumers received milk of good quality. In the main that objective has been achieved and I suggest to the Minister that consumers will not suffer if they have no representative on the board. Ever since the board was established 22 or 23 years ago the present chairman has been connected with it. He has a knowledge of all sections of the milk industry and looks after the interests of them all.

If members will look at the record of the board they will see that it has protected the interests of the public. Prosecutions have been launched against dairymen who have sold substandard milk and the health authorities are vigilant in this matter. The Milk Board has its own inspectors who visit dairies to ensure that milk of the proper standard is sold. They advise dairymen and look after the interests of the consumers as well. In view of that, I suggest that the Minister agrees to the amendment of the Legislative Council.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I have no doubt that the board looks after the interests of the producers as well as of the consumers.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Undoubtedly.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: In all Acts of Parliament dealing with the marketing of produce such as wheat, oats, barley and others there is a certain arrangement, and we desire the same conditions to apply with regard to the Milk Board. I am trying to carry out what has been accepted as the law in regard to all other forms of agricultural produce. The Leader of the Opposition said he is pleased to see I am accepting a board of three. I would much rather adopt my proposal than the one proposed by the Legislative Council, because if there is a disagreement, and the board is comprised of three members, it will not be as effective as under my proposal of five members. Then, after a year or two, when both consumers' and producers' representatives had had an opportunity of settling in, the board could be reduced to three as the terms of office of two of the members expired.

The Council will not agree to my proposal and if we do not accept their amendments the legislation will go overboard. But if it is fair to have a producers' representative to look after the producers' interests, it is equally fair to have consumers' representative to represent the people who have to pay the price that the board determines. Rather than allow the measure to go overboard completely, I am prepared to accept this amendment provided the Council will compromise in regard to Amendment No. 3. I would say to the member for Toodyay that the Council has not got me out of a hole because I do not like this proposition, but I am prepared to take what is offered rather than to see the Bill defeated.

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

No. 2. Clause 2, page 2—Delete the words "four other members" in line 5.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 3. Clause 2, page 2—Delete all words after the word "Act" in line 9 down to and including the word "woman" in line 11.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I wish to amend the amendment. The Legislative Council's amendment provides that the words "and one is the representative of consumers of milk, who shall be a woman" be struck out. I wish to amend that by striking out only the words, "who shall be a woman." This will make the paragraph read as follows:—

By substituting for the words "two other members" in line 2 of Subsection (1), the words, "four other members of whom one, who shall be actively engaged in the business of dairymen licensed under this Act, is the representative of dairymen licensed under this Act, and one is the representative of consumers of milk."

I move—

That the amendment be amended by striking out the words, "'Act' in line 9" and insert in lieu the words, "'Milk' in line 10."

Hon. L. THORN: I understand that the board will be comprised of three members and that the Minister wishes to amend the Legislative Council's amendment by inserting in lieu that one person shall represent the consumers.

The Minister for Agriculture: That is so.

Hon. L. THORN: Is it the function of this Chamber to amend Legislative Council's amendments? Are we empowered to do that?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon. L. THORN: I thought we could only agree or disagree with them.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are getting mixed up with conference managers' reports.

Hon. L. THORN: I thought that a conference would probably decide on the Minister's request.

The CHAIRMAN: The Minister has not moved to disagree with the Council's amendment and therefore the necessity for a conference does not yet arise.

Hon. L. THORN: I do not think the Minister's amendment is necessary. The chairman of the Milk Board is just as interested in the welfare of the consumers as he is in the welfare of the producers.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: In that case you do not want producer representation.

Hon. L. THORN: The milk belongs to the producers. It is being sold to the consumers.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: The consumers must pay for it.

Hon. L. THORN: And so they should.

The Minister for Agriculture: The consumer cannot get his milk from anywhere else. He must take it at the price the board lays down.

Hon. L. THORN: Is that not the same with dried fruits, potatoes and so on?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: It is not the same with potatoes because there is Potato Distributors Ltd., as well as the board.

Hon. L. THORN: The sale of potatoes is controlled by a board in the same way as is the sale of milk. I think the amendment is unnecessary and I think the Legislative Council will agree with my view. The interests of the consumer are well looked after, and I oppose the amendment on the Council's amendment.

Mr. MANNING: I oppose the Minister's amendment. It is only splitting straws. In arriving at the price of milk, the Milk Board bases its assessment on the cost of production, plus various margins to the people who treat and handle the milk. Thus they arrive at a price to the consumer. There is nothing a consumers' representative could tell the Milk Board because it has all the points that affect the consumer set down. If we are to give the consumer representation, then there are other interests which are far more entitled to it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The consumer has got to pay the price.

Mr. MANNING: There is nothing else the consumer can do. There would be no value in having a consumers' representative on the board.

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



No. 4. Clause 3, page 3—Delete paragraph (a).

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:  
I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

## **BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of two amendments made by the Council now considered.

### *In Committee.*

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

No. 1. Clause 4, page 2—Delete the words "a subsection" in line 13 and substitute the word "subsections."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This is designed to prevent a sawmiller who, for instance, has taken up a large area of country from paying the amount of rates provided for in this Act at the rate of 5s. per acre on the whole of the permit area. For example, if he has 100,000 acres and is only using 10,000, his rates would be limited to that amount on the basis of 5s. an acre. A query was raised as to the meaning of the Bill in relation to that matter, and I expressed the opinion that I did not feel the sawmiller would be called upon to pay on more than he was actually using for a cutting area. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

No. 2. Clause 4, page 3—At the end of the clause add a new subsection as follows:—

(7) Nothing in this Act shall make the holder of any permit issued pursuant to section thirty-two of the Forests Act 1918, liable to be rated for any land comprised in any such permit in excess of the area of the defined coupe current at the date of the assessment.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:  
I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

## **BILL—STATE GOVERNMENT INSURANCE OFFICE ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [5.40]: This Bill seeks to clear a possible doubt as to whether the State Government Insurance Office can carry on business of indemnifying children from accident during their period at school; whether they be in the classroom or travelling to and from their place of abode. A scheme of insurance, as it relates to children attending State schools is now in operation. The Minister said he had been approached by other schools which indicated that parents were anxious to have their children covered in a similar fashion.

There can be no objection to the Bill. As far as I can see, insurance of this particular type has been undertaken by the State Insurance Office alone, and I see no reason why it should not carry on this business. The form of insurance will be that comprised in the actual policy issued by the office from time to time; it is not referred to in the Bill. If that were not so I would comment on the provisions of the Bill, because I think they are open to some confusion as to the conditions under which a child would be covered. For example, would a child studying at a boarding school be covered? I know there are no State boarding schools, but there are a number of private boarding schools.

The Minister for Labour: An institution for the deaf and dumb is an example.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is not clearly defined in the Bill whether a child would or would not be covered under those conditions. The Bill states that he would be covered if he was attending a school in which he was enrolled as a pupil, whether for the purpose of receiving instruction at the school or attending a sport. A pupil at a boarding school is certainly enrolled at a school for the purpose of receiving instruction, and probably the provision would be wide enough not only to cover the child while actually there for the purpose of instruction, but at other times as well.

That would be the purpose of the State Insurance Office when issuing a policy, and I see no reason to object. There is one other point on which the Minister did not comment, but which no doubt again could be a matter of arrangement with the State Insurance Office. I refer to the relative protection received under the hospital benefits scheme and this insurance scheme. The number of accidents that happen to children on the playing field would be covered under the Hospital Benefits Scheme, but there again I do not know the relative position.

Mr. J. Hegney: They would be covered for the full amount.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: They could be, because I have an example in my own family. A son of mine was injured on the football field and he received practically a full cover. That, again, is a matter for negotiation between the State Insurance Office and the insurers, and will be covered, no doubt, in the terms of the policy. I support the second reading.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.46]: I support the second reading. For a considerable time, parents and citizens' associations have been pressing for an insurance scheme to cover schoolchildren, and the State Insurance Office accepted responsibility for doing this in accordance with the principle outlined by the Parents and Citizens' Federation. There are, however, a number of children attending schools, which have no parents and citizens' associations. In some areas in my electorate, and in adjoining electorates those associated with schools other than Government schools have combined into parents and friends' associations, which are not affiliated with the Parents and Citizens' Federation. I consider it only right and proper that schools other than those to which parents and citizens' associations are attached should have the opportunity of having their pupils covered under this insurance scheme.

With the consolidation of schools in country areas, children there have to travel considerable distances for their education, and they should be covered against accident and perhaps death. We know that traffic accidents occur on our roads, and every precaution should be taken to see that a system of insurance is evolved under which the children can be covered. Some of them might belong to families which are not affluent, and hardship could be imposed on parents if there were no insurance scheme from which they could benefit in the event of their children meeting with accidents. The Bill has everything to commend it, and I desire the House to know that it has my full support as I am of the opinion that every child should have the same opportunity of being covered by insurance as is now enjoyed by children attending schools which have parents and citizens' associations attached to them.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [5.49]: I support the measure and commend the Minister for introducing it. I think it is agreed that all children attending school, whether it be a State or a private school, should be covered by some insurance scheme, and that outlined in the Bill is a worthy one. When the Minister was introducing the measure, I asked him, by

way of interjection whether a child boarding at a school would be covered if it were necessary for him to go into town after school hours to keep an appointment with a dentist or a doctor, and in travelling met with an accident.

The Minister for Education: You are referring to a child at a boarding school?

MR. NALDER: Yes; to one living away from home, and staying at a boarding school. Such a child might have to attend a dentist or a doctor, perhaps during school hours, and might be knocked down in St. George's Terrace. Would he be covered by insurance in those circumstances?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That would depend on the policy.

MR. NALDER: It is a point I would like to have cleared up. In country areas, children travel long distances to attend school; and it is a worthy suggestion that they should be covered by insurance against accident while travelling in a school bus, or walking to their homes or to school after alighting from a bus. Many children attend convent schools in the country, and travel by bus; and they should be, and I understand will be, covered by the Bill. I support the measure and trust it will pass through both Houses.

MR. J. HEGNEY (Middle Swan) [5.52]: I support the measure, which I think is long overdue. For many years the Education Department provided cover for children during school hours but not against accidents befalling them on their way to and from school. About 18 months ago, a boy in my electorate was injured at school. He arrived at 8.40 a.m. Some lads were fooling with a detonator, and, with a view to exploding it, threw a brick at it, which struck the boy on the shin, with a result that he had to be taken to the Children's Hospital, where he remained for a period. This matter was taken up with the Education Department. In the first instance, the information received was not correct.

It was thought that the accident had occurred outside the school grounds; but, in fact, it occurred inside. It is contended that the school hours are those during which the schoolmaster is in attendance to supervise the children. It happened that on this occasion the head master was at the school, but was in his office, and did not know what was happening. The mother of the boy has a family of five, and her husband is on the basic wage. The hospital account was for £90. The family was entitled to some refund under the hospital benefits scheme; but, after allowing for that, the family could not find the money to meet the balance owing. I made the strongest possible representations to the Education Department, which, although it did not find the whole amount, did make an *ex gratia* payment.

This measure will be a boon to many parents throughout Western Australia, no matter what school their children attend, and the measure deserves the fullest support of country members, because children in the country travel long distances to school. They are away from home from shortly after 7.30 a.m., and from then until they reach home after school there is always the danger of their meeting with accidents on the highways or in vehicles in which they are travelling. Parents in the metropolitan area will benefit from the Bill because there is always danger lurking on the roads because of the increased volume of traffic.

A question arises as to when the insurance becomes effective. Does the cover begin from the time the child leaves home in the morning until he reaches school? Many children walk to school, and are on the playground as early as 8.15 a.m. If such children met with an accident, would they be covered? I realise that this Bill gives the office power to provide insurance cover. The Education Department has endeavoured to deal with accidents that have occurred during school hours in the past; but in recent years the Parents and Citizens' Federation has achieved a good deal by discussing the matter at length, and making representations to the responsible authorities. Those representations have borne fruit, and this measure is one to which all members can readily agree.

**MR. O'BRIEN** (Murchison) [5.56]: I support the Bill and endorse the remarks of previous speakers. The small and scattered population of the Murchison has meant that buses have had to be used to take children to school. There is one place in my electorate called Boogardie. It is growing fast and a school will have to be established there; but at present children are obliged to travel by bus to obtain their education. This measure will be of great benefit to their parents, and not only to them, but to those in the metropolitan area. The member for Middle Swan said that the measure would be a great boon to children in the country, but it will also be a great asset to those in the city.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION** (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [5.58]: I thank members for their support of this measure. I am sorry that all the Bills I introduce are not accepted in the same spirit.

Mr. Bovell: If they were all as sound as this one, we would support them.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** If one wants the support of other people, one must not antagonise them, so I will discuss that matter privately with the hon. member. In reply to the member for Mt. Lawley concerning the hospital benefits scheme, I point out that the moneys payable by that fund would be used as a

set-off against the amount payable from insurance. I omitted to mention that when introducing the Bill. The difference would be payable to the parent or guardian of the child concerned.

In regard to the matter raised by the member for Katanning, if he reads the Bill he will see what the extent of the insurance will be. At this stage neither Mr. Bown nor myself, nor any other person could give a comprehensive outline of exactly what will be covered. I would stress that the object of the State Insurance Office in arranging for the acceptance of premiums for this type of insurance, is not to make any undue profits.

Mr. Bovell: The premiums are, very reasonable.

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** That is so. I suggest that, as the scheme expands and the numbers of children insured increase, a reduction in the premium or an extension of the benefits, may be warranted. The premium will be 3s. 6d. per child per year with a maximum of 10s. 6d. per family. A boy or a girl who is at boarding school and who, after school hours, is taken to a doctor or a dentist, and is not actually travelling to or from his or her home would not necessarily be covered, whereas a child who was walking home from school or going home by bus would. A child who was living at home would not come within the provisions of the Bill if, after reaching home, he was taken by the parents to a concert or fete, or to a doctor or elsewhere.

The manager of the State Insurance Office is quite happy about this position: A child, say a girl, who leaves school and who on the way home goes to a music lesson for half an hour will be covered. Provided she takes the most expeditious route and does not dawdle, there would be no argument about the payment of benefit in the case of an accident. Comparatively few of these cases would be involved. I have taken the trouble to read through the whole of the files and I can say that the position is being met in a sympathetic manner by the State Insurance Office.

Mr. Nalder: Recently there was an instance of a girl who attended a play at the school and on her way home at about 11 o'clock at night she was knocked down by a bus in Stirling Highway. What would be the position there?

**THE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION:** Actually the policy is the contract, but, of course, it is not set out in the Bill. If the hon. member reads the measure he will see that a child will be covered whilst attending a school, in which he is enrolled as a pupil, whether for the purpose of receiving instruction at the school or attending a sport, activity or other entertainment organised by the school authorities.

If some entertainment had been organised by the school authorities and the child was going home by the nearest practicable route, and met with an injury, he would be covered.

I would like to mention the matter raised by the member for Middle Swan. Previously the Education Department would not accept liability for injury to schoolchildren unless the injury was sustained as a result of neglect or negligence on the part of the department. I have had one or two such cases. Whilst the Education Department treats each case sympathetically, it would not, unless it could be shown that there was gross negligence on the part of the department, be liable. The scheme should certainly be of benefit to the parents and guardians of children in Western Australia. Although the Education Department has highly qualified mechanics regularly inspecting the school buses throughout the country, and while we are all pleased to know that the transport of children to and from school in this State has been free from any serious accidents—we hope this will continue—the insurance cover provided by this measure will, in the case of emergency, be of benefit to the parents.

Mr. Bovell: The scheme is voluntary, of course.

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: Yes.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILLS (4)—RETURNED.**

- 1, Forests Act Amendment.
- 2, Dentists Act Amendment.
- 3, Mines Regulation Act (No. 2).  
Without amendment.
- 4, Traffic Act Amendment (No. 2).  
With amendments.

#### **BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 16th November.

MR. MAY (Collie) [6.10]: The Bill proposes to amend three sections of the Act. The first portion of the measure seeks to enlarge the area of leases for the purpose of prospecting for diamonds. I do not think that anyone, after reading the Bill, will agree with what the Minister suggests in that regard. Every encouragement should be given to all classes of mining so

that there will be greater prospects of increasing the wealth from our mining activities. I do not propose to dwell on the necessity for that amendment because I agree with it.

The second portion of the Bill deals with some amendments to the Coal Mines Regulation Act. The proposal is that two sections shall be repealed, and another amended. When the member for Dale spoke on the Bill, he was inclined to be a little bit facetious when making a comparison between the first part of the Bill dealing with diamonds and the second portion dealing with coal because he referred to the second part as dynamite.

Mr. Wild: It certainly is.

Mr. MAY: The only comparison I can make with dynamite and the coalmining industry is the action of his Government when it robbed the State Electricity Commission of the Black Diamond leases. That was dynamite! That incident was packed with every known class of explosive! If the member for Dale wants to talk about dynamite, I suggest he examine the circumstances surrounding the taking away by his Government of those leases and the handing of them over to a private company. That action was more like dynamite than anything else I know of in connection with the coalmining industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Even though they were taken away from a private company.

Mr. MAY: I am talking about the Black Diamond leases, and I say that the hon. member, as a member of the Government at the time, was instrumental in robbing the State Electricity Commission of those leases. That action of the McLarty-Watts Government did more to upset the economy of this State than anything else connected with the coalmining industry, that I know of.

The Minister for Railways: They got bigger dividends for the shareholders, though.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No.

Mr. MAY: The Government at that time took from the State Electricity Commission the opportunity to mine its own coal, which was tantamount to getting it at the cost of production. That opportunity was handed over to private enterprise and as a result the State has to pay the cost of production plus the company's profit. If that is not dynamite, will the hon. member tell me what is? The Bill proposes to repeal Sections 316 (4) and 323, and partly to amend Section 324 of the Act as they apply to the coalmining industry. These sections deal with appeals from the Coal Industry Tribunal to the Arbitration Court.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

Mr. MAY: I was referring to the principle outlined in the amendments. They deal with appeals from the Coal Industry

Tribunal to the State Arbitration Court. We consider that such appeals are quite unnecessary, and I will endeavour to inform the House the reason why.

Subsections (7) and (8) of Section 322, of the Coal Mines Regulation Act, provide for a review of the decision of the board of reference by the tribunal. That is, a review, by the tribunal, of a decision made by that board on a dispute. There is nothing new about the Coal Industry Tribunal dealing with such matters, because the Commonwealth and New South Wales Governments appointed a Joint Coal Board to administer the coal industry in New South Wales which has complete power over all coal questions and decisions. Queensland also has a similar set-up. It has its own Coal Industry Tribunal, from which there is no appeal.

Further, in England, the Government nationalised the coal industry and the administration of it is completely under the control of the National Coal Board. In this State the Coal Industry Tribunal is an extremely competent body. It comprises a chairman, two employees' representatives and two employers' representatives. That tribunal has power to appoint a board of reference and any matter relating to the coalmining industry can be dealt with by such a board from which there lies the right of appeal to the Coal Industry Tribunal.

That is one particular reason why it is quite unnecessary, in addition to the provisions already existing, that there should be another appeal to the State Arbitration Court. We consider that this will cause unnecessary litigation, and it can be avoided by repealing the two relevant sections in the Act. If we read the report of the Royal Commission of 1942 at page 55, it is obvious that the creation of a coal tribunal in each State was thought of even at that time, because on the industrial set-up of the coal industry in this State, the commissioner said this—

Prior to the coming into operation of the National Security Act, 1939, and regulations, the industry of coalmining in Western Australia came under the jurisdiction of the State Arbitration Court functioning under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-1941.

The National Security Act and regulations were superseded as regards members of the Miners' Federation by the industrial provisions of the Coal Production (Wartime) Act, 1944 (Commonwealth), which was superseded by the Coal Industry Act, 1946. All workers who were previously members of the Miners' Union at Collie, now being members of the Federation, come under the jurisdiction of the Coal Industry Tribunal set up under the Coal Industry Act.

That meant that the jurisdiction held by the State Arbitration Court had lapsed and all reference to the industry came under the jurisdiction of the Coal Industry Tribunal. Continuing to quote the report—

All members of other unions working in the industry come under the jurisdiction of the Central Reference Board, established under the National Security (Coal Mining Industry Re-employment) Regulations. The local Reference Board (Western Australia) which is established under the same regulations may act of its own volition on all local matters relating to any union associated with the industry at Collie, or under delegated authority from the central industrial authority or the Central Reference Board.

In explanation of that, it is apparent that at that time it was not intended that the coalmining industry in any State should come under the jurisdiction of the State Arbitration Court for the reason that coal industry tribunals were set up in each State to ensure the smooth working of the Act.

Mr. Court: You are referring to the period during which the national security regulations were in operation.

Mr. MAY: That is so. To continue—

In practice this complicated-looking arrangement worked out quite well in Western Australia. Its principal virtues are in fast action and in the wide powers given to the central authorities and the local boards. If in due course the industry of coalmining in Western Australia drops out of the Federal arbitration arena it would be well to consider the creation of a board under the State system with all the powers of the Central Industrial Authority.

Therefore, even at that time it was foreshadowed that the coal industry in this State would be brought under a coal industry tribunal which would deal with every phase of coalmining here. The report goes on to say—

When in the past an Industrial Board existed for the industry of coal mining it was hamstrung for want of power to act on its own volition in calling conferences and settling disputes without reference to the Arbitration Court.

The functioning of the central authorities and the local Reference Board has been greatly assisted at Collie by the activities of the Board of Reference. This is a board set up under the award to deal with domestic matters arising out of the award as distinct from variations, amendments, or additions to the award. It is pre-ided over by the Inspector of Mines at Collie. It is on the job all of the

time and is most expeditious and efficient in the handling of cases. Although an appeal lies from this Board to the Local Reference Board and the Central Authorities, I have never known a decision of the Board of Reference to be disturbed.

That was the report made by the Royal Commission appointed in 1942. As I said before, the Coal Industry Tribunal in this State is an expert body and its decision should be final, because the men who are associated with the tribunal are well acquainted with every phase of the coalmining industry in this State. I would remind members that the Arbitration Court cannot be so well informed because it has not the close association with the industry that the Coal Industry Tribunal has. I know that the member for Dale, when speaking to the Bill, said that the State Arbitration Court has to study the economy of the State when decisions are made by the Coal Industry Tribunal. The Royal Commissioner who was appointed in 1942 was Mr. Wallwork and the same gentleman is the chairman of the Coal Industry Tribunal today. From his report it is very evident that he was studying the effect of any decision that was made by the tribunal.

So it would seem that it is so much nonsense to take authority away from such a competent body. I want to make it quite clear that the men in the industry—and I refer to all unions connected with it—have complete faith in the tribunal as constituted today and they are quite prepared, at all times, to accept, without question, the decisions of the Coal Industry Tribunal. I cannot see any reason why the coalmining companies should not have the same faith in the tribunal.

That is where it should end because we have a competent body in the Coal Industry Tribunal and it has power to appoint a board of reference to deal with any matters relating to the industry, and that from that board's decision there is the right of appeal to the Coal Industry Tribunal. The coal industry in this State, as in other States, represents a compact and isolated body. It is an isolated industry. It has no connection with other industries throughout the State and that is the reason why the tribunal was constituted, namely, to deal with all matters connected with the coalmining industry, which is a basic industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Are not other industries interested?

Mr. MAY: Of course it is a basic industry, but no outside unions are associated with it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But the general public is, and so are industries.

Mr. MAY: I shall deal with the general public shortly. The coal industry in this State is a complete, compact and isolated

one. There is no outside union interwoven with the unions engaged in it. If the sections which this Bill proposes to repeal are deleted, it will bring the industry in this State into line with those of New South Wales and Queensland. There is no reason why this State should be differently situated compared with the other States. Even the Commonwealth recognises that fact in that it has appointed, in association with New South Wales, a coal industry tribunal which was set up to deal with matters arising in the coal mining industry.

The member for Dale referred to the years when decisions of the boards of reference were referred to the Arbitration Court. This was in the days when no coal industry tribunal existed. Naturally in those days there were boards of reference, and any appeals went before the State Arbitration Court. As time went on, it was considered that a tribunal to deal with this industry was preferable to referring appeals to the Arbitration Court. The member for Dale said there have only been four appeals from the Coal Industry Tribunal to the Arbitration Court, and that is perfectly true.

The very reason why there should be no appeal to the Arbitration Court is because over all the years in which the tribunal has been in existence, is because there have been so few appeals. The present procedure is very cumbersome. Of the four appeals, one was refused leave to appeal, the second was withdrawn, the third was partly successful, and the fourth was successful.

Mr. Wild: One appeal was on the question of margins.

Mr. MAY: Yes. Those were the only appeals made to the Arbitration Court since 1949.

Mr. Wild: Is there any reason why Western Australia should be the only State in the Commonwealth where there is no right of appeal against a decision of a coal tribunal?

Mr. MAY: The other States have a similar set-up, with the exception that there is no appeal to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Wild: But in the other States there is an appeal to the coal tribunal.

Mr. MAY: There should not be two appeal courts.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It does not apply in the Eastern States.

Mr. MAY: It is in operation at the present time, and has operated right through.

Mr. Wild: In the other States there is a right of appeal to Mr. Gallagher.

Mr. MAY: In this State there is an appeal to Mr. Wallwork, which is tantamount to the same thing.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is totally different.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member does not understand the set-up.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do. I shall explain it to you one day.

Mr. MAY: The hon. member will know all about it if he listens to what I have to say. The chairman of the tribunal is a very capable and impartial man.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He is a police magistrate and should be impartial. So he should be.

Mr. MAY: There is no doubt that he is.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He is.

Mr. MAY: That was not what the hon. member said. He said he should be impartial.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He is a police magistrate.

Mr. MAY: His principal job since the war ended has been chairman of the Coal Industry Tribunal.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not agree. He gets hardly any remuneration for that.

Mr. MAY: I am not speaking in terms of money. I am referring to the continuity of coal supplies in this State. Nobody can deny that the miners in this State have the best record regarding continuity of work. I would say that has been brought about through the good judgment of the chairman.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not think Mr. Latter had much to do with it.

Mr. MAY: There is no red herring in my utterances. As far as the hon. member's red herrings are concerned, I shall ignore them. The chairman is a capable man and he does give full consideration to all matters involved in arriving at decisions made by the tribunal, which affect the economy of this State. No one knowing Mr. Wallwork will, or can, argue against that. The member for Dale cannot tell me that the tribunal has no regard for the economy of the State when giving its decisions. If it comes to a question of recognising the economy of the State, I would remind the member for Dale and those associated with him, that by handing over the Black Diamond leases to the private coalmining company and depriving the S.E.C. of them, the previous Government did more to upset the economy of the State in the coalmining industry, than any other Government.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: You should study the problem before making such an assertion.

Mr. MAY: The S.E.C. at this very moment should be producing its own coal supply.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Your Government can resume those leases.

Mr. MAY: The S.E.C. would have been supplying its own coal had the set-up not been interfered with by the McLarty-Watts Government.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Why doesn't the Government resume them today?

Mr. MAY: The hon. member knows that he was partly responsible for tying the hands of the present Government which is committed to take 60 per cent. of the output of Amalgamated Collieries for the next 12 months. He knows very well that such an agreement exists, and that it cannot be broken. The present Government is not prepared to break that agreement in the same manner as the previous Government broke the agreement relating to the Black Diamond leases.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It did not break any agreement at all.

Mr. MAY: There was an agreement. Those leases had been set aside for the S.E.C.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No, they were resumed.

Mr. MAY: The previous Government took those leases away from the S.E.C. and gave them to a private coalmining company, which in addition to receiving costs of production, also received its share of the profit. This upset the economy of the State as it affects the coalmining industry.

Mr. Moir: And the previous Government also gave the mining companies considerable financial assistance.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Government got cheaper coal, and there is no doubt about it.

The Minister for Mines: The Government did not get any cheap coal at all.

Mr. MAY: The member opposite made a very cheap interjection.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The company is not like the Wundowie iron and charcoal industry, which has cost the State thousands of pounds.

Mr. MAY: There is no need to draw red herrings across the track. It does not matter what members opposite have to say. The action of the previous Government in regard to the Black Diamond leases seriously upset the economy of the State.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It only upset you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I would ask the member for Collie to get back to the Bill.

Mr. MAY: The member for Dale referred to the economy of the State and I am replying to him. There was a lot of other black material in regard to the Black Diamond leases. The record of the employees in the coalmining industry here is without parallel. Over the years this State has been most fortunate in obtaining a continuity of coal supplies. From time to time something always crops up to disturb employees and production in other industries, but that cannot be said of the employees in the coalmining industry.

I support the second reading because the deletion of the particular sections I referred to previously will help put coalmining here on a sound footing and so ensure peace in the industry. When there are two authorities already in existence to govern an industry, and then a further tribunal is empowered to hear appeals from those two authorities, there is a possibility of the industry being disturbed by the decisions of the third tribunal.

In making that statement, I am not reflecting in any way on Mr. Justice Jackson; I would not do that. I do feel that the set-up of the coal industry in this State was excellent when the coal industry tribunal had power to appoint boards of reference and from which appeals could be taken to the tribunal when any party is aggrieved by a decision of a board of reference. That tribunal consists of two men from the industry, two from the employers and an independent chairman. I again emphasise that the chairman has the complete confidence of the men engaged in the industry and there is no sound reason why that same confidence should not be shown by the employers. Consequent on that, there is no necessity for any appeal to the Arbitration Court. I hope this House will agree to the proposals contained in the Bill.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [7.58]: Like you, Sir, I always listen with interest to the member for Collie. Usually he tells us something worthy of consideration. As the Premier said in connection with the redistribution of seats Bill, when members are affected by a situation they are apt to be, and perhaps rightly so, a little biased in their outlook. Whereas I have trusted the opinion of the member for Collie on many occasions, I feel that in regard to Collie he can only see one way, and that is only to be expected. He sees the way of the Collie miners, and when it comes to the interests of the general public and those of the Collie miners, I find that I must mistrust his judgment. In the circumstances, I mistrust his judgment in connection with his comments on this Bill.

The Minister for Lands: Now you are spoiling a good start.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Bill relates to two matters. I do not propose to deal with the first one in connection with the amendment of the provisions relating to the prospecting and mining for diamonds. That has been dealt with by the member for Dale and I agree with his views.

The second matter does call for some comment. I wish to make it quite clear that I have the same respect for the coalminers as I have for the industrial workers generally, and nobody can say with justice that we in Western Australia have not a right to be proud of them. I for one am. Naturally they look after their own interests, but who does not? Members of this House certainly look after their own interests from time to time, and why should not an organised body of workers look after theirs? We have the goldmining industry and the workers in that industry look after their interests.

So, in considering this Bill, we should regard it from the point of view of doing justice to all the workers and all the citizens of the State, and not only from the point of view of Collie. Who would not say that the goldminers work under conditions equally arduous as do the coalminers? Then we have the timber workers and the workers in many other industries, and under the principles enunciated by Parliament, tribunals have been appointed to do justice to certain organised bodies and also to the general public of which they form part. They have to do justice not only to a particular body, but also to all sections, and decisions must necessarily be relative to all sections.

The coalminers have never asked for favours; they want only equal justice with any other industrial organisation. I have not heard of their claiming preference; they want only their just due comparable with that of any other organised body of workers. They just want a fair thing. I thought that the Minister for Lands, by his attitude was going to interject.

The Minister for Lands: No; but I was thinking that you would make a good union advocate, judging by the way you are speaking.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I think I would, because I am putting forward a very fair proposition. Before the war, there was a board under the Arbitration Court to deal with local matters pertaining to Collie.

Mr. May: That was a board of reference.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, and the board consisted of men acquainted with the industry. Many matters in dispute from time to time between the employees and the employers were settled by the board of reference. When the war broke out, the Commonwealth Government, in



its wisdom, decided that the coal industry should be dealt with on a specific basis and it undertook the responsibility and established a coal tribunal in this State. The tribunal was composed of two representatives of the employers and two representatives of the employees and a judicial officer—a police magistrate.

I do not intend to deal with individuals, because they come and go. We are dealing with Acts of Parliament and principles. The Commonwealth appointed a judicial officer, and the appointee was a man for whom I have a great deal of respect. He is a police magistrate; that is his main avocation, and he does an excellent job in that capacity. I consider that he was a fit and proper person to decide an issue, as is his ordinary duty between two people, and he has an additional duty which is to keep in view the general interests of the whole of the citizens. Even if the employers agreed, he has no right to award something to the miners which does a grave injustice to the community.

Mr. May: He has never done it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, and he never would. His knowledge is that of a judicial officer, and he exercises his discretion, not as an expert in coalmining, but as a man with experience and training in the work of hearing points of view of various parties as given in evidence and making his decision on the basis of what has been put before him and what is advisable. That was the position when he was appointed to the Coal Industry Tribunal and there was right of appeal to the supreme authority. That continued until after the war. When the war ended, the coal tribunal carried on and continued until 1952.

Mr. May: The national security regulations operated.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, but when that authority passed, the coal tribunal was established. It was necessary to provide an alternative system, and the Government of the day, rightly or wrongly, decided as far as possible to continue the existing system.

Mr. May: All the other States could not have been wrong.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Western Australia decided to carry on the existing system at the request of the coalminers. They said that a similar system as far as possible should be carried on, and that instead of having a board of reference of three, there should be a board of five.

Mr. May: The board of reference consisted of five, too.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Very well. A majority of the decisions of the tribunal were the decisions of one man. I do not

know of any occasion—there may have been some—when all five members agreed. Invariably we had two on one side and two on the other, and the decision was that of the chairman. It was the decision of a judicial officer trained in law and capable of deciding what was fair and proper.

The Minister for Mines: And that should be final.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is very good reason why it should not be so. The coal reference board or tribunal was established under State law.

Mr. May: The tribunal.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Then it was decided that in matters of importance to the community as a whole, there should be an appeal to the Arbitration Court. This was not mandatory; there is no absolute right of appeal. The right of appeal extends only to such cases as the President of the Arbitration Court considers are of State-wide or major importance to the industry or the parties concerned.

Mr. May: The right of appeal is still there.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: And I hope it will be retained. It is all very well to say that the coal tribunal has an intimate knowledge of the coalmining industry, but we cannot say that it has anything like the same knowledge of industry as a whole in Western Australia as has the Arbitration Court. We cannot segregate in a little pocket one favoured industry. It must be co-related with the other industries of the State in the same way as State awards have to be kept in line with Federal awards.

The Minister for Mines: Why cannot it be done in Western Australia if it can be done in Queensland?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is an appeal in Queensland.

Mr. May: Not to the Arbitration Court.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, but to another tribunal—a man who does not live in that State. There is an appeal from the Queensland board to a man who lives in Sydney.

Mr. May: Not now.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, there is.

Mr. May: I say there is not.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: There is an appeal from the Queensland board of reference.

The Minister for Mines: That is not correct.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Not often does the Minister make an incorrect statement, but I do not think he is right on

this occasion. I have taken the trouble to inquire from the best authority I could consult, and I hope that if the Minister is wrong, he will withdraw his statement, as I shall do if I am wrong. I say there is an appeal, but it does not matter whether there is or not.

The Minister for Mines: Yes it does.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: What I emphasise is that we cannot have a pocket in industry, especially in a basic industry which the member for Collie admitted coalmining is. The coal industry is one of the most important in the State. A great deal of the transport and of the power is dependent upon coal, so we cannot have that torn apart from the general organised wage decisions of the State. To do that would be neither reasonable nor fair.

The Minister for Mines: It would be just as reasonable in this State as in any other State.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It is basic here.

The Minister for Mines: If it is basic here, it is basic elsewhere.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Does the Minister agree with everything that Mr. Menzies or Mr. Playford does?

The Minister for Lands: I do not agree with anything either of them does.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: We cannot just create a pocket industry with special conditions and special wages without trying to make them relative to the conditions and wages of the ordinary workers in this State, because the ordinary worker depends on coal. If this were a luxury industry or a small isolated industry, we might ask, "Does it matter?", but when it is so important we simply cannot have in this industry conditions that are not applicable to other industries. The chairman of a special tribunal has not the intimate knowledge of the industrial conditions throughout the State that has the court which is charged with the responsibility of determining those conditions. The man charged with holding the scales of justice between the various sections of the community in our State must surely take the responsibility for a basic industry.

Subsection (9) of Section 322 of the Act states that when the coal tribunal makes an award, order or agreement it shall be binding on all parties concerned and shall be filed in the court, and "the court" means the Arbitration Court, and so it becomes virtually an award of that court and is enforceable as an order or award of that court. It is therefore really incorporated into the jurisdiction of the Arbitration Court, which is charged with the enforcement of that order. It would

be foolish to charge the court with the enforcement of an order without giving it power to say whether the order was fair and just.

The position has been clearly stated by the president of the Arbitration Court, who said that he did not propose in matters of minor importance, or peculiar local conditions, to interfere—and he has not done so—but the court must interfere when the tribunal cuts across general principles applicable to the industrial life of the State. With regard to margins, was there any reason why the Collie miners should receive increased margins when the rest of the industrial workers were not given them? Was there any fairness in that?

The Minister for Mines: We did not argue that—

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister will agree that it would not be just for one section of the workers only to receive increased margins. If it is fair to grant increased margins, all workers in the State and, in fact, all the workers in the Commonwealth, should receive them, but not just some little favoured pockets here and there, and I do not think the Collie miners would want that. All they ask for is justice and nothing more.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: That is all any of the workers want.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so. They would not ask for increased wages and preferences at the expense of the basic wage worker who has to buy electric power and transport that depends on coal.

The Minister for Mines: You are drawing the long bow.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am not. It is logical, because the cost of coal is basic and has some effect on every person in the State, through electric power, rail transport and the many by-products of coal, all of which prove it is a basic industry. I believe that the standard of living of the Collie miner should be the highest possible but not that he should receive undue favours at the expense of the goldminer who depends so much on transport—

Mr. Moir: But they would not receive such favours under this.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: They might. The president of the Arbitration Court is given the job of co-ordinating industrial conditions in the State, and I know of no person—including Ministers of the Crown—who has the same tremendous responsibilities as he has.

The Minister for Mines: His decisions do not always meet with general approval.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: What decision is unanimously acclaimed? Yet he is still charged with that tremendous responsibility. How would the goldfields miners

feel if the Collie miners received, at their expense, something that was not justified?

Mr. Moir: They would get nothing unjustified under this measure.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: They might, because every individual's view differs from that of his fellows on a particular question, and we do not all see the same problem from the same angle. I do not see things from the same point of view as the member for Collie does, yet we are both honest in our views.

Mr. Moir: How do you reconcile that with your statement, made by interjection, that the magistrate is fair and just? You now say he would give favours.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Would the hon. member say the member for Collie was not fair and just?

Mr. May: You had better not.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Of course he is, and he is putting forward his views on this problem. I do not say that I am right or that he is right, but we are giving our views in democratic fashion, and in the end the public will decide. When we charge a man with great responsibility, he must be allowed to do the whole job, and we cannot give an outside body power to upset his decision in a basic industry such as this. Mr. Wallwork could not think the same as the president of the court on everything. We must cast the responsibility on a particular person or court, and accept the decision.

Mr. May: That is what we are going to do.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The people of the State cast the responsibility of government on this Parliament, and must accept its decisions, although they do not always think we are right. We do the best we can. It is important not to have any little industry with conditions entirely differing from those of the rest of the workers in the State.

Mr. Moir: It is an industry with problems peculiar to it.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Of course, and that applies to every industry. How often has the hon. member told us about the special hours and conditions in the gold-mines?

Mr. Moir: You created those problems.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Perhaps, but the hon. member pointed out that his industry has special problems, and so has every other industry, but we still charge the Arbitration Court with responsibility for those conditions. There are appeals from conciliation commissioners and boards of reference, and the Arbitration Court is the final arbiter, although it only deals with major issues that affect the

community. In a judgment the president of the court said in referring to the present Mining Act—

It is important, therefore, on this occasion that I should indicate what, in my view, are the principles to be applied by the president of the court when deciding whether or not to permit a decision of the tribunal to be reviewed by the court. It will be observed from Section 323, that Parliament did not give a dissatisfied party a right of appeal to the Arbitration Court as a matter of course.

As a matter of fact, Parliament provided by Subsection (1) of Section 323 that a review of the decision of the tribunal could only be heard with permission of the president. There is no right of appeal as there is in the ordinary courts of law. He continued—

I think the proper inference to be drawn is that Parliament intended the president to have a discretion to refuse the right of review if he considered the application was a frivolous one or that the subject matter of the tribunal's decision was of a relatively trivial nature, or a matter of minor importance. On the other hand, if, in the opinion of the president, the decision of the tribunal involved a question of considerable importance to the parties or to the public, then I think it is clear that it is the president's duty to admit the decision to be reviewed.

How wrong it would be to alter the situation! I know I am repeating myself—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Why?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Because this is a question of major importance to the community, and it would be wrong to give industries separate tribunals whose decisions would be final. Should the gold-mining industry, the timber workers, the clerks or any other industry, have a separate tribunal the decision of which was final? It would be a hopeless position.

Mr. Brady: Or members of Parliament?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: It was tried in the Federal court but did not work, and the law had to be amended to provide appeals on major matters from the conciliation commissioners to the court itself. Not one of the commissioners suggested that it should not be done, because they realised they might get out of step with one another and thus throw various industries out of step. This measure deals with a basic industry, of maximum importance to the community, and it is essential that the provision taking away the right of review from the Arbitration Court should be altered.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn—in reply) [8.30]: So far as the arguments advanced by the member for Dale and the member or Mt. Lawley are concerned, I feel that there is little to which I can reply.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That shows how much two people can differ.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: There is much to commend the case put up by the member for Collie. I think the member for Mt. Lawley put up a good case on behalf of the president of the Arbitration Court; in fact, I do not think that that gentleman could have presented a better one.

Mr. McCulloch: Birds of a feather!

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: Without being too critical of the hon. member, I would say that he made a number of inconsistent statements. For instance, at one stage he spoke of the Collie Miners' Union, or the mining industry, as being a little pocket which was being given favours.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I did not say that at all.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: As the hon. member spoke, I wrote down the words. He can look in "Hansard" and find that that is what he said.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I said that we did not want that situation.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: The hon. member said that the industry was a little pocket and that it should not be given favours. Yet, almost in the same breath, he said that it was the most important industry in the State. Then further on he said that it was a little industry with little problems. Goodness gracious, there is no consistency in those remarks; they have no connection! There was nothing in the case the hon. member put up, and no reply is needed. I do not intend to apologise to the House for repeating myself. I have given the Government's reasons for introducing the measure and I shall leave it to members to make up their own minds.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Would you explain why a special concession should be given to this industry.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: A moment ago I said I did not want to repeat myself. When moving the second reading I said that this is a specialised industry; it is one that is apart from every other in the State and it is, as the member for Collie said, an isolated industry with totally different principles.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I do not call it an isolated industry. It has not its own problems.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: All we are asking is that this industry shall be placed in the same position as the coal industry in other parts of Australia.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Why should it be regarded as an isolated industry?

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: Why should Western Australia be any different from other parts of Australia? The principle of this Bill is already in operation in other parts of Australia; yet members opposite say that we should be treated differently. Why? All I am asking is that our industry be placed on the same footing as the coalmining industry in other parts of Australia.

Mr. Court: Do you still maintain that there is no right of appeal in other States? My understanding is that all the other States have a local coal authority.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: There is no appeal to arbitration.

Mr. Court: It has the same effect. The Arbitration Court here takes the place of the industrial tribunal in the other States.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: There is no appeal in Queensland.

Mr. Court: Yes there is.

Mr. Wild: There is a Federal Coal Tribunal.

The **MINISTER FOR MINES**: The hon. member has the right to make his own speech. I am telling members that that right does not exist. However, I do not intend to delay the House. I have explained the Bill and I regret that it is necessary to bring down two totally different aspects under the one measure. However, if that had not been done, it would have been necessary to introduce two Bills.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Section 316 amended:

Mr. WILD: I think everything that can be said has been said by the member for Mt. Lawley. To a large extent he repeated what I said last week. We do not agree with the last three clauses of this Bill and I differ with the Minister when he says that Western Australia should be placed in a different category from other parts of the Commonwealth as regards appeals. In Queensland there is a right of appeal to Mr. Gallagher, who is the Federal Coal Tribunal; he has the same responsibility as Mr. Justice Jackson has in Western Australia now because Mr. Gallagher can give margins.

Mr. May: He did that in this State, too.

Mr. WILD: That makes no difference. The hon. member said that there is no appeal in the Eastern States similar to what we have in this State now. That is not so.

The Minister for Mines: Why do not they appeal to their own Arbitration Court?

Mr. WILD: They have a different system. Prior to our present system, we had a right of appeal to Mr. Gallagher; but now Mr. Justice Jackson does that job. We feel that there should be a right of appeal and while we agree that Mr. Wallwork may have a good local knowledge and be the man on the spot who can attend to the small matters, Mr. Justice Jackson, as he pointed out in his judgment in 1954, deals with matters of policy and interprets the wishes of Parliament. I shall not support the clause.

Mr. MAY: The member for Dale is quite wrong in regard to Queensland. That State has a set-up of its own on lines similar to what is obtaining in this State, without appeal to the State Arbitration Court.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is called the Queensland Local Coal Authority.

Mr. MAY: That is so. In this State we call it the Coal Industry Tribunal. The point members opposite are trying to make is the price of coal and the fact that the State's economy depends upon it. There is no other point at issue. Mr. Wallwork is quite competent and has a full knowledge of the industry. Without reflecting on anybody I would say that Mr. Wallwork, from his experience of the industry, is fully competent to deal with any situation. As a result, I think it is unnecessary to have an appeal to the Arbitration Court.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What knowledge has he of the goldmining industry?

Mr. MAY: That is not connected with the coalmining industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: But the goldmining industry is affected by the price of coal.

Mr. MAY: That is what I am arguing. Mr. Wallwork would be dealing only with the coalmining industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No.

Mr. MAY: He would not be dealing with the goldmining industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He would be, indirectly.

Mr. MAY: Does the hon. member say that the price of gold and the price of coal have the same effect on the community?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They have an effect on each other.

Mr. MAY: Mr. Wallwork, who is the chairman of the Coal Industry Tribunal, knows the effect of the price of coal on the community of this State. If there were no tribunal in Western Australia I would agree that the State Arbitration Court should be the deciding factor; but where there is a tribunal which has the power to appoint boards of reference, and there is the right of appeal from the boards to the tribunal, I feel that an appeal to the State Arbitration Court is unnecessary.

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

Ayes	.....	19
Noes	.....	16
Majority for	.....	3

#### Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Moir
Mr. Brady	Mr. Norton
Mr. Heal	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Styants
Mr. Lapham	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lawrence	Mr. May
Mr. McCulloch	

(Teller.)

#### Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Sir Ross McLarty
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Cornell	Mr. North
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

#### Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Ackland
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Brand
Mr. Sewell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Mann
Mr. Graham	Mr. Hill
Mr. O'Brien	Mr. Yates

Clause thus passed.

Clause 4—Section 323 repealed:

Mr. WILD: There is no use wasting the time of the Committee on this clause because it is evident that the Government wants to force this through. I wish to say, however, that I definitely oppose the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I do not think I heard you give the decision on that clause.

The CHAIRMAN: I am sure no one would say that my voice cannot be heard in the Chamber; I said, "the ayes have it."

Clause 5, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*Third Reading.*

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	18

Majority for 1

*Ayes.*

Mr. Andrew	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May
Mr. Lawrence	

*Noes.*

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Cornell	Mr. North
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Watts
Mr. Manning	Mr. Wila
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. Bovell

*Pairs.*

<i>Ayes.</i>	<i>Noes.</i>
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Ackland
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Brand
Mr. Sewell	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Mann
Mr. Graham	Mr. Hill
Mr. O'Brien	Mr. Yates

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time, and transmitted to the Council.

**ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1954-55.***In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

*Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £1,054,161.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [8.55]: Under this division the total provided in the revenue section for 1954-55 under the heading of Public Works and Buildings is £1,054,161. This represents an increase of £2,859 compared with the actual expenditure for 1953-54. It has to be remembered, however, in endeavouring properly to assess the position, that the expenditure in connection with the North-West of this State, which had heretofore been provided under this division, has been included under Division No. 55 for 1954-55 under the vote of the Minister for the North-West.

The provision for public works and buildings in the North-West under Division No. 55 is £174,900. Accordingly but for this reallocation, the provision for public works would have been £1,229,061, or an increase of £72,497 compared with the actual expenditure for 1953-54. In addition to the

salary provision of £11,300, and incidentals £6,500 under Division No. 55, the following items previously included in the Public Works Division are now included under Division No. 55:—

	£
Repairs and Maintenance, North-West harbours	93,000
Additional watering points, Kimberley cattle stations	10,000
Northern Australian Development Committee expenses	300
Refrigeration plant North-West operating expenses	3,800
Additions, repairs and maintenance of public buildings in the North-West	50,000

It is very necessary, in order to make a comparison of revenue and expenditure of this department, to bear in mind this departure for this year, otherwise quite a wrong impression would be gained of the actual activity of the department. The gross amount provided on last year's Revenue Estimates for salaries was £572,000, and the actual expenditure on salaries was £549,322. After allowing for amounts provided elsewhere, as indicated, which were last year included in the Public Works division, the gross provision for 1954-55 is £291,700.

In this department, considerable emphasis for this financial year, has been placed upon the provision of water supplies in country districts, and every endeavour has been made to push on with the comprehensive scheme, it being realised that the conclusion of that scheme is of tremendous importance to the State. That is emphasised more this year because of the exceedingly dry period we have experienced and the fact that our storages are so much down compared with those of previous years. I had some figures taken out earlier this month to give an indication of what the situation really was. At Barbalin there is a capacity of 41,000,000 gallons. In storage on the 8th November, there were only 22,100,000 gallons, compared with 27,600,000 gallons at precisely the same time the previous year. Then at Waddouring which has a capacity of 21,400,000 gallons the storage on the 8th November was 11,400,000 gallons; and at precisely the same time last year, it was 16,300,000 gallons.

Now let us take Bridgetown which is in a different part of the State, but important by way of comparison of rainfall and storages. We find that the capacity is 28,100,000 gallons, and the storage on the 8th November was only 7,900,000 gallons, compared with 15,600,000 gallons at the same time the previous year. Narrogin, with a capacity of 77,000,000 gallons, had 23,100,000 gallons compared with 59,300,000 gallons the previous year. Respective figures for other centres are as follows:—Brookton: Capacity, 30,800,000 gallons;

storage on the 8th November, 7,700,000 gallons; storage the previous year, 20,100,000 gallons; Boyup Brook—another town in a part of the State where the rainfall is substantially normal—28,400,000 gallons, 5,800,000 gallons, and 8,800,000 gallons; Katanning: 55,000,000 gallons, 10,400,000 gallons, and 39,100,000 gallons.

Mr. Nalder: I think that rain since then added another 1,000,000 gallons.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Fortunately, that is true. Boddington, with a capacity of 24,000,000 gallons, had in storage at the 8th November, 5,700,000 gallons, compared with 10,700,000 gallons the previous year. So the story is the same throughout—considerably reduced quantities of water in storage to carry us over what looks like being an extremely long and dry summer, placing considerable emphasis upon the absolute necessity for us to push on as rapidly as possible with the provision of water supplies and the improvement of water supplies generally throughout the State. It is most unfortunate that, in connection with this work, we are so hampered through lack of funds. A number of projects have been approved, but we cannot put them in hand, simply because funds are not available to enable us to get on with the work.

Mr. Court: To what extent is the funds problem aggravated by lack of supplies of material?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have been handicapped from time to time through a shortage of steel. The position was quite grim for a time until B.H.P. put in an additional rolling mill, and then supplies started to come forward much better, but not sufficiently rapidly to enable us to keep up with our requirements. While we have been able to make some progress with the comprehensive scheme, it has not been nearly as great as we would have liked. I have a short statement about the Wellington Dam-Narrogin main which will indicate what has been achieved and what it is proposed to do; and this will be of interest to the member for Narrogin.

At the end of June last, 46 miles of 30-in. main had been laid in position. That was at the end of the financial year. The programme for this financial year for which funds are available will, it is anticipated, embrace the laying of 13½ miles of main, making a total to the end of the financial year of 59½ miles. For the three months, July to September, three miles of pipe were laid, and at the present time steel plate is being fabricated into pipes at the Hume Steel Works, which will enable a further two miles of pipe to be forwarded to the job within a few days. The plate for a further six miles has already been rolled by B.H.P. at Port Kembla and is awaiting shipment. Thus, there will be material available for a steady supply of pipes in the New Year.

Plate for a further two miles has been listed for rolling at Port Kembla in the December-January rolling period, and it is anticipated that the remainder of the requirements for the year's programme will be rolled in the February-March rollings. If that programme is adhered to, we should not be held up for lack of supply of the necessary steel. We have ordered as much steel as we have money to pay for.

Mr. Bovell: B.H.P. has been playing an excellent part.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The company has treated us quite well. It has had difficulties; and while it has not been able to deliver steel which it indicated it would forward, always on time, when it acquired its additional rolling mill, the position improved considerably.

Hon. V. Doney: What work has been absorbing a far larger quantity of steel than normally? There is evidently a lesser output so far as this State is concerned. You have finished the work at Kwinana. Is the output very much smaller than it was five or six years ago? If so, what is the reason?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. The total output of the company is not down, but the overall demand for its product has considerably increased, and it has not been possible to secure the proportion that was obtainable previously.

Hon. V. Doney: The company cannot increase the output proportionately to the demand?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It had a number of difficulties. We would enter into contracts and expect a supply of steel at a certain time, but it did not come forward. However, there was always a satisfactory explanation by the company. It promised us that the position would be improved when the new rolling mill was brought into production, and that was so. It appeared that after the company had got into production it would be able to meet our requirements unless unforeseen circumstances arose, such as shipping hold-ups, or something of that nature. Quite often plate is available in the East for us, but to get it over takes some time, and a lag occurs because of that. If the plate could be delivered as soon as it was fabricated, these delays would not occur to the same extent. But sometimes weeks elapse before it is possible to have the steel shipped to Western Australia.

The department intends to concentrate on the provision of water supplies, and is giving the highest priority to that. For that reason, less drainage work has been undertaken than was recommended. I have had to say that, of the two works, preference must be given to the provision of water supplies, although it is recognised that drainage work is important and, in some cases, essential. In my view, however, what is

of greater importance is the provision of water, and such money as has been available for the department has been diverted, in the main, from drainage, and used for the provision of water supplies.

Speaking of water supplies reminds me of a project which we are now developing, and which has for its purpose the making of adequate provision for the requirements of the metropolitan area. From time to time there is criticism by country people of projects in the metropolitan area, especially from those people who are in districts where water is very short. They get the impression that steps should not be taken to make provision for water supplies in the metropolitan area until all the country supplies have been looked after. That view will not stand examination, really, because the largest proportion of the population of the State is in the metropolitan area; and the more prosperous the country districts, the greater the population they support.

With a tremendous housebuilding programme under way, it is essential that steps be taken to keep up the supplies of water for storage as well as for household purposes, otherwise a serious situation would develop. Over the years this State has done a remarkably good job in making provision for water supplies some time ahead. We have not been in the serious position that other States have found themselves in because they, through lack of foresight or other reason, have not made provision ahead of requirements.

In looking to the future in this State, we have carried out extensive surveys in the Serpentine valley. A pipehead dam has been surveyed and designed, and the first pipeline has been located. It is too early yet to give a complete outline of what is proposed. I simply mention the project to indicate that the department is taking steps now to meet a situation that has already developed and which will be very difficult to deal with if steps are not taken.

An examination of the present sources of supply, in the light of increased demands by a greatly increasing population, shows that the safe supply has been exceeded for some years. Therefore it is essential that works be undertaken immediately to provide adequate water storage. The deficiency of safe supplies from existing sources is estimated to be approximately 15,000,000 gallons per day by 1960, and 30,000,000 by 1970. Only a very large new source of supply could yield such substantial quantities. The proposals for the Serpentine project will, therefore, provide for progressive development to improve storage from the year 1957 to the year 1962.

Mr. Nalder: Is the amount you mentioned the average daily consumption for 12 months in the metropolitan area?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The figures I have mentioned are the estimated shortages of supply on average consumption. If the Serpentine project is gone on with and completed—it will be a costly one—it should quite adequately take care of the requirements of the State until approximately 1974. It is no good waiting until then to go ahead with this scheme. We have to follow the good example that has been set in the years gone by and take early steps to ensure that the storage capacity is there ahead of actual requirements so that the position can be safely held and development not retarded. This project is now actively proceeding in the initial stages, but has yet to receive the final endorsement of the Government in connection with the complete scheme.

As I have already explained, much survey work has already been undertaken, and we are quite satisfied that we have located a first-class site for a reservoir and that we will have a substantial storage as a result. This scheme will require the provision of trunk mains. The total trunk main capacity, I am advised, should not be less than the average daily consumption for the maximum seven-day period. Therefore the proposals provide for a main dam approximately 170ft. high with a capacity of about 37,000,000,000 gallons.

Canning Dam is 280ft. high and has a capacity of 20,550,000,000 gallons. So, the Serpentine Dam, with a wall 50ft. lower is expected to have a capacity of 17,000,000,000 gallons more. There will also be a pipehead dam, 45ft. high, with a capacity of 750,000,000 gallons. This dam will be situated four miles downstream from the main dam, and there will be a first trunk main of 48in. diameter from the pipehead to the metropolitan area.

Hon. V. Doney: You implied that although this work will not be required until 1974, construction work will be carried out before very long.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I did not say quite that. I said that if this project is gone on with it will be adequate to meet requirements up till 1974; but the time has actually been reached now when the work should be commenced. With the rapid growth in our population, the demand for water is such that we have now actually passed the point of safe supply.

If we were to have any serious depletion in metropolitan storages, we would be in serious trouble because the safe margin disappeared quite a long time ago. I mentioned the actual deficiency figures. The deficiency of safe supplies from existing sources is estimated to be approximately 15,000,000 gallons per day by 1960. From the way we are developing, if nothing is done to improve the storages by 1960, the deficiency below what is regarded as safe supply will be 15,000,000 gallons per day,



and if nothing is done from then on, the deficiency below safe supply will be 30,000,00 gallons per day by 1970.

This would be a very serious position in view of the expected growth of population in the State because of the tremendous development at Kwinana and the opening up of further farming lands. I do not propose to give any further detail now. Members will hear more about it later. I have mentioned this matter to show that although we regard the early provision of water supplies in country areas as the most urgent need at present, we must, at the same time, plan for an increase in storage for use in the metropolitan area. Preliminary work has already been undertaken in this connection.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I suppose that is worked out at 185 gallons per day per head throughout the year.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it would be.

Hon. A. F. Watts: That is pretty generous.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Compared with the quantities to which some country people are limited, it would be. In some country districts the amount, unfortunately, is 10 gallons per day.

Hon. V. Doney: It is six gallons in some.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That does not sound too good. We want to do better than that.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It would not suit the metropolitan area, would it?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member knows that. It would not be sufficient for flushing purposes, and we would soon be in trouble in that connection. Although the Main Roads Department does not have a separate section in the Estimates and it is not usual to discuss its activities to any extent, I propose to make a short reference to it. The work of this department is expanding considerably. Western Australia is fortunate that no alteration was made to the existing area-population formula, so that we continue to share very favourably in the funds available for road construction.

Many requests have been made for the provision of black roads. Everyone seems to think it is essential that a black road be provided, no matter what the length of it may be or how many people are going to use it. What is overlooked is that every mile of bitumen road imposes an additional obligation on the department after the road is made, because it must be replaced within a period of about 15 years. Funds, therefore, have to be set aside for the replacement. Not only have we to face the initial expenditure for the provision of these roads, but from our funds we have to make provision for their renewal over a period. Each additional road, therefore, instead of

being a burden off the department becomes an additional burden on it, and is an ever-growing liability.

Visitors who come here comment favourably upon the state of our roads and, generally speaking, they consider them to be in first-class condition. It is true that in some places bad stretches can be found, and even when the earth road is good, that that does not stop settlers from requesting that a bitumen road be provided. I do not blame them for that, because it is so much better, so much cleaner and so much more enjoyable to travel on. When people are making a long journey, and portion of that journey is over a bitumen road, a comparison can be made between the two stretches and it can be expected that their desire for a bitumen road is heightened.

Of course, it is quite impossible to meet in any one year all the demands that are made. Often I get requests for the provision of 30, 40 or 50 miles of bitumen road without any conception by the people making the request of what is involved. In some places, the cost of providing a bitumen road exceeds £3,000 a mile. In such districts, if we are asked to build 40 or 50 miles of bitumen road, such a substantial sum is involved that it would leave very little for use elsewhere if all that work were undertaken at once.

So what the department endeavours to do is to list all the requirements and requests made, go through them carefully, give full regard to the traffic density on the road concerned, and then carry out such works programmes that will permit of some bitumen road work being done in certain places. However, there are some centres where the amount of traffic does not warrant the provision of a bitumen road, and they must wait until the traffic becomes more dense to justify the heavy expenditure involved.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Has the Main Roads Commissioner returned from the Eastern States yet?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, he returned on Monday. We had to take a dredge away from Albany a short time ago and interrupt the work that is being done there. I did my level best to avoid doing so, but unfortunately, I had no alternative. The construction company at Kwinana had pushed on with such speed that it became clear that the construction work of the refinery would be completed considerably ahead of time. That meant that tankers could be brought into Cockburn Sound and the refinery go into operation earlier than was anticipated, provided the channels in the approach to the sound had been dredged, and I was requested to endeavour to have the dredging speeded up.

I readily agreed to take what action was necessary to bring this about, but had to indicate that the State could not be expected to bear any expense in this connection and, provided the company would bear

such expense, steps would be taken to have dredging expedited. It was necessary to arrange a meeting in England between the principals of the refinery company and the dredging company. This was arranged by our Agent General, the outcome of the conference was most satisfactory and, because of an arrangement agreed upon, it was possible to have the dredging considerably speeded up. It is now expected that the first tanker will go through the channel on the 11th January next.

Although it is expected that the channel will be completely safe for navigation, it could not be guaranteed unless it were equipped with leading lights, which require a great deal of work in fabrication and, after being fabricated have to be placed in position. When the Director of Works had the position examined to ascertain how these leading lights could be placed in position, he found that the only way in which it could be done would be to have the use of a grab dredge, and the only one available was at Albany.

If that dredge had not been brought up until the work at Albany had been completed, it would have been months before the leading lights were erected and we would have had the position of the refinery being complete, the channels dredged, but no tankers being brought in because the Harbour Trust could not allow them to enter the channel without the leading lights being in position. When I found it was impossible to install the leading lights without the use of the dredge, I approved of the dredge at Albany being brought up.

That has caused a temporary cessation of the work at Albany, but the dredge will be returned there immediately work on the channel has been completed. It was not easy for people at Albany to understand the reason for bringing the dredge away from Albany. Their first impression was that preference was being given to the metropolitan area as against the outports. Although that was so, it was, of course, unthinkable that, having had arrangements made for the early commencement of the refinery, it should be kept idle for months.

Hon. V. Doney: Was an explanation given to the people of Albany at the time?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and I will say that, apart from a few isolated grumbles, the people down there understood the position and accepted it in a very good spirit. I was advised that while the cessation of work at Albany would mean some little delay in the use of facilities available, it would not be substantial so far as the port was concerned, and the difficulty could easily be surmounted in some other way. I feel that members would not be interested in a great deal of detail being given about the items. I

have the information available, and if it is required during the discussion on various items, it will be furnished.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do we discuss electricity under this vote?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I could deal with it, but I did not intend to do so, feeling that any special point in regard to it could be dealt with in replies made to members. However, if general reference is desired, I will say that fortunately the various loans which have been launched by the State Electricity Commission have been fully subscribed, enabling that commission to have ample funds with which to carry on its work.

In this developing State, there are insistent demands for the extension of electricity supplies to all kinds of places, and one of our greatest difficulties is to make people appreciate the fact that there must be a limit in any one year to the number of extensions that can be undertaken. If the commission embarks upon extensions which are uneconomic and which result in deficits, those losses can be made up only by increases in charges, and the more such uneconomic extensions are put in, the greater will be the loss and the higher will the charges rise. That is a most undesirable practice and is a policy we do not intend to follow.

Another reason is that there are sufficient jobs on hand for the installation of economic extensions without giving attention to uneconomic extensions. Generally speaking, and for the guidance of members who represent metropolitan electorates, when an extension is requested it cannot be installed if it requires the provision of more than two bays or two poles for the consumer to be connected to the main supply. If, for example, in a certain street there are four potential consumers, and if only eight poles are required to serve them all, the extensions will be put in. But if 10 or 12 poles are required, the people in that area must wait until the conditions are met.

That is a basic principle from which we will not depart because if we do it means that we are putting in uneconomic extensions which lose money and therefore oblige the commission to recoup its losses by increasing charges. As explained to the House in answers to questions, the commission has done remarkably well in absorbing costs because, although there would have been some increases in the basic wage in the past financial year and some increases in the cost of coal, all those increases were not passed on by way of increased charges, and a considerable portion of those increases was absorbed by the commission and charges kept at a comparatively low figure. Our electricity charges compare favourably with those in any other State. I am pleased to say that the work of extending the

supply to country districts is proceeding steadily, and many people have already found the benefit of the power provided.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: How many settlers would you want to the mile, say, in a country district, to make an extension an economic proposition?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The basic conditions required in a country district are different from those in the metropolitan area because, if we are going from one large town to another where we know that, after traversing a certain distance, we can pick up quite a number of consumers in a town, we would run the line out and connect consumers in the intervening territory without regard to the length of line and the number of poles required.

There is not the question of so many poles per consumer or so many chains. After the district is surveyed, we can calculate whether it is economic to make such an extension, by obtaining the number of potential consumers, the estimate of the probable amount of current consumed, and the capital cost to carry the supply. I cannot answer the question specifically because other factors have to be considered.

HON. V. DONEY (Narrogin) [9.46]: I speak in a general way to this vote. My principal purpose in talking on water supplies is to tell members once more that the people of Narrogin and Pingelly in particular—they being the greatest sufferers—are sick to death of waiting, waiting, waiting for scheme water that never comes. Members have heard this story before. I know that, but the point is that they need reminding and especially does that refer to members of the Cabinet.

All the same I have no misunderstanding of the Minister's position. I know he is passing through harassing times. I have no misunderstanding of what is required and what he is able to do. It is necessary for me to put up a case for more attention to be given to country water supplies. For a long time I have been concerned with the water supplies for the towns of Narrogin and Pingelly which are the greatest sufferers in this State. The electors have told me over and over again that they are tired of waiting for scheme water.

My desire is to advance reasons why the balance of the pipeline to connect the 81-mile section between Wellington dam and Narrogin can, and should, be done in one year, instead of two years. This is essential so that these two towns, which are desperately situated, may be granted relief in one year's time. It is practical and within the competency of the engineers to complete the remaining portion in one

year. I want to correct the general misconception as to the nature, the huge size and the importance of the work involved in this scheme.

I would like new members to know that the drastic water shortage which I have complained of so frequently has confronted the Narrogin electorate and the Williams-Narrogin electorate for the whole of the 27 years I have been in this House. It has not been easy to pacify the electors, especially in the last five or six years. For 17 years before my time in this Chamber, the same position faced my predecessor. This district wants very much more of the fair share of the State's income. My predecessor constantly complained that people living in the metropolitan area did not care a great deal whether the people in the country had water supplies.

There can be little doubt that the metropolitan area receives far more and prompter attention than the outer areas. I do not blame the present Government. I realise that the previous Government and all past Governments were equally to blame for coming under the metropolitan spell. This strange spell appears in all capital cities in the world, in some more apparent than in others. I am probably right in assuming that the bias against the country is probably worse in Western Australia than in other parts of the world. The last 36 miles of pipeline to be laid between Wellington dam and Narrogin can and should be done in one year.

Let us see what the engineers have to say about it. In 1948 they set the mileage at 10; in 1949 at 25; and in 1950 at 46, making a total of 81 miles. Precise calculations went into the estimate of those mileages. The man who knew a great deal about this was Mr. Russell Dumas and he can be truthfully described as a great engineer and a very wise man. To my knowledge he was never content with a guess. When he set the 1950 programme at 46 miles he meant 46. He graded the mileage according to the nature of the country to be traversed.

Most of us know that the western end of the line is in either mountainous, swampy, heavily timbered or rocky country. The going was extraordinarily difficult, therefore the mileage was set down at 10. The programme in 1949 was over easier grades and the mileage was 25. The third section was set at 46 miles and this high figure is accounted for by the easier country around Narrogin. The 46 miles we are now concerned with is, unfortunately, not in one continuous line; that is to say, it is broken up here and there and consequently might fairly be brought down to 42 miles. As the length remaining to be done is 36 miles, it can be seen that there is more than enough time to complete the job even in the one year. Today, however,

the estimate is two years. The reason for that was explained by the Minister a little while ago.

As showing what can be done—and in saying this I am referring to the work of the engineers and the departmental men—in our first year and in the very worst country when we were asked to do 10 miles, we actually did 15, and in addition, accumulated the requisite precision gear, and heavy gear of the bulldozer type, and did all the tracking and trenching and other extremely heavy work that was necessary in the difficult country then being traversed. Today's assessment is 36 miles in two years, which is equal to no more than 18 miles a year. It is extremely difficult to understand why this should be so, and I would have asked the Minister for an explanation had he not already given one.

It is conceivable that the Minister is fearful of still more late deliveries of sheet steel and is making forward provision for possible delay, but I point out that the steel outlook is certainly not worsening. The Minister could not claim that it was. I was hopeful that he would have pointed out that the steel position is improving rather than moving backward. I think the general expectation is that the steel position will substantially improve, and if his engineers carry on with the idea that 18 miles is as much as can be done in a year, they will be making a very big bloomer indeed, because they would have thrown away the saving of one year of misery for people who are facing a very bad and trying time indeed. So I say to the Minister, "Why not in these circumstances aim at the one year target? Why not make it 36 miles instead of 18?" If it still happened that steel ran into short supply, we would have to stand up to it, but meanwhile nothing would be lost by adopting a more optimistic outlook.

Quite a few people hold the view that the comprehensive water supply scheme is concerned only with the electorates east and west of the central Great Southern. Others link it with certain areas to the eastward. The scheme is a vastly different undertaking from what the generality of members know of. Actually the scheme embodies the central Great Southern areas already referred to as well as those long stretches of occupied land between the fast-growing town of Williams and the town of Collie. It also includes those areas on the Goldfields line east of Northam and extends to certain lands northward into the territory of the member for Moore as well as into the districts represented by the member for Roe and the member for Mt. Marshall. These areas embrace Bruce Rock and other towns lying between that and Wickepin.

The raising of the weir at the Mundaring reservoir was part of the comprehensive scheme as also was the raising of the

Wellington dam to a capacity of 38,000 million gallons. It will come as a shock to some members to realise that Wellington dam, when completed, will have an impoundment substantially ahead of all the other dams in the State. Apart from the raising of the Wellington dam, there has been the increasing of the capacity of the pumping stations and mains on the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme so as to permit of the expansion of supplies to the goldmining industry as well as providing big quantities of water for large-scale irrigation purposes in the South-West.

There is also the fact that turbines will be installed at the foot of Wellington dam so that hydro-electric power will be fed into the high tension transmission lines of the big South-Western power scheme. There are quite a number of other matters in some way or other linked up with the scheme, but I think I have quoted enough to show that it is a vastly more important undertaking in many respects than some members have previously realised.

I think I might fittingly refer to the great amount of enthusiasm expressed at the time when the legislation authorising the scheme was assented to. At that time I had occupied a seat in Parliament for 19 years—19 years of plotting and planning—and I managed to secure the acceptance of the Bill by all members in both Houses. I should like this House of 1954 to realise that the Parliament in 1947 to a man voted for the comprehensive water supply Bill without any amendment excepting one submitted by the member for Roe, to which I readily agreed. I have given this little outline of history so that it may be understood that every member then in Parliament accepted all the conditions, instructions, and other data contained in the Bill, as well as the information in the brochure distributed at the time. I may say that the House was put upon its honour in this matter, though to say so might seem to be a trifling exaggeration.

At this point, I should like to ask the Minister whether he is impressed with the great need for all possible urgency with respect to the continuance of this scheme. Incidentally, I could quote the opinion of a friend of the Minister's, the late Mr. Ben Chifley. He, I recall, very readily agreed to advance 50 per cent. of the finance for the scheme. The point I wish to make plain to the Minister is that, when I last saw Mr. Chifley in Canberra, he said that the scheme was a truly impressive one and he wished it a quick journey to its conclusion. That implies that he was one who wanted to get the job done quickly.

A year or more ago the present Premier had a talk with Mr. Butler, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who, according to what

we read in the Press, expressed deep interest in the comprehensive water scheme and told the Premier that he felt a keen interest in it. He added that it was the type of scheme that the Government of the Old Country was anxious to help. I want to impress on the Minister the need still to endeavour to find a way to speed up this work.

The best method I can think of is to finalise the first section of the scheme in one year instead of two. If one year were feasible in 1950 it should be so in 1955. It cannot be that the difficulties have increased greatly since then. I am of the opinion, which I think the Minister shares, that the position in regard to steel is improving and I hope the suggestion I have put forward will be regarded as a reasonable and proper one. There is much more appropriate matter that one could deal with, but I have informed the Minister of the general position and am hopeful that he will take action along the lines I have suggested and thus lessen the misery of a deeply troubled people.

**HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [10.18]:** I feel at this stage that I should support in rather more general terms the point of view expressed by the member for Narrogin. I would say at the outset that no part of my electoral district is now concerned with the time when or the circumstances in which the pipeline from the comprehensive water scheme at Wellington Dam reaches Narrogin or Katanning, because any arrangements that were contemplated in that direction have been entirely cancelled and other arrangements made to the satisfaction of the local authorities concerned. I therefore feel quite free—as a disinterested party as far as this work is concerned—to express my views on this subject.

Before doing so, I wish to record my appreciation of the efforts of the Minister and the officers of his department in handling, in recent months, the matter to which I have just referred. The position of the towns to be served by the comprehensive water scheme, and particularly those referred to by the member for Narrogin, is becoming more pitiable every year. For some reason the local water supplies at those centres were never adequate and in view of the increasing populations and, this year, the diminishing rainfall, they are becoming more inadequate than ever.

However, I suggest, that even if the rainfall had been sufficient to fill the reservoirs existing at those centres—ignoring for the moment the difficulties at Pingelly, which are dissociated from the quantity of water—there would have been nothing like the supply available which the metropolitan area appears to expect as its proper due. Do not imagine that I am trying to put the metropolitan area in the same position as the places I have mentioned.

To the contrary, I realise the enormous benefits to be gained, both individually and collectively, from a satisfactory water supply.

I know also that the position of the metropolitan area and its development, and the requirements of health and sanitation, render the use of a much greater quantity of water essential there, but there seems to have grown up a situation in which the citizens of one portion of the State cannot be submitted to even a temporary restriction of being able to use their sprinklers for only four hours per day, for example, while another section of the community can be reduced to a position, over a period of years—with regard to Katanning which I once represented I should say nearly 30 years—where the people are extremely lucky if they are able to use a sprinkler for any time on any day in any year.

While I heartily agree that the best possible provision that can be made for the metropolitan area in regard to water—as a present resident in the metropolitan area I fully appreciate the situation—should be made, I say it is vitally necessary that we take the quickest possible steps to improve the situation in these other places, even if for a short time we have to continue some minor restrictions in this great centre of population. Looking around at my fellow citizens of the metropolitan area, I feel certain that if they knew, as we know, the situation that exists in these major rural centres they would at least in the majority of instances refrain from even beginning to protest against these minor restrictions being imposed from time to time unless and until the situation of those other places had been brought to somewhere near what they themselves were experiencing.

Those feelings have been simmering in my mind for some time and were brought to a head tonight by the remarks of the Minister concerning the possible new developments in the Serpentine area. I was aware that that was the next place that metropolitan water supplies would be likely to come from, and I know that in order to maintain the average daily per capita consumption in the metropolitan area at something like 150 gallons per head per day—and probably up to 185 gallons at times—it will be necessary, with the increasing population, to undertake this work fairly promptly.

But I do not believe that the majority of metropolitan residents would expect it to be done, as long as they could get a reasonable supply with only minor restrictions, if they knew that not only are the citizens of the major country centres now reduced to six or 10 gallons per head per day—and shortly in all probability nothing per head per day, and that in most cases the water they do get is inferior through discolouration and so on to that generally

supplied in the metropolitan district—but also that such a position will continue until it is remedied.

I believe that if the position were put to metropolitan residents, they would be generous enough to say to the Government, "Use at least some of your funds in the quicker completion of this very necessary work." I feel that the suggestion made by the member for Narrogin, if it be practicable, should be put into operation. There are probably two reasons why it would be difficult; one being the difficulty of obtaining supplies of steel—as the member for Narrogin said, if that was the position he and those associated with him in the matter would have to face it—and the other doubtless being the supply of funds.

We know that, with some justification, shortage of funds is frequently referred to in this Chamber and yet I feel that, bearing in mind the position that I have just set out—the desperate position of the people in those areas—money might have been found with which to progress a little more rapidly with that work. Do not let members who have not heard debates on this subject in the past, but who are now in the House, get away with the idea that the present position is the product of low rainfall in the last two years.

In 1937 I moved for a select committee to inquire into the question of water supplies and told the House that of the 19 years that the Katanning reservoir had been in operation it had had no water in it on six occasions on the 31st December, and that position, more or less and from time to time, still persists. The situation has been improved to some degree by heavy expenditure in past years on a bitumen catchment, but even then the heavy rainfall of that district would not suffice to fill the reservoir and maintain supplies for a population which in the meantime has nearly quadrupled, and so at present more and not less water is required.

If there are terrifically heavy rains there, they not only fill the reservoir, but the earth catchment surrounding it also brings in more water and the agricultural area is nearly submerged. Even then the supply is not adequate in a normal year and the reservoir is not more than half full—on six occasions I have seen it with no water in it at the end of December or early January—and so this is a problem of long standing. When I moved for the select committee in 1936 or 1937 the Minister of the day assured me that steps would be taken as early as possible to improve the position, but the war intervened and so we have gone on.

However, I feel that more money might have been diverted from other channels where it has been used, because I have been studying the Auditor General's report and I find that for the year ended the 30th June, 1954, a sum of £590,000 was made available to the Rural & Industries Bank

from loan funds for capital. In the normal way I would not offer the slightest objection to that sum being made available to the bank in order to increase its capital from loan funds in a period of 12 months, provided I was satisfied that the money was being used for the general development of the State and for the maintenance and expansion of agriculture and industry generally.

But I find, from the same Auditor General's report, that no less a sum than £538,000 was advanced to one concern by the Rural & Industries Bank in the course of that year. Obviously, therefore—and I say "obviously" because that is the way it seems to me—the money was provided to the Rural & Industries Bank in order that it might make the advance to this one institution. That institution is already heavily indebted to the State, and its indebtedness has increased by a further £538,000 in the 12 months up to 30th June, 1954; roughly the first 12 months that the present Government was in office.

During the 12 months prior to that, the indebtedness of this institution increased by a matter of only £44,000. If that had been the position for the year ended the 30th June, 1954, I would say nothing about it. An extra advance of £44,000 to a concern of that nature could have been regarded as normal and an advance of £50,000 for the Rural & Industries Bank would have covered it without the bank having to draw upon its normal resources. However, in this case we find that an advance of £590,000 was made to the bank and the indebtedness of this institution, organisation, or company increased, during the same period, by £538,000.

If a brake had been placed upon the tremendous advance to this institution, a sum of £400,000 or £500,000 could have been made available for the expansion of public works. Is it more important that these funds should be made available to this institution or should they be used for the provision of a comprehensive water supply scheme or some other public works which have been the subject of complaint, and justifiable complaint, deputation and argument for the last 20 years and which today are far in arrears of the original programme? The reason given for not continuing the work is always a shortage of funds.

Mr. Lawrence: To what institution do you refer?

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Chamberlain Industries Ltd., since the hon. member must know. In the circumstances, I do not think the Government is justified in saying to the public that it has been short of funds over the last 12 months, especially in view of the position disclosed in the report. As I have said, the indebtedness of this company increased by £538,000 for the year ended the 30th June, 1954, as against a sum of £44,000 for the previous

year. A sum of £590,000 was advanced from loan funds to the Rural & Industries Bank, and obviously seven-eighths of it went in the one advance. It is gone; it is finished; it is done with.

The position cannot be reversed and I am not suggesting that any spectacular steps should be taken to try to remedy what has happened. But I express the hope that the same procedure will not be repeated in the current financial year, because if it is it will obviously postpone the carrying out of these important major works.

I have made reference only to a fractional part of the scheme to which the member for Narrogin alluded. I appreciate that many other places are associated and form a part of this comprehensive scheme and today are in a similar position. I hope that something will be done to speed up this work and if restraining advances to the bank for such purposes as I have indicated will help, I hope that that restraint will be applied.

**MR. BOVELL (Vasse)** [10.37]: The main subject discussed this evening has been water supplies and earlier in the session a statement was made about a request from the Premier for me to make certain inquiries in regard to underground water supplies and the conservation of water in the Union of South Africa. I have already told members that, following inquiries, I received a letter from the Under-Secretary for Mines in the Union of South Africa, who is responsible for the water supplies of that country, stating that he was investigating the position and would supply me with as much data as possible in due course.

Yesterday I received a reply from that gentleman, who is stationed in Pretoria, but as yet I have not had an opportunity to peruse his letter thoroughly. Africa, like Australia, is a continent of vast distances and it experiences the same difficulties in regard to its water supplies. It has limited sources of supplies of natural water. As soon as possible I shall supply the Government with the information I have received and I trust that some notice will be taken of it. It took considerable effort on my part to obtain it, and I must say that the Government of the Union of South Africa co-operated in securing all the information possible in the hope that it would be of advantage to Western Australia.

While the main theme of the debate has been water supplies and the need to develop the drier areas of Western Australia, I think I am in order in referring to the Main Roads Department and, in particular, a bridge on the main highway which connects the Warren and Blackwood electorates with the Perth-Bunbury Road. On a number of occasions

I have asked questions regarding the building of a foot-bridge across the Preston River at Boyanup.

The present bridge is in such a poor state of repair that it is dangerous to children and I trust the Minister will give consideration to the building of a new bridge at Boyanup. We want something similar to the bridge at Pinjarra and then when the new bridge is constructed, a foot bridge should be built. I have discussed the matter with the Commissioner of Main Roads, and he has been most helpful and co-operative. I trust that the Minister will use his utmost endeavours to see that this bridge, over which a great amount of traffic passes, is renewed completely in the near future.

I would also like to discuss the irrigation of the Capel-Boyanup area. The Minister has received a number of communications from me on this subject and he has stated in this Chamber that certain funds have been made available for the survey of the area concerned. I hope the survey will be completed as soon as possible and that an extension of the irrigation scheme to the Capel-Boyanup area will be implemented without delay. This area is suitable for irrigation and it will considerably assist the primary industries. It is an area which has an assured rainfall and therefore the land can be utilised to much greater advantage than it is today.

I ask the Minister to give consideration to the matters I have raised particularly the rebuilding of the bridge at Boyanup. When I have had an opportunity to peruse the information from the Government of the Union of South Africa, I shall advise the Government and I hope that it will take due notice of the experiences of that country.

**MR. WILD (Dale)** [10.44]: I want to draw the Minister's attention to two festering sores that have been troubling my electorate for some considerable time. I have drawn his attention to them over the past two years and, firstly, I wish to refer to the attitude of the State Electricity Commission in regard to extensions. The Minister told us this evening—

The **CHAIRMAN**: I would draw the hon. member's attention to the fact that he cannot discuss the State Electricity Commission on this vote. Provision is made in the Loan Estimates for a discussion on that department but under the vote "Public Works and Buildings" there is nothing dealing with electricity supplies. The hon. member had an opportunity last evening when we were discussing the "Treasury: Miscellaneous" items, but that opportunity has gone. The member for Dale will have a chance to discuss the commission on the General Loan Estimates. I admit the Leader of the Opposition put a question to the Minister eliciting some information and I should have

stopped the Minister immediately, but I did not wish to interrupt. Electricity supplies cannot be discussed on this vote.

**Mr. WILD:** Very well, Mr. Chairman. The other matter I wish to refer to is the attitude of the Water Supply Department when people apply for water extensions. There is one subdivision that has had great difficulty in getting water supplies. It is an area of ten acres, just this side of the Narrogin Inn, Armadale, and a subdivision was made about 12 months ago. This area is on the Albany Highway on the same side as the water main, and the Town Planning Commissioner, as we know, will not approve of a subdivision unless water and electricity are available. On that assumption, a subdivision is made, and people buy land and commence to put up houses.

I have forwarded three different applications to the Minister in relation to that subdivision. Members should bear in mind that it is only a 10-acre subdivision. It is on the main highway and of the five houses in course of erection only one, which is on the main road, has water. Of the other four at the back, one has not made representations to me yet, but in the case of the others each time they have done so the Water Supply Department has said it is not an economic proposition and water cannot be connected.

Today people are told to decentralise and do something for themselves. But what happens when a man goes 19 miles from the metropolitan area and establishes himself three or four chains off the main road where the main pipeline from Canning to Perth runs? He is told it is an uneconomic proposition to connect the water to his property. We know that, as members of Parliament, we are responsible to our electors. We find, however, that an individual goes into the department and makes representations, but gets nowhere. He then asks us to take up the cudgels on his behalf, and we finish up by achieving some result.

Why should the department change its policy because a member of Parliament makes the representation? I know there are a number of proposals which people put up that cannot be undertaken, but in cases where a person purchases land knowing that a subdivision is only granted because the necessary services will be there, he should not be told when he approaches the department that nothing can be done and that it is uneconomic. When he gets on to his member, however, somebody in the department changes his mind and ultimately some results are achieved. It causes a good deal of inconvenience and delay. A man may have a builder on the job, and he cannot afford to be held up. One man I know of had a builder who was prepared to start straight away if water was laid on by the end of the month.

The owner could not get the water and he lost the services of the builder. He is now trying to do the job himself and is carting water by bucket from a distance of three or four chains away. The department still contends it is an uneconomic proposition. It seems to me there is something wrong. We all know that any Government would try to encourage people to do something for themselves, and it is not right when a young fellow strikes out for himself that he should be told that nothing can be done for him. It is little wonder that these people decide to build in Perth where services are available and where they will not have any bother.

**Mr. Lawrence:** I thought your argument was that they could not get water.

**Mr. WILD:** I would like to know what the Minister has to say on the attitude adopted by his department.

**MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [10.50]:** I did wish to have a few words to say on electricity but apparently I would be out of order. I would like to address a few words to the Minister on main roads. We were pleased to know, from what the Minister said, that Western Australia's quota for main roads had not been reduced but considerably increased. There is great scope in this State for using the main roads grant to improve our main roads generally, and replace the surface of our roads. It is an accepted fact that it pays to put down a black road only when there is a certain density of traffic.

Some regard must be paid to roads, particularly in the wetter areas where, because of the incidence of heavy rainfall during five or six months of the year, they are likely to be washed out, and where during the five or six dry months they are likely to be powdered and blown away. It is true that the initial cost is heavy. As the Minister said, it is necessary to resurface roads every 15 years or more. I would point out to the Minister that in the case of gravel roads and their maintenance, not only is the initial cost considerable but also maintenance is very heavy.

Under normal traffic, the surface of a gravel road is worn away after five or six years and it is necessary to topdress it again. I venture to say that in the 15 years suggested by the Minister in which it is necessary to resurface a black road, it would probably be necessary to resurface a gravel road three times, and to run a grader over it four or five times during the year. If it were possible to construct a road and surface it without delay, it would give a better surface and be cheaper in the long run.

This year the Main Roads Department has assisted many road boards under a contributory scheme, and I for one was



pleased to see the department apply this system more extensively. Those who are willing to help themselves should get some assistance from outside. If a board could raise money for road construction, whether from revenue or loan, and the Main Roads Department could subsidise it on a £ for £ basis, it would be a bigger inducement for local governing bodies to improve their roads. This would be of great benefit to the State generally and to everyone using the roads.

There are two sections of road that have caused great concern in my own locality. One is the Greenmount hill section of the Great Eastern Highway. The Main Roads Department has undertaken a programme of generally widening the Great Eastern Highway. It undertook last year to widen the section from Midland Junction to Bellevue, and this year it has undertaken a programme of widening from the top of the hill as far as the other side of Mundaring. That wider road is giving good service and making traffic easier and less dangerous. Possibly because of the heavier costs involved, the whole section through Greenmount and to the lower part of Glen Forest has not yet been widened.

This would appear to be a most dangerous section, particularly now that a heavier strain is thrown on it because of bus transport due to the closure of the Mundaring branch of the railway. Admittedly, we have not the very heavy traffic caused by wheat and super carting, but the number of motor-vehicles as well as passenger buses has greatly increased. On the hill section there are quite a number of bus stops where it is impossible for a bus to pull off the bitumen, and accordingly where the bus does stop to pick up or put down passengers, the useful width of the road is reduced by 50 per cent., which means that, should any vehicle that is coming down have faulty brakes, a very serious accident could result.

I would like to stress to the Minister the necessity for having the hill section widened. I asked a question as to when this work would be undertaken, and am pleased that work on the lower section—that is, up to the junction of the old York-rd., and the Great Eastern Highway at Greenmount—will be undertaken next year. The rehabilitation of that section should be undertaken and completed at the earliest possible moment. With reference to what is known as Lesmurdie Hill-rd., the Main Roads Department may not consider it a main road, but it is a main road so far as Darling Range area is concerned.

The department has been reconstructing that road in small stretches and, because of the difficulty in negotiating the steep hill, the work on that road ceased 18 months ago. During the intervening period, the department has made several

attempts to relocate the road. There apparently has been some controversy in the department as to whether the road should remain at its present location and be widened as much as possible, or whether the road through the hill section should be relocated to give an easier grade.

We were very heartened by the news, a month or two ago, that some £8,000 had been allocated for that section, and that plans had been prepared to go ahead in the present location of the road by cutting off an acute bend at the top and bottom of the hill and thus improving the situation greatly. At the last moment, the plans were apparently changed, and it is now proposed to relocate the road on the other side of the gully. In the meantime, the Darling Range Road Board has undertaken a considerable programme of reconstruction, and the board is still a little doubtful whether the road will connect where it wants to undertake work. Consequently, the local programme is to some extent held up by the delay in the construction of that whole section by the Main Roads Department. I would therefore press for a decision in the very near future so that work can go ahead.

Quite a lot has been said about the urgent need to progress with country water schemes in order that adequate supplies can be taken to the drier areas, particularly in the central wheatbelt and the Great Southern. I agree that all speed should be clapped on in order to have that work completed. But I would like to lodge a protest against work in the metropolitan area always being pushed in advance of requirements, so that there will be no water rationing there. I feel that the people in the metropolitan area could very well cut down on their water consumption. Many of them do not seem to appreciate the value of water at all. They have sprinklers going almost night and day; and it would be very nice indeed if the country areas could receive only a quarter of the 180 gallons of water per head per day which is consumed in the metropolitan area.

As the department is going ahead with the laying of the Mundaring Weir-Mt. Yokine 30-in. main, which it is expected will be in operation very shortly, I would like to stress the need of two districts in my electorate which have water supplies drawn from that main. I refer first of all to Helena Valley, which obtains its present meagre supplies from the old line which was known as the link between the metropolitan area and the Goldfields Water Supply scheme from Mundaring Weir. Unfortunately those pipes were put in many years ago. They are only 1½ inches in diameter, and quite a number of consumers are drawing off them. Though the consumers are paying water rates, they have difficulty in getting a good supply because the pipes are inadequate.

Approximately two years ago, when the 30-in. main was commenced, I submitted a plea on behalf of those consumers that they be connected with the new main when it was completed; and the Minister of the day said that consideration would be given to the matter. I hope the department will see its way clear to make those connections and, if possible, increase the size of the pipes serving the settlers in the Helena Valley area. That 30-inch main also traverses the Maida Vale area, where there is no reticulated supply. That area, in common with outer suburban districts, is progressing quite rapidly; but many of the workers who go to the Midland Junction, Welshpool or Belmont industrial areas dwell at Maida Vale and have difficulty in obtaining water supplies at all.

Just at the foothills, wells and bores have been put down to depths of over 100ft., and in quite a number of cases water has not been found even at that depth. The people are faced with great hardship in providing for their domestic needs. Rainwater tanks have been installed, but although the district enjoys quite a heavy rainfall—30 to 45 inches—it is difficult to provide adequate storage. As the main to which I have referred goes within a mile of the Maida Vale area, I trust that something will be done to provide a reticulation scheme from the 30-in. main to supply the Maida Vale area and the Bushmead and Hazelmere districts.

At this stage I would like to say how grateful we are to the Water Supply Department for proceeding with the Kalamunda scheme. It afforded the district great pleasure last Friday to know that the scheme had been officially opened, and that already 100 consumers were connected. With the amount of money provided on this year's Estimates, a considerable part of the township will be supplied with water. The first application for a scheme for Kalamunda was made in 1925, nearly 30 years ago. I hope that the townships in the wheatbelt will not have to wait as long as that before they obtain adequate water supplies.

I have quite a lot to say on electricity extensions; but as you, Mr. Chairman, have ruled discussion on that subject out of order, I will leave consideration of the matter until we come to the Loan Estimates.

**MR. PERKINS (Roe) [11.8]:** I listened carefully to what the Minister had to say in introducing the Estimates of his departments, and I could not help being struck by the anxiety he expressed concerning any possible hold-up in the supply of water to the metropolitan area. I agree that that is a proper anxiety to have. But one cannot help contrasting it with the attitude of the Government towards supplying water to many of our country districts. I do not hold the present Minister responsible alone;

it is something against which I have protested on previous occasions. There are numerous country towns throughout the State—unfortunately a number of them are in the area I represent—which have no reticulation at all. The only water supply which the homes in those areas have is what is caught from the roofs of the houses. I am referring to districts with a very much lower rainfall than that enjoyed by the metropolitan area of Perth.

For a considerable time, I have been urging the Government to do something about providing adequate water supplies to those centres. Once again I would like to protest against what I call the dual standard that exists within the State. We heard the Premier introducing another Bill a day or two ago and making reference to the concentration of population around the metropolitan area. Can we wonder at that? If people are given the choice of living under decent conditions in one part of the State, or under subnormal conditions in another part of the State, can we be surprised if they choose to live in an area where most amenities are provided?

**Mr. Lawrence:** Do you not think that there are any people in the metropolitan area living under subnormal conditions?

**Mr. PERKINS:** Not so far as water supplies are concerned, and we are discussing water supplies at present. A great deal more is done for people living within 30 miles of the G.P.O., Perth than for people living in most country centres.

**The Minister for Railways:** Nonsense! You are pretty comfortably off. You have a lot of amenities at your place.

**Mr. PERKINS:** The Minister is taking a very peculiar attitude. Surely he is not going to start discussing this question on a personal basis!

**Mr. Lawrence:** He should have added the North-West, too.

**Mr. PERKINS:** I have a great sympathy for the North-West as well. Surely one of the reasons for lack of population in the North-West is that the standard of living there is poorer than that applying in the more favoured areas of the State!

**Mr. Lawrence:** I disagree with you strongly.

**Mr. PERKINS:** Perhaps the hon. member does. If he will get up and advance some reasons and refute my argument, there will be much more point to his protest. I suggest that he come to Lake Grace with me. I will be very pleased if he will do so, and I invite any other members to follow suit and see for themselves the conditions under which people in that township are living. The Minister for Railways knows all about it, because he has been there. He knows that there is the greatest

difficulty in keeping even the hospital at Lake Grace functioning because of lack of water supplies. As a matter of fact, he must know that his department is transporting water to that centre in order to keep the hospital functioning.

The Minister for Railways: There is great difficulty in getting a meal there.

Mr. PERKINS: Perhaps that is connected with the lack of some of the other facilities I have referred to.

The Minister for Railways: No connection at all; uncharitable people!

Mr. PERKINS: I protest against this dual standard to which I have referred. It goes even further than that. The present Minister for Water Supplies is not altogether unsympathetic; and when I have taken deputations to him, he has tried to meet them halfway. But there are certain difficulties which I believe he could overcome if he exercised full imagination.

For instance, as part of the comprehensive scheme, the pipeline is being extended southwards from Merredin towards Kon-dinin. It has almost reached Narembeem. When the Bill relating to the scheme was introduced the boundary was delineated slightly to the east of that pipeline, and I was given to understand at the time, by officers of the Public Works Department, when I protested at where the line was drawn, that it was never intended to be a hard and fast line, and that a certain latitude could be exercised with regard to extensions outside the boundaries defined.

The area around Campthorne and Muntadgin—part of which is represented by myself and part by the Minister for Mines—is just outside the boundaries of the comprehensive scheme. But it is all within 12 miles of a 10-inch pipe line carrying a good supply of water. Yet, because it is not within the boundaries of the comprehensive water supply scheme, the department refuses to do anything; it will not go one foot outside the boundaries of the scheme. I know that any work done within the scheme is subsidised on a fifty-fifty basis by the Commonwealth Government, whereas any work done outside, until the Commonwealth agrees to an extension of the boundaries, will have to be paid for by the State Government. In my opinion, however, that is no good reason why this work should not be done now, if it can be carried out reasonably cheaply.

When all is said and done, if extensions of water supplies are carried out anywhere in the metropolitan area, the whole of the money is found from State sources. In my opinion a case can be made out for the extension, forthwith, of a scheme to serve consumers who are conveniently placed for such extensions. I maintain that if it is practicable to extend water supply schemes, the financial bar should not operate. A service comparable to what is provided in the metropolitan area should,

where practicable, be made available. I could not let the vote pass without voicing my protest at the treatment meted out to some country districts compared with what is received in the metropolitan area. In my opinion this is one reason why more people want to live in the metropolitan-suburban area than want to go into some of the outer country districts.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Education, £5,018,260—agreed to  
Progress reported.

## BILL—BUSH FIRES.

### *Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council and had appointed Hon. C. H. Henning, Hon. H. L. Roche, and the Minister for the North-West as managers for the Council, the Chief Secretary's room as the place of meeting and the time, 9.30 a.m. on Thursday, the 25th November.

## SUSPENSION OF SITTING.

Mr. SPEAKER: In view of the conference to be held tomorrow morning, I shall now suspend the sitting until the ringing of the Bells at approximately 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

*Sitting suspended from 11.20 to 2.15 p.m.  
(Thursday).*

THURSDAY, 25th NOVEMBER, 1954.

(Continuation of Wednesday's Sitting.)

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The SPEAKER resumed the Chair at 2.15 p.m.

## BILL—BUSH FIRES.

### *Conference Managers' Report.*

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I wish to inform members that the managers met in conference on the Bill and I submit the following report:—

Proposed amendment No. 2—Deleted.

Proposed amendment No. 6—Agreed to.

Proposed amendment No. 8—Agreed to.

Proposed amendment No. 9—Deleted and the following amendment substituted in lieu—

9. Delete the word "greater" in line 22.

Proposed amendment No. 10—Agreed to.

Proposed amendment No. 11—Agreed to.

Proposed amendment No. 12—Agreed to subject to the deleting from the amendment the words "or in such other manner either verbally."

Proposed amendment No. 13—Deleted.

Proposed amendment No. 17—Deleted and a new amendment No. 17 inserted as follows—

No. 17. Delete the word "fifty" in line 22, and substitute therefor the word "seventy-five."

Proposed amendments Nos. 19, 20 and 22—Agreed to.

With regard to Amendment No. 2 made by the Legislative Council, its desire was to insert in the Bill a provision to ensure the the bush fires board met every two months, whether there was any business to transact or not. After a full discussion, and an assurance that the board would meet possibly more frequently than that under the powers delegated to the chairman and other members—and possibly during the summer months it would meet frequently—the Legislative Council agreed not to press its amendment.

The next amendment of the Council was No. 6. It desired to insert after the word "writing" in line 22, page 13, the words "or as otherwise provided in paragraph (a) of section nineteen of this Act." This amendment has to be taken in conjunction with amendments 12 and 13 which were discussed at length in this House both on the second reading and during the Committee stages. After a discussion of the amendments it was agreed that amendment No. 6 be accepted.

Paragraph (a) of Section 19 of the Act provides the means by which notices to burn should be given to neighbours and includes almost every facility there is. But there is an insistence that it should be done personally and also in writing. After the words "personally" the Legislative Council desired to insert "or in such other manner either verbally or in writing as will ensure (except in the case mentioned in paragraph (c) of this section) that every owner occupier or other person is made aware of the intention to burn and the date and time thereof." Members will find that set out in amendment No. 12.

After due discussion it was agreed that we should strike out the words "in such other manner either verbally" so that it

will tie the question up and will ensure that a person will give notice both personally and in writing. In amendment No. 13 the Legislative Council desired to delete paragraph (b), but, as a result of the discussion, it was agreed that this amendment would not be insisted on. The only way to explain it is to take the three amendments as one. As has been the case ever since the original Act was passed, the word "writing" will still be in the legislation and, in addition, there will be the word "personally."

As regards Legislative Council's amendment No. 8 it desired to insert after the word "authority" in line 15 of Clause 18, the words, "if a bush fire control officer is not available." The Legislative Council felt that where a permit to burn is granted the person who should have the authority to issue the permit is the bush fire control officer and not the secretary of the local authority, as is laid down in the Bill. We agreed to accept that amendment.

In Clause 18 a paragraph lays down that at least 10ft. or such greater width as is specified in the permit issued under paragraph (c) shall apply at all times in regard to the boundaries of land which it is required to burn. The Council's amendment was to delete the words "of at least 10ft. or such greater width," which would mean that there would be no restrictions whatever. It would require the bush fire control officer to inspect every holding before a permit to burn was issued whereas today by retaining that 10ft. provision in the Act an officer need not give a permit to those persons who are personally acquainted with their neighbours in the area.

At the conference it was finally agreed that the words proposed to be struck out by the Council should remain but that the word "greater" should be deleted. It would then read, "to a width of at least 10ft. or such width as is specified in the permit." That will overcome the objection that was raised by members of this Chamber who were keen to protect the interests of the small farmer.

Amendment No. 10 had as its object the deletion of Subclause (5) on page 16. The question was whether expenses up to £100 should be collected in the event of a bush fire brigade turning out to assist people with fires and as a result incurring considerable expense. In spite of the arguments raised for the retention of this proposal, the Legislative Council was adamant and insisted on its amendment.

Mr. Nalder: Did the Council insist on deleting it or leaving it in?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: It insisted on its amendment and therefore this paragraph will be struck out of the Bill. Amendment No. 11 was consequential on No. 10 and refers to the deletion of the

words "other than Subsection (5)." However, as Subsection (5) will now be struck out, there is no need to retain any reference to it. As to amendment No. 12, I have already dealt with this in brief when speaking to a previous amendment which refers to giving notice personally.

Amendment No. 13 refers to Clause 19, page 16, and the Council sought to delete paragraph (b). The Legislative Council decided not to insist on this amendment because it considered that there was no necessity to strike out the reference contained in paragraph (b) after having made its decision on the previous amendment.

In connection with amendment No. 17 I may explain that it refers to the maximum acreage that should be allowed for the burning of clover. Members will recall that in the Bill the acreage was limited to 50 because it was felt that some control must be exercised over an area when a fire was deliberately lit. If there were no restriction, the fire could probably do tremendous damage if it got out of hand. The Council wanted to leave the question wide open. However, after discussion a compromise was reached and, instead of 50 acres being the limit, 75 acres will be inserted in lieu.

With regard to amendment No. 19, this refers to the insurance premiums that are to be paid for insuring fire fighters travelling to and from a fire. In the Act there is provision to insure these men on their way to the fire but no cover was provided for their return from it. The Council has insisted that the words "or from" should be inserted in order that sufficient cover can be given to a fire fighter whilst travelling to and from a fire. It has always been my principle, when dealing with workers' compensation legislation, to endeavour to obtain the insertion of a similar provision in that Act for workers generally. The principle is good and although its implementation in this legislation will create an additional burden on local authorities for the time being, nevertheless, the Council insisted on its amendment and the conference agreed to it.

Amendment No. 20 relates to Clause 37, page 36, and proposes to insert, after the word "brigade," the following proviso:—

Provided that the provisions of this paragraph shall not apply in respect of an injury sustained after the work of controlling or extinguishing a bush fire has been completed unless such injury occurs during the journey back to the place of employment, business or residence of the person concerned without any deviation or interruption thereof unconnected with work of extinguishing or controlling the bush fire.

The intention of the Council is that if a fire fighter breaks his journey from the scene of the outbreak to the picking up point and decides to have a drink, he will

not be covered by this insurance if he meets with an accident. Finally, the Legislative Council insisted on its amendment to Clause 40. It asks that the whole clause be deleted. The substance of this clause is that if a fire gets away from the area of one local authority to that of another, there ought to be some provision to enable some officer to be in control, irrespective of whether or not he belonged to the district in which the fire broke out, and he should have power under the Act to take charge until the officers of the district to which the fire has spread, arrived at the scene.

The Legislative Council insists on its amendment in the belief that it will be able to bring the local officers to the scene of a fire to take charge within a reasonable time. There appears to be some jealousy between districts on the matter of fire control. Personally, I think this amendment is unwise. I do not feel disposed to jeopardise a Bill of this description, which is the best bush fire Bill we have had, for the sake of being stubborn on this clause. Generally, there has been an attitude of give and take in the managers' conference and this has resulted in the improvement of the existing legislation. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

### *As to Notice Paper in Use.*

MR. SPEAKER: Before going on with the business of the day, in case there is a doubt as to what these proceedings are about, I would remind members that we are working on yesterday's notice paper, and theoretically we are still on the business appearing therein because the sitting was suspended last night. It is the intention of the Deputy Premier to move a special adjournment this afternoon, and when the House meets again, members will discuss the items appearing in today's notice paper.

## BILL—SOIL FERTILITY RESEARCH.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 23rd November.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [2.34]: This Bill is the outcome of negotiations between the Farmers' Union and the Minister, and is an endeavour to include legislation in the statute book to enable ¼d. a bushel to be deducted from wheat proceeds and paid into a fund to enable further experiments to be carried out on soil research and fertility. The move no doubt originated from a number of branches of the Farmers' Union in the country areas. This proposal should be encouraged, not only from the wheat producers' point of view, but from

that of everyone engaged in farming. It is the responsibility of each agriculturist to contribute in some way or other to the fund required for research into his particular form of agriculture, with the object of improving production and of eliminating crop failures. Every member realises there are many aspects of agriculture and there are many associated problems which the States of the Commonwealth have not been able to overcome.

Mr. May: We will not be able to make it rain.

Mr. NALDER: Even if we could get the rain when required, there would still be many problems. It is very encouraging to know that there is one section of the farmers in Western Australia that is alive to its responsibilities, not only for the present, but for future generations. I do not agree with some of the provisions. One is that the scheme will be voluntary. I think it should be obligatory on every farmer to contribute some amount to this fund, otherwise a percentage of the farmers will not contribute because they consider these matters the responsibility of the Government. Although the Minister said that every effort has been made, I suggest that further action should be taken to induce all farmers to come into the scheme.

Under the Pig Industry Compensation Fund, a certain amount is deducted from the sale of pigs and placed in a fund to be used for the interests of the pig producers. Perhaps the Minister can tell us if this is possible in the wheat industry. I wonder whether every avenue has been explored to find out if a compulsory fund can be inaugurated, irrespective of whether a farmer grows one bushel or one million bushels of wheat. Doubtless most farmers will accept their responsibilities and contribute to this fund and in years to come they will benefit from the research.

But there are those who will eventually benefit from it without having contributed anything. If there is any possibility of overcoming this loophole in the legislation, an attempt should be made to do so. I would suggest that the Farmers' Union could possibly have carried out such a scheme without having to approach the Government for assistance. One method would be to deduct an amount from the subscriptions of all members of the Farmers' Union, and place it in a fund to assist research along the lines suggested by the Bill. That would cover a far greater portion of the State because each agriculturist, whether engaged in the production of wheat, wool, dairy products, tobacco or poultry, must be interested in such a scheme. Yet, as I have pointed out, there will be a section who will evade their responsibility in this direction. My suggestion may not be acceptable to the Farmers' Union. I have not been able to

contact the president or one of the vice-presidents to find out, but I have offered the suggestion in the hope that a better scheme that will produce more finance may be evolved.

Another point worthy of consideration is that, if we have a voluntary scheme, we shall find that possibly in the coming year the contributions might total, say, £20,000 or £25,000. If next season proves to be worse than the present one, with prices not as good, farmers will not be very happy about contributing any sum to the fund, and the total might drop to £5,000 or £10,000. Then what would be the position? If members of the trust decided to donate £20,000 in the first year and, on the strength of that, a number of officers were engaged to undertake research work, an embarrassing position might occur in two or three years' time through insufficiency of funds to pay the salaries of the research officers, let alone carry on important research and purchase the necessary implements or instruments that may be required.

Without doubt, the Minister is very enthusiastic about this scheme, and probably that applies to the Premier and the Deputy Premier also, because it represents an opportunity to bolster up the funds needed for some of the work that the Government itself should undertake. I should like to know how much money is being provided by the Government for research work at present. Is the Government facing up to its responsibilities by endeavouring in every way to carry out this research work, which is the responsibility of the Government of any State?

We in Western Australia are so dependent upon agriculture to produce the wealth of the State that every effort should be exerted to increase production and all possible steps taken to ensure that neither effort nor money is wasted in the work of procuring the maximum production from every acre of cultivable land. This, of course, depends upon the fertility of the soil. We cannot continue year after year taking out of the soil and putting nothing back. We have to build up the fertility in order to increase production, and only by so doing shall we obtain the wealth so much needed to feed the people not only in this State but also in other parts of the world.

I intend to support the second reading of the Bill with the object of giving the scheme a trial to see what it can do, but I hope that in future we shall be able to adopt a compulsory scheme under which every farmer will contribute to the research work that is so much needed.

Mr. May: Would you include poultry farmers?

Mr. NALDER: Yes, because they are dependent upon the wheat farmer to supply poultry feed. I would include those engaged in all forms of agriculture, because of the importance of the matter.

**MR. BOVELL** (Vasse) [2.45]: I support the second reading, and in doing so, I point out that session after session we have measures introduced to impose a charge on the product of the farmer. While the Bill, which has quite a worthy object, is being supported by the Farmers' Union, the Government of the day must accept its responsibility to the primary industries. Producers are being called upon to pay numerous taxes in one form or other. There are drainage rates and irrigation rates; there are charges on the pig producer and the wheat producer, and now we have this charge to further soil fertility research. One could give almost countless examples of the charges that the producer is being called upon to bear.

**Mr. May:** You would regard irrigation as an asset.

**Mr. BOVELL:** Of course it is, but we must bear in mind that we are largely dependent upon our ability to market our primary products overseas, and looking at the markets of the world at present, we find that practically every form of primary produce is in the balance as regards remunerative prices. We are told that there is a world surplus of wheat equal to one year's production; the price of wool has deteriorated 25 to 30 per cent. in one year, and the problem of disposing of our surplus dairy products overseas is causing concern to those engaged in the industry.

**Mr. Nalder:** And the recession in the price of pigs.

**Mr. BOVELL:** Yes, and so one could go on enumerating various lines. There is a limit to the resources of the primary producer to contribute in the form of dues of one sort or another. The drop in the prices for our primary products overseas is not encouraging, and if they continue to fall, many producers will have to go out of business because the burden of charges will become unbearable. While I support the measure, I ask members to realise that there is only one source from which all these charges can come and that is from the proceeds of the commodity that is being produced. We cannot continue indefinitely to levy such charges on the producer.

The member for Katanning stated that the economic welfare of the State depended upon primary industries. That applies to the whole of Australia. If our income from wool, wheat, dairy produce, canned fruits and so on, were to be halved, we could not maintain our present standard of living, which is second to none in the world. We are able to enjoy this standard of living simply because of the products that come from the soil. I trust that we will give serious attention to relieving the producer of charges in the future and will not impose further financial responsibilities on those who are bearing the burden of our economic stability.

**MR. PERKINS** (Roe) [2.51]: This is a necessary measure because the Department of Agriculture is unable to do the work which is being undertaken by the Institute of Agriculture at the University of Western Australia. Unfortunately, because of the lack of funds and the resulting lack of equipment and personnel in the Department of Agriculture, the department is unable to do the work which is carried out by similar departments in the other States. Fortunately other funds have been available in Western Australia to further some of this research work.

Some time ago certain branches of the Farmers' Union in the wheat belt suggested to the Co-operative Wheat Pool of Western Australia that it use some of its funds to help the Institute of Agriculture to carry out this type of research work. It is a good thing that such a valuable organisation has been built up at the university. I strongly recommend any members who have not inspected the work being done there to make a point of doing so. They will be welcomed by the officers there. If they make contact with Professor Underwood I am sure that every effort will be made to show them the work that is being carried out.

The reason for this particular branch of research work is rather a twofold one. It deals with the question of soil fertility, particularly in the wheat belt. Therefore, it is appropriate that the wheat industry should bear a major portion of the cost—that is, if the Government is not able to do the job. In the past, as both the member for Katanning and the member for Vasse have stated, it has been the practice for the Department of Agriculture to see that the agricultural industry was kept on a sound technical basis; or at least to attempt to do so. Because that department has not the resources to do this work, it is necessary for someone else to step into the breach.

Most of the Western Australian soils are of a lower natural fertility than the agricultural soils in the other mainland States; and compared with some, they are very much lower. Therefore there is a greater danger by continued cropping, of seriously depleting the natural fertility. We have evidence of that in the wheat belt. The immediate objective of the Institute of Agriculture is to develop a suitable legume for the lower rainfall areas of the wheat belt which will assist in building up the soil fertility in much the same way as subterranean clover does in the higher rainfall areas.

Already a fair measure of success has been achieved. Certainly the officers at the Institute of Agriculture are confident that they are on the right track, and that the time is not far distant when a legume will be developed which will not only improve the fertility of our wheat belt soils,

but will give a better balance to agriculture in the wheatgrowing areas. I have no doubt that because of the fact that most of our wheat belt has been developed in comparatively recent times—as one judges time in a matter such as this—there has been an undue concentration on grain growing.

But with the improved prices in recent years for wool and meat, there has been a tendency to change from wheatgrowing to stock raising, to some extent at least. To give the proper balance of pastures in the wheat belt areas, it is desirable that a legume, which is not only suitable for pastures but is also a factor in restoring or improving soil fertility, should be developed.

Another point that enters into the question is that there does seem to be definite evidence that the baking qualities of our wheats have been deteriorating. It has been said that the reason for this deterioration is that we have been cropping our soils with grain too frequently, and that the consequent decline of natural fertility has had this effect on our wheats. If we can give a better balance to agriculture in our wheat belt, and are able to improve the soil fertility, it is hoped that there will also be a considerable improvement in the baking quality of our wheats.

Not much imagination is needed to visualise that if we grow a wheat which will produce flour of a high baking quality we shall have, in difficult marketing times, a product that will be much easier to sell than a wheat which needs stronger wheats added to it in order that a satisfactory flour may be milled. The objective, therefore, is an important one. Although no sections of the primary producers particularly like amounts deducted from their proceeds in order to finance research, I think that practically all producers would prefer that that be done rather than not have the work carried out at all. I am afraid the latter will be the position unless this measure is passed.

The member for Katanning suggested that the Farmers' Union might canvass the farmers to obtain funds by voluntary giving, or perhaps deduct something from the subscriptions received by the organisation in order to finance this work. I doubt, however, whether that would be practicable. I understand from the Farmers' Union that it needs all the funds derived from the present subscriptions to finance its own work, and that if it were to make money available for research work, it would be necessary for the subscriptions to be increased somewhat. Perhaps we could follow the suggestion of canvassing the growers for voluntary donations but I am afraid that under any such scheme those who would be most likely to contribute are the most public-spirited citizens in the community and they are the very ones who in all

probability are contributing to many other voluntary efforts, not only in relation to their own districts but also to State-wide projects.

As a matter of fact, some effort was made along those lines and I was associated with one of the officers made available by the co-operative wheat pool to canvass portion of the eastern areas. While he did have some successes and some large donations were made—I think as much as £75 or £100 by individual farmers—on the other hand the spread of the donations over the farming community was very small indeed. That entirely bears out the point I have made, namely, that any voluntary scheme which depended on the farmers being canvassed in order to get their signatures and to induce them to put money into something, would not result in a very good spread over the farming community.

It is possible that there would be a considerable number of farmers who would not contribute to the scheme with which we are dealing, but I understand that the warrant being prepared by the Australian Wheat Board in Western Australia—for the information of members generally, that is the document which the grower receives from the bulk handling organisation, indicating that he is entitled to so many bushels of wheat—has been altered as compared with the warrants issued in the past either here or in the other States, to contain a clause which specifically provides that up to 1d. per bushel may be deducted from the proceeds by the board and paid into this research fund. If the grower just signed the warrant, that would indicate his agreement to that particular clause.

Mr. May: He must sign the warrant in any case.

Mr. PERKINS: Yes, but provision is made for him to strike out that clause if he does not want to contribute. If he does not wish to contribute, he will have to take positive action and strike that clause out of the warrant. Therefore, there is reason to hope that there will be a bigger proportion of farmers contributing under this scheme than there would be under any scheme that could be visualised which required the farmers to be canvassed for their signatures in order to obtain either their cheques or documents authorising a deduction to be made from moneys due to them. On all those counts, I am afraid this is the best we can do. I believe the principle in this Bill is not a particularly good one, in that the growers themselves are being asked to do something which in other States is being done by the Departments of Agriculture.

The Minister for Agriculture: You are not quite right there. We are not asking the growers to do anything. They asked us to make these arrangements.



Mr. PERKINS: They have to do this research work because the department is not doing it and has not the resources to do it.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do not accuse the Government of going to the Farmers' Union and saying, "Come into this or else", because we did not do that.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister misunderstands me entirely. The point at issue is that this research work was started because the Department of Agriculture was doing nothing material along these lines. I do not blame the officers of the department to the tiniest degree and I have the greatest respect for their energy and ability and believe they are doing a marvellous job so far as the material resources and the number of technical officers available are concerned. But the point—it is impossible to escape it, although the present Minister is not particularly to blame—is that for a considerable time various Governments have been starving the Department of Agriculture.

I believe there should have been a great deal more money allocated to it so that it would have been able to do some of this work which—it having been unable to do what was necessary—is now being undertaken in a department of the university. I do not think it is wrong for the work to be done at that institution and I feel that the set-up in this State is a very good one because it is appropriate that research of this kind should be done at the university. But it is obvious that if we were to suggest that the Government should allot funds to cover this work by the Institute of Agriculture, there would be grave danger that the Department of Agriculture might be further starved for funds.

If the department has any funds to spare, I think it will be agreed that there is a great deal of expansion and work that can be undertaken in the Department of Agriculture. I think I can state definitely that this proposition has the approval of the wheatgrowing industry, but I regret the necessity for it, inasmuch as the Department of Agriculture has not been able to do this work in the past. The amount of money which it is hoped to raise under this scheme may be perhaps £25,000 or £30,000 and that will be little enough compared with the amount of work that can be done at the institute. I suggest to members—no matter whether they represent agricultural, goldfields or industrial areas—that if they can spare the time to make contact with Dr. Underwood at the Institute of Agriculture, I feel certain he will be only too pleased to show them what is being done and I am sure that, having seen the work that is in progress, members, and particularly those who represent agricultural areas, will have further reason for supporting the plea that more generous treatment should be

meted out to that section of the university and also to the Department of Agriculture. I support the second reading.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [3.9]: I do not think it can be expected that any member representing the South-West would oppose a measure of this nature although it raises some interesting points in regard to the principle of farmers having legislative provision made for them to contribute to the cost of research, because that perhaps is a new idea as far as this Parliament is concerned. I do not say that I disagree with it and in view of the fact that the legislation affects only the wheat farmers, it would be presumptuous for me to express an opinion as to what the reaction of the wheat-farming community might be.

Some rather interesting points have been brought out in this debate and I listened with attention to the speech of the member for Katanning, because he suggested that the question of soil fertility affects a good many farmers. In fact, it affects agriculturists generally, and not wheat farmers alone. That is a sentiment with which I heartily agree.

During his speech the member for Vasse expressed some qualification regarding the wisdom of putting a further impost on farmers. I think most of us will probably agree with that sentiment, but it might be just as well for those who represent South-West electorates to bear in mind that valuable work is being undertaken at the Institute of Agriculture. As a matter of fact, in certain aspects of research, it is considered a world authority.

If any South-West member has visited the institute he must have been struck by the fact that very little of the work being done has direct application to the South-West. If one inquires as to the reason, one will find that a great deal of the work has been partially financed by the people in the drier areas, and consequently the activities of the institute are directed more towards the solving of their problems than to solving the problems which have direct application to the South-West.

Should members in this House who represent the heavier-rainfall areas continue to take the view that the farming community should not be asked to bear any of this cost, they must expect that the work of the institute will continue along its present lines and will not have any direct relation to problems confronting the South-West. I think that is a bad state of affairs and I agree with the member for Katanning when he says that this question of support for the institute is one that affects all sections of the farming community and they should all be willing to contribute and be anxious to participate in the advantages that may result from the basic research that is carried out at the institute. I am not quite so ready to

deplore the idea of farmers having to make a contribution as I am to express regret that more farmers are not giving the institute greater practical and perhaps direct support.

A position that is arising in the South-West is not entirely the fault of the farming community in that area. There appears to be some arrangement or agreement about the spheres of activity of the C.S.I.R.O. and the Department of Agriculture and at times the Institute of Agriculture is much more closely allied with the C.S.I.R.O. than it is with the department. The South-West seems to be largely the responsibility of the department, and to that end I am concerned, for the same reasons as the member for Roe—and I do not cast any reflections on the officers of the Department of Agriculture because what is now happening is the result of the treatment received from successive Governments over many years—that the department, by the very nature of its duties, which are administrative rather than research, cannot make the contribution to agricultural research that is required in the South-West or in the whole of the State. In many cases this research is absolutely necessary.

I have observed among the farming community something in the nature of a paradox in their approach to the question of scientific research. When times are good and prices are high, many farmers are not concerned about new and better methods because they are doing well by using existing methods. But when prices tend to drop, they take much more interest in scientific research. While most thinking members realise that export prices for our agricultural commodities are dropping, it may be argued that that is a time when farmers generally would have less chance of making a contribution towards scientific research. By the same token, I believe that the reduction in their incomes may stimulate an even greater interest in research and for that reason farmers may be willing to consider some form of contribution to enable the work of the institute to be continued and expanded.

Mr. Nalder: Voluntarily?

Mr. HEARMAN: Either voluntarily or compulsorily; I think it would be preferable to have voluntary contributions. That may sound like a contradiction, but I think such a system would work. The fact that it is necessary to introduce a Bill of this nature in order to assist the Institute of Agriculture underlines the shortcomings of our existing set-up, which are particularly manifest when considering the South-West. There is another reason why farmers in the drier areas have contributed to the institute. It may well be that the institute has more interest in those areas because its scientific problems are more challenging.

Notwithstanding that, I would like to see the activities of the institute expanded to cover the research requirements of the heavier-rainfall areas and this Bill institutes something of a principle inasmuch as it suggests that if farmers want the work done, they had better contribute towards it. As far as farmers of the South-West are concerned, I think it would be a good thing if the Minister, in replying to the debate, qualified some of the points I raised about the arrangement between the C.S.I.R.O., the Institute of Agriculture and the Department of Agriculture and indicated to what extent the department feels that it can adequately cope with the research problems that present themselves in the heavier-rainfall areas.

MR. OWEN (Darling Range) [3.20]: In a way, this Bill is supplementary to the Wheat Stabilisation Bill inasmuch as it proposes to constitute a committee to administer a fund which will be built up from voluntary levies made under the wheat scheme. The levy must be voluntary because under the Constitution it is not possible to make it compulsory, which is rather a pity because, after all is said and done, the question of soil fertility concerns the whole of our primary producers. If it is to be restricted to the wheat farmer, it should concern all of them, and I think, therefore, it is a shame that they are not all included. This scheme to build up a fund is not new because it has been practised in two or three other primary industries for a number of years. The fruit-growing industry has what is called the Fruit Growing Industry Trust Fund which is used for the betterment of the industry and part of the money collected under the scheme is made available for research work.

Mr. Nalder: Who administers the fund?

Mr. OWEN: That scheme is administered by the committee of the Fruit Growing Industry Trust Fund and for many years I was a member of it. Grants are made in certain cases for research work which has been conducted by the State Department of Agriculture. As the member for Roe has said, it is not possible for the department to undertake all the research work that is required in this State. It has not the finance available and further it has not the equipment that is necessary. Therefore, this Bill proposes to set up a committee to administer a fund, the money for which will be collected under the wheat stabilisation legislation.

I understand that this measure has been requested by the Farmers' Union because it realises that there is greater need for research to improve our soil fertility. Many members will recall that ever since I have been a member of Parliament, I

have pressed for more agricultural research work. I regard soil fertility and soil conservation as being closely allied. We have a soil conservation branch in the Department of Agriculture and it is performing excellent work. Some of its activity is directed towards soil fertility research. However, this particular fund would seem to be directed more towards soil fertility research in the wheatgrowing areas.

The cultural method of wheatgrowing has changed considerably in the last 40 years, and I would say that wheatgrowing in Western Australia, on a large scale, has been in existence for only 40 or 50 years. In the early days it was the custom to clear the land, plant a crop of wheat, burn the stubble and plant a crop again the next year because there was insufficient cleared land and there was not enough water to run stock in conjunction with wheatgrowing. But as the areas were enlarged, it was found from experience, and the results of research, that it was much better to have a crop rotation for wheat. One year the land was left in stubble and then fallowed in the following year and then sown with crop the next year or the year following. However, even that method made the soil under-nourished because no attempt was made to build it up by humus or to increase the soil fertility other than by the use of superphosphate.

During the last 10 or 15 years it has been shown that even in our lighter rainfall areas, crop rotation can be widened to include a legume crop which, in itself, does a great deal to build up the nitrogenous content of the soil and greatly improves soil fertility. It not only assists in having better crops harvested—provided, of course, the rainfall is adequate—but also it has some influence on the type or quality of grain that is produced.

Further, we are developing a better type of wheat to improve the strength of our flour. That practice, in conjunction with improved soil fertility, would make Western Australian wheat much more valuable, particularly on the overseas market. I believe that this particular fund will enable much more research work to be carried out. Mention has been made of the relations between the Department of Agriculture, the C.S.I.R.O., and the State Institute of Agriculture which is conducted in conjunction with the University of Western Australia. In many ways there are happy relations between those three bodies, but at other times, I feel that there is a certain amount of antipathy between one and the other.

Mr. Hearman: It is probably professional jealousy.

Mr. OWEN: It may be, but it is a fact that at times relations are a little strained. I deplore such a state of affairs because

the three organisations are working in their own spheres towards a common end, namely, the improvement of primary production and agriculture generally in this State and in Australia. So although this fund will enable work to be carried out at the institute, I sincerely trust that there will be harmonious relations with the Department of Agriculture so that the officers can work hand in hand on this great problem of research.

The question of bringing other fields of agriculture in to help provide money for the fund could be implemented to a greater extent. For example, the potato-growing industry, the egg industry and the fruit-growing industry each have a small fund to enable work of this nature to be done, but I would like to see a comprehensive arrangement agreed to between all industries, so that a worth-while amount could be made available for research. Some few years ago when our late Governor, Sir James Mitchell, passed away, I suggested then, because he was so interested in agriculture, the possibility of establishing a fund which, of course, would have been on a voluntary basis. However, the idea did not catch on. I feel that this may be the genesis of a much more comprehensive scheme whereby all primary producers could be encouraged to subscribe to a fund for research purposes.

Mr. Nalder: Is the fruit-growing industry fund a voluntary one?

Mr. OWEN: It was voluntary in that it was recommended by the Western Australian Fruitgrowers' Association, but it does have the backing of an Act of Parliament. The same applies to the potato industry fund and the egg industry fund. I think the validity of the Act envisaged by this Bill could be queried if the scheme as suggested were not on a voluntary basis. I feel that the Bill is a good one, though it is perhaps not as wide as we would have wished. Nevertheless, it will do a lot of good towards assisting research regarding soil fertility.

#### THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE

(Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren—in reply)  
[3.31]: I am very glad to hear the comments of members who have spoken because I recognise that, from the agricultural point of view, they are practical men and are well versed in the difficulties of securing all that we would like to get for the scientific problems associated with that large industry. Of course, it costs a tremendous amount of money. One speaker wondered whether the Government was doing all it could to find sufficient money each year to carry out the whole research programme necessary in all branches of agriculture.

With the world developing as it is, and with agriculture keeping pace, I do not think any Government will ever spend

enough money on research in that field. I will say that all Governments over the years have been spending more each successive year from the moneys that are allocated to them. It is not possible to make money go further than it normally will. For example, last year this State spent £495,647 on agriculture; that is, on all phases of agriculture.

Mr. Nalder: That would include land settlement as well.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, only for agricultural research and for the carrying out and financing of our 13 research stations; for the carrying on of our agricultural colleges, and the preparation that is being made in relation to artificial insemination. All the work related to agriculture is included in that sum, exclusive of those parts mentioned by the hon. member. That sum is more than it was last year. In the coming year we expect to increase that amount by another £47,000.

Accordingly, irrespective of what the colour of the Government may be, it will recognise the need to spend as large a sum as possible on agriculture, and it does so within its means. As the member for Darling Range pointed out, the proposition to have a voluntary levy is not new; it has been in operation for a number of years on a lesser scale in different phases of agriculture. I think farmers realise the necessity to spend far more money than was available to the Government on breeding better types of wheat, and on strengthening our wheat to get a better commodity on the local market, as well as for export purposes. They recognise the necessity to spend more money on all matters associated with wheat production, and diseases such as rust, and so on, are matters which receive intensive investigation by officers of the Department of Agriculture.

I am sure that in their own hearts everybody must realise that the Department of Agriculture is doing a lot of work in this field and is spending a tremendous amount of money. It is spending over £500,000 each year, but that is still not enough. This fund will be on a voluntary basis, and the first year it will approximate £25,000 or £30,000 which will be passed on to the university for special research into the everyday problems of agriculture, and the related activities of the department. There will be no overlapping.

Mr. Nalder: It is the first move of its kind in any State.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That may be so, but it was done at the request of the growers themselves.

Mr. Nalder: But the growers did not ask for a scheme such as this.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is possible that the richer States have more money to spend than we have. We are hoping to spend some £47,000 more than we did. I feel sure members will realise that it is not possible to draw blood from a stone. The point was raised as to whether the levy should be struck voluntarily or compulsorily. I would point out that it is impossible to strike a compulsory levy, though we were going to do it last year.

Mr. Nalder: How is it that in the case of the pig industry, the levy is compulsory?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If that is so and if any person in the pig industry cares to challenge the payment of the levy, he would succeed in a court of law.

Mr. Nalder: You would not suggest they did that?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: He would succeed. The position is that the Australian Wheat Board asked me who was going to guarantee or indemnify the board against prosecution for wrongful collection of money; it wanted the Government to do it, as it was not prepared to do the work itself. It could possibly cost thousands of pounds. The members who spoke suggested that quite a number of wheat farmers would not come in. If they were forced to come in, they could challenge the Government of the day and their claim would be successful in a court of law, which would mean that whoever was responsible would be liable for repayment of the money to those growers, and also might possibly be liable to pay damages.

That point was considered very carefully by the Crown Law Department and it caused that department, the Farmers' Union and myself to try to find another way out. This is that way; it is the only way out. I agree with the member for Katanning that everybody ought to be in it, and I believe that every worker ought to be in a union because of the benefits he will receive from everybody's contributions. But it cannot be done by law unless somebody is prepared to spend a large sum of money in the case of a challenge. I again thank members for their contributions, and as I understand it is necessary, for some reason or other, to get this matter finished by 3.40 p.m., I will not say any more.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

The DEPUTY PREMIER: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 4 p.m. today.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 3.39 p.m.*