Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: When dealing with a similar clause last year I could not understand the reason for deleting the words sought to be deleted in favour of the amending wording. My first approach to the Bill is one of co-operation as I believe it is an improvement on last year's measure and that the Minister has tried to make it acceptable to the Committee.

In the last 12 or 18 months an enactment was passed in America relieving the Red Indians of certain protection that had been accorded them for many years. They appealed to the Government not to remove that protection. I believe they are regarded as of a fairly high standard, as such races go, but they felt that without the protection any Yank could put it over them, and that they had not the resistance to enable them to stand up for their rights. I ask the Minister to consider the necessity for specifying care and protection of the natives as far as the department is concerned.

Hon. C. W. D. BARKER: I think Mr. Craig gave a very fair view of the clause, which would not take protection from the natives but give them more. It would allow the department to assist the outstanding native to be assimilated into our community.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: The Committee seems to consider that the natives should be helped in this manner, and yet some members feel that certain protection should be afforded to the native. If Mr. Baxter would agree to withdraw his amendment I propose to move one which I think would achieve the desired end.

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST: The reason for the wording of this clause is not to dodge responsibility but that the words proposed to be deleted are superfluous. I am agreeable to leaving them there if that is the desire of the Committee, but I hope members will oppose the amendment. I have no objection to hearing Dr. Hislop's proposal.

Hon. N. E. BAXTER: I feel that the clause would remove the possibility of the department's taking certain necessary action, but I am willing to listen to Dr. Hislop's proposal. I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (b) the words "substituting for the words, 'and to protect them against injustice, imposition, and fraud' in lines 3 and 4 of" be struck out and the words "inserting in" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. J. G. HISLOP: I move an amendment—

That after "(6)" in line 21, page 3, the words "after the word 'natives'" be inserted.

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

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.39 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 23rd November, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

MIGRATION.

As to State Representative in Great Britain.

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

Has the Government appointed, or sponsored, any person to visit Great Britain for the purpose of inquiring into the possibility of bringing suitable migrants to Western Australia, and if so, what will be the lines on which such person will be acting, and who is the person?

The MINISTER replied:

No.

TRANSPORT.

As to Transference of Goods from Road to Rail Service.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

Is there any substance in the suggestion that the State Government intends to endeavour to insist that all goods hauled interstate between Western Australia and the Eastern States by road be carried by train from or to Norseman?

The MINISTER replied:

The full implications of the decision of the Privy Council in this case are not yet available to us, but from what we understand of the judgment, it does not refer to interstate traffic in any shape or form; or it does not interfere with the powers of the State Government to make laws in relation to interstate traffic. Assuming that is so, it will be the intention of the Transport Board to continue the system that has been in operation for many years in relation to interstate traffic, namely, that when the goods arrive at Norseman where they make contact with our railway system, and assuming the cargo is not fragile and liable to be damaged by transhipment, it is intended to insist that they be transferred from the road vehicle to the railway vehicle.

The Act administered by the Transport Board is the State Transport Co-ordination Act, and it does not appear to me to be a good example of transport co-ordination to allow vehicles, either from within or without the State, to run parallel for some 500 miles to the railway system. I would emphasise that this has not been enforced during the last 18 months, but the Transport Board has been insisting for years that goods which would not be damaged by being transferred from road vehicles to railway vehicles should, when coming interstate, be put on the railway trucks at Norseman.

FRIDAY SITTINGS.

As to Hours.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Minister for Works:

If it is intended that the House is to sit on Fridays, what will be the anticipated hours of sitting?

The MINISTER replied:

The intention is to commence at 2.15 p.m., and sit until teatime.

CRIPPLES.

As to Accommodation for Young Persons.

Mr. COURT (without notice) asked the Minister for Health:

With reference to the answer given to my question on the 18th November, 1954, dealing with the six young crippled persons who are at present accommodated at "Sunset", can he advise—

(1) What is the Government's ultimate proposal for dealing with these crippled persons?

(2) Has the Government any information as to the potential demand for special homes for such persons?

(3) Can any tentative indication be given of when some provision will be made in view of the fact that the recent increase in the number of lads accommodated at "Sunset" has the effect of reducing available accommodation for old men for whom "Sunset" is primarily designed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) and (2) Numerically, the problem is not at present large enough to warrant the establishment of a special State institution. Therefore, the policy is to assist and encourage voluntary organisations to care for this type of case.

(3) The six cases at "Sunset" referred to, aged between 15½ and 27 years, were taken there temporarily, pending availability of beds at the Home of Peace, which will be soon.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Bookmakers Betting Tax.
Introduced by the Minister for Police.

2, City of Perth (Rating Appeals) Act Amendment.
Introduced by Mr. Nimmo.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1, Health Act Amendment (No. 2).

2, Constitution Acts Amendment (No. 2).

3, Physiotherapists Act Amendment.

BILL—BETTING CONTROL.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie): I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

I have heard that it is the intention of the Opposition to speak at some length on this measure. It is, of course, permissible within the Standing Orders for that to be done. I would mention on behalf of those who desire to give this legislation a trial that, if the members opposed to it—who are in a minority—desire to have one, two or three all-night sittings again in connection with the third reading, that is quite permissible under the Standing Orders.

However, I would say this to them: They have made their protests. They have made them very vigorously and over quite a long period—I think some nine or ten hours on the second reading, and for some hours during the Committee stage. I would draw their attention to the fact that I gave an undertaking at the second reading that, so long as the principle of the Bill was agreed to, the Government would have no serious objection to amendments being made in Committee. As a result of that undertaking, the provisions of the measure were materially altered in Committee.

In all sincerity, therefore, I suggest to them that the logical thing to do is to agree to the third reading, allow the measure to go to another place, and see what becomes of it there.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [4.45]: I want to reaffirm my opposition to the Bill, because I believe that the answer to the problem is not to legalise betting shops. A great deal has been said in respect of this problem both inside and outside of this House. I would point out to the Minister, who referred to all-night sitting, that there was only one such sitting on this Bill; and surely that was justified as a stand against such legislation! The policy was one followed by the present Government when it was in Opposition to a far greater extent than one all-night sitting. For that reason I feel that we, who, as individuals, opposed the Bill on this side, were justified in taking up the time of the House—seeing that the Government would not permit an adjournment—to express the views which we hold individually in respect of this proposed legislation.

Mr. May: What is this "individually"?

Hon. D. BRAND: The hon. member refers to the individual opinions expressed on the Bill from this side of the House. I want to assure him that each and every member on this side is still quite free and unbound by any party policy to vote as he pleases in respect of the measure. We have been chided by the other side for not carrying out the recommendations of the Royal Commission which we appointed.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must draw attention to the fact that on the third reading only the Bill as reported from Committee can be discussed. No other phase can be touched.

Hon. D. BRAND: Thank you, Sir. If I may conclude my sentence, I would say that we feel that the Bill we have before us at the third reading in respect of legalising betting shops, will encourage betting and will create a situation which will become a social evil. I believe that the object of any legislation should be to restrict and control betting; and it is my opinion that this Bill, if it becomes an Act, will not do that.

Experience elsewhere has shown that where facilities are provided through means of betting shops, and the personal element is evident, those who are responsible, those who are in authority, have set themselves out to attract people to bet and encourage a greater turnover from betting. That is very natural. Therefore we believe that betting shops are no answer to this problem. It must be admitted that to legalise on-the-course betting is most logical and desirable. In so doing, we provide facilities for people living within the metropolitan area, because it is only within built-up areas that racing is organised to any extent. Therefore facilities for betting would be available only to people living within such areas. It is my opinion that those people who want to bet—we admit that we cannot stamp out betting—will always bet.

No legislation will bring about a state of affairs in which there will be no betting, but any system to deal with betting must emphasise the policy of discouragement rather than provide facilities to increase the turnover. The Government should look into the possibilities of providing betting per medium of the phone, or postal betting, which would mean that there would be limited facilities for people living in country centres to have a bet if they so desired. As the Bill stands, it would appear we have recognised that betting is essential, but I am sure that is not the opinion of thinking people. Last night, at a dinner, I was privileged to sit beside one of the Press prepresentatives from New Zealand, and he informed me that as a result of the set-up—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I draw the attention of the hon. member to the fact that he can only discuss the provisions of the Bill as reported.

Hon. D. BRAND: Thank you. He pointed out that what was done there had not proved to be 100 per cent. satisfactory. If I am confined to the point that the Bill legalises betting shops, I am very

much opposed to it. I would support a measure which would legalise on-course betting.

The Minister for Housing: You would!

Hon. D. BRAND: I would support a Bill which would provide for a referendum such as applies in another State at the present time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! I must inform the member for Greenough, and all other members, that this is not another second reading debate. On the third reading, members are entitled to discuss the Bill—what it lacks or what is wrong with it—as it was reported. Any reference to anything outside of these matters is right out of order.

Hon. D. BRAND: Very good, Sir. The Bill envisages the setting up of a board of control which we believe is not a very desirable arrangement. We think the board should be much smaller; that it is not necessary to be loaded in favour of the Government; that it would be well to have a board of three independent members because in that way we would get a more impartial approach to all the problems involved—economic, social and political—than we will if the Bill becomes law.

The Premier: Did the hon. member move to alter the size of the board?

Hon. D. BRAND: No, but some discussion went on in the Committee stage.

The Minister for Police: Not to restrict the size of the board. That was never suggested.

Hon. D. BRAND: If I did not move in that direction at that stage, I do believe that a board composed of three independent members would achieve the object the Government has in mind rather than will the board as is now envisaged. Once the Bill becomes law, it will set up a vested interest which will prove to be most difficult to alter. We know that in Committee the Minister moved that the Bill have a life until 1957, but, as the Premier once said in reply to an interjection from this side when the question of entertainments tax was under discussion, once the measure was lifted, it would be most difficult, politically, to reimpose the tax; and I think the same principle would apply here.

The Premier: No.

Hon. D. BRAND: Once the Bill becomes law, it will create a vested interest and something that the people will be accustomed to, so that it will be more difficult to approach the question then than it would be if the Bill had never become law.

The Premier: Under this restriction, Parliament will have to re-enact this law.

Hon. D. BRAND: Yes. As the Premier well knows, Parliament in general reflects public opinion, and the same point that he made, when speaking to the Leader of the Opposition on the occasion to which I have referred, will apply. Parliament will be the deciding factor and will have to make the decision.

The Premier: If this law is to continue after the 31st December, 1957, Parliament will have to re-enact it before that date.

Hon. D. BRAND: I realise that, but as the Government of the day would have the majority of the members supporting it, it would have to make the decision as to whether the Act was to be continued. Seeing that this step has been taken, I would much prefer to see a Bill that legalised, in the first place, on-course betting, and, in the second, a great deal more thought given to the facilities which might in some small way meet the principle that is involved in the Bill. I oppose the third reading.

MR. HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [4.57]: I think the fears recently expressed by the Minister will not be fulfilled—I do not think there is going to be a long debate. I do not know whether there will be or not, but I have my doubts about it. I reaffirm my unequivocal opposition to the Bill, principally because I believe that the solution offered to the evil operating in regard to betting does not solve anything. I think that if the Bill becomes law, it will accentuate the gambling evil. To my mind it will encourage betting.

Mr. May: Why?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Because we will find that situated in the suburbs, the country towns and the city there will be bright and shining new shops or converted old shops which will throw their doors wide open.

Mr. May: There will not be any more money available.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: That is hardly the point.

The Minister for Lands: You will not bet any more than you normally do.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I might be one of those people who like to have a bet, but on the other hand, I might not. Betting is a passion with some people; others do not bet because to do so is illegal. The Bill gives the stamp of legality to betting to such an extent that facilities for it will be provided in our every-day existence. Next to the grocers' shop, the cake shop and the frock shop a gambling hell will be opened and it will have the stamp of legality. No longer will people have to go around corners to make a bet. They will be able to go in their numbers into these shops; they will be encouraged to do so.

Mr. May: Do you think there will be—

Mr. HUTCHINSON: If the member for Collie wants to make a third reading speech, I feel sure he is entitled to do so. I am trying to make a few observations on the Bill. As I pointed out, if the Bill becomes law

it will encourage gambling. It will, as I have also mentioned, accentuate the evil which exists with regard to betting shops at present. I do not think anybody on the other side thinks that these betting shops will be places of beauty; places where one's moral fibre will be strengthened. I do not think that members opposite would agree that our national character will be improved by having these shops in existence; I do not believe that the Government front bench thinks that.

What they have attempted to do is to try to improve the present set-up; to obviate something that they believe is a blot on the face of our betting laws. In my opinion, the attempt will prove to be a failure, but I do not believe that nothing should be done. I do not condone the present set-up because of my opposition to this Bill and a lot of people have lost sight of that fact. One can oppose a measure such as this and yet have something at the back of one's mind as regards a possible solution.

The Minister for Housing: What is at the back of your mind?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: If the Minister will bear with me for a little longer I will try to point that out to him.

Mr. May: What about your Government? It had six years in office!

Mr. SPEAKER: I am afraid the member for Cottesloe cannot discuss what is at the back of his mind at the moment.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Perhaps. Mr. Speaker, you will allow me to say why I feel that this Bill is lacking; it fails to include certain features.

Mr. SPEAKER: No, the hon. member cannot discuss what is not in the Bill. He can discuss only what is in the Bill now.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Let me say again that I believe that this Bill does not offer any solution. The Government is attempting to improve what it feels to be a blot on the face of our civic set-up. But instead of improving it, it will accentuate the evils associated with gambling. I agree that there should be legalised on-the-course and off-the-course betting, as is mentioned in the Bill. But the form of control of off-the-course betting as set out in the Bill is one with which I disagree. I believe that its form could be improved by not having betting shops with their doors wide open; not having shops which offer an ever present temptation to people to bet. We could provide other avenues for off-the-course betting with shops—

The Minister for Housing: With their doors shut.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: —with their doors shut and which would cater for phone and postal betting. If that were done, I think it would stamp out illegal betting and some of those bad features we find at present where groups of people congregrate around hotels and indulge in this pastime. By this method we could attack this evil and get rid of it. I believe that the gaming laws could be tightened and if necessary the evil could be stamped out.

Your ruling, Mr. Speaker, has prevented me from describing what I would like to do. I agree with your ruling, but suffice it to say at this stage that my condemnation of this measure still stands; my condemnation of the means outlined in this Bill still remains. There is a way to overcome this evil and, as for the criticism levelled at the McLarty-Watts Government for not having done anything during its six years of office, the same could be levelled at other Governments over many years.

I do not think those arguments hold water. If they do, it is a mistake that that Government made and it is one that all Governments have made. I would state, even at this stage, that if the Bill becomes law it will be a blot upon the record of the Hawke Government, not because of its attempt to do something, but because of the way in which it is being done. The solution to the problem as proposed in the Bill is impracticable. This measure will have an effect upon our national character, moral fibre and the family circle, which is the basis of our economy.

Mr. Andrew: You will make us laugh in a minute.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: This is no laughing matter! I am perfectly sincere about it. The member for Victoria Park surely cannot see anything hilarious about this!

Mr. Andrew: But there is about your statement.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I have tried to put some thought into this matter and I believe the Government would be well advised not to establish these betting shops because they will be a blot upon the civic landscape. Even at this late stage I ask the Government to withdraw the Bill and, if necessary, it can make another attempt to legalise gambling. As I see it, these gambling hells will be bad for us. I oppose the measure.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [5.7]: I would like to take this opportunity of reaffirming my opposition to this Bill and even at this stage I appeal to the Premier and the Government not to go on with it.

The Minister for Lands: What is this? Adulterated milk?

Mr. MANNING: The Minister for Police said that this debate had been a long one, but I would point out that although that is so, the speeches on it have been short and to the point, and he cannot accuse

us of having stonewalled the measure. We have been expressing our opinions on it.

The Minister for Police: You took the half hour you were permitted under the Standing Orders.

Hon. A. F. Watts: What is wrong with that?

The Minister for Police: Nothing, but why deny it?

Hon. A. F. Watts: You took two hours when there were no Standing Orders to cover it.

The Minister for Police: That was in the dim and distant past.

The Premier: That was in the good old days.

Mr. MANNING: My main objection, as I mentioned in the Committee stage, is to the creation of these betting shops. I believe that the Bill, as it has been reported from the Committee, does not achieve what is claimed for it—that is, to control or minimise betting. It is my belief that the creation and establishment of betting premises will encourage gambling. To me that is objectionable.

During the Committee stage, I attempted, by way of amendments, to introduce a principle so that betting could be legalised on the racecourses and trotting tracks and in that way it could be confined to the surroundings where, in my opinion, it belongs. I believe that s.p. betting as such should be stamped out. As the member for Cottesloe has suggested, there are other ways and means of betting away from the course without legalising betting shops. My concern is for the younger generation. If this measure is agreed to, they will grow up believing betting shops are part and parcel of community life; and that is not a good thing.

Much has been said about the previous Government not having the courage to deal with this problem. My contention is that this Bill is not a courageous effort to overcome it; it is the easy way out to legalise something which one has not the courage to correct, stamp out or minimise.

Mr. Heal: How do you know it will not have the courage to stamp it out?

Mr. MANNING: Judging by the opinions and tone of the remarks from the Government side, it seems unlikely that this measure will stamp it out and it appears that when this measure comes before Parliament again, it is not likely to be removed from the statute book. I am led to believe, from the opinions expressed by members opposite that this Bill is likely to become an Act and remain so for some considerable time. Therefore, I wish to take this opportunity of voicing my opposition to it in the hope that it will never reach the statute book.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [5.11]: I would like briefly to say that in my opinion this Bill, at the third reading stage, is little better than it was when we voted on it after the second reading debate. Some small alterations have been made, but none of them has affected the major principle. The Premier seems to have attached a good deal of importance to the amendment inserted to provide that the legislation shall be re-enacted in 1957. I am afraid I do not attach much importance to it, because if we set up an organisation such as is envisaged in this Bill, it will be most difficult to get rid of it overnight.

We have had a previous example in the lotteries legislation. That was re-enacted by Parliament year by year; but it became almost a matter of course to do that because, in the long run, the Treasury came to have a big vested interest in its re-enactment. I am afraid that that is what will happen so far as this betting shop legislation is concerned. If the Bill becomes an Act and these betting shops are established, the Treasury, as well as many others in the State, will have a vested interest in seeing that the set-up is continued and it will be much more difficult to alter that in 1957 than it will be to take some other course of action now.

Admittedly, the situation at present is not a good one. But I notice that the Premier, in the statement he made when commenting on the large demonstration against this legislation which took place on the Esplanade last Sunday, seems to assume that this type of legislation is the only answer to what is, admittedly, not a good set-up. I contend that there is definitely room for more than one opinion on that point. It would be possible, at least to try some other line of action rather than take one which will be the result if this Bill becomes an Act and which, in my opinion, and in the opinion of a good many people of this State, will have a damaging consequence on the whole of the economic, as well as the moral, life of this State. I do not want to make a long speech, but at this stage I would like to indicate my continued opposition to this measure.

HON. DAME FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco) [5.15]: I did not intend to speak on the third reading, but as the Minister dealing with the Bill has said that he heard that we were all going to make long speeches—

The Minister for Police: I did not say that you were all going to make long speeches.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Well, the majority of us. Those statements are so untrue. We have made no arrangements for members on this side of the House to make long speeches.

The Minister for Police: I am pleased to hear it.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Nevertheless, the Minister has made me make a short speech. I wish again to protest against this Bill. Whether you ask me to sit down or not, Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that we have a confounded lot of hypocrites in this House.

The Premier: Especially on your side!

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: All I know is that we come in here and say our prayers; we say, "Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come." We close our eyes, and then the Government introduces a Bill such as this, which is the Devil's own evil!

The Premier: Why do you not tell us some of the things that you do?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: All members are elected to endeavour to make better citizens of the people and to introduce moral legislation, but they are not doing it. All we have at present is unmoral legislation.

The Premier: What did you do on this issue when you were a Minister?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I worked very hard when I was a Minister.

The Premier: But what did you do on this issue?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I did not dream of introducing legislation such as this.

The Minister for Works: You told the Minister to pray and said that that would remedy the situation.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: Every hour of my life as a Minister was spent in endeavouring to work for the people and not against them.

The Premier: What did you do on this issue?

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER: I did plenty. This Bill has been brought before the House and hours and hours have been wasted on reiteration and now we are doing the same thing again before sending the Bill to the Upper House. I have every reason to enter my protest in this House. Outside the House I will do everything in my power to ensure that those who have voted for the Bill will not be in this House next Parliament.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.19]: In introducing the third reading of the Bill the Minister said he understood it was a prearranged plan—

The Minister for Police: I did not say that at all. Be truthful for once!

Mr. BOVELL: That is what the Minister implied. I want to say, as the Opposition Whip—and I am not accustomed to telling untruths—that there has been no prearranged plan whatsoever in regard to the opposition against this Bill on the third reading or—and may the Divine Will take a hand if I am stating an untruth—

The Minister for Police: There is no need to go that far.

Mr. BOVELL: —of any stonewalling. On entering the House this evening, the Whip of the Country Party asked me what the L.C.L. members were going to do, but I told him I did not know what they intended to do. I want the Minister to know there was no prearranged plan to oppose the third reading, and he knows as well as I do what a Whip's functions are.

The Minister for Lands: I will accept your apology.

Mr. BOVELL: Whilst I am on my feet, I would like to reaffirm my opposition to this Bill.

The Minister for Housing: It is not necessary.

Mr. BOVELL: In my opinion, it is only encouraging the spirit of gambling in our community. I will admit that the present system is unsatisfactory—

The Minister for Housing: Hear, hear!

Mr. BOVELL: —but, in my opinion, this Bill, as reported to the House, will encourage gambling to a great extent. It will be a blot on the community which will be hard to erase. Criticism has been levelled against the Government I supported for not taking any action in regard to this matter, but I know that you, Mr. Speaker, will not permit me to speak on that aspect. Nevertheless, in my own mind, I am convinced that, notwithstanding the unsatisfactory conditions surrounding the present set-up, as I said in my second reading speech, no Government will stamp out betting, regardless of how unsavoury it may be. However, this Bill is not the answer to the problem. There must be an answer, but what it is I cannot suggest now. There is no doubt that this Bill will encourage betting, and I oppose it because of the opinion I hold.

MR. YATES (South Perth) [5.22]: Apart from this legislation, nothing has been done in the past 50 years to suggest a remedy for this ever-increasing evil of betting, either on or off a racecourse. If betting is basically evil, it is equally bad if done on the racecourse, on the telephone, or in an s.p. betting shop.

The Premier: Hear, hear! Every bit!

Mr. YATES: In 1947, when I entered this House, I did so on a policy which was submitted by the present Leader of the Opposition, and part of that policy was aimed at giving consideration to the evil of starting-price betting. However, the only consideration that was given to any aspect of it was the appointment of a Royal Commission and the non-implementation of its findings.

Mr. Manning: Did it recommend that betting should be legalised?

Mr. YATES: I know I have drifted away from the subject, Mr. Speaker, but it is very difficult to gather one's thoughts whilst one is standing on one's feet. I have not heard any member of this House, either on the Government or Opposition side, put forward a better proposition to counter that contained in the Bill.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That is not correct.

Mr. YATES: With the exception of asking for a referendum.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Or a totalisator.

The Minister for Lands: Why are you trying to dominate people?

Mr. YATES: A totalisator would be worse. The Leader of the Opposition said he was afraid of the effect of this legislation. I suppose we are all afraid. Frankly, I am. I do not know whether it will be a success or not, but I have a feeling that it will be.

Mr. Nalder: You will be sorry.

Mr. YATES: I am not sorry.

The Premier: It could not be worse than the existing situation.

Mr. Hutchinson: Of course it could be. That is where you are wrong!

The Minister for Police: It could not be worse than the conditions which exist in Katanning.

Mr. YATES: Neither the member for Katanning nor any other member can say what will be the future of this legislation with regard to s.p. betting.

Mr. Nalder: We can make a fair guess.

Mr. YATES: That is all anyone can do. Whether this legislation will be for the ultimate benefit of the community, only time will tell. It is not the full answer to the problem. This Bill is not a good measure by any means, but, in my opinion, it is a step towards eventually eradicating s.p. betting.

Mr. Nalder: Oh!

Mr. YATES: Of course it is! If the Bill passes through both Houses, we shall have legislation that will give powers to the Commissioner of Police that he has never had before. It will include penalties that we have never before had on the statute book. It will also grant power to the betting control board to refuse certain people the right to enter a betting shop. If these are not steps in the right direction, what is?

With the situation as it is at present, we find s.p. operators in every part of the State, whether of good or bad character, and they are betting in contravention of the law. Such a set-up, of course, breeds contempt for the law; that is, when a person can, with impunity, defy the law. The Bill will encourage people to obey the law. In answer to the interjections by members that it will encourage the ever-increasing growth of this evil, I, like the member for Collie, do not think it will take any more money out of the pockets of the people.

A certain amount of money is spent by the people on every kind of sport. I do not think the legalising of s.p. betting will make the people spend more money on it. If one is a betting man, one will bet; but if one is not a betting man, one will not enter a betting shop.

Mr. Hutchinson: That does not apply to everybody. You cannot make a general statement such as that about human nature.

Mr. YATES: Because there are licensed betting shops, I do not think that will make people bet more. This Bill does not force anybody to make a bet.

Mr. Hutchinson: It is a most impractical approach.

The Preimer: It is no less impractical than the member for Cottesloe.

Mr. YATES: I feel that this legislation, however small a step it may be in regard to the overall issue, is at least an attempt—

Mr. Hutchinson: That is all it is; an attempt!

Mr. YATES: Well, it is a start. I do not like s.p. betting and I have always said so in this House.

Mr. Hutchinson: You will not effect a solution with something that is no good.

Mr. YATES: I would sooner have this Bill, than continue accepting the situation that exists now.

The Premier: Hear, hear!

Mr. YATES: I can also make my speeches without encouragement from the Government side, too. I have quoted instances of s.p. operators working in full view of Canning Highway in my electorate.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Why did you let them?

Mr. YATES: I have no power to close up s.p. operators.

The Premier: There are some in Subiaco.

Mr. YATES: The Commissioner of Police has also had his hands tied in regard to taking such action, because of the lack of suitable legislation. The only way the police can arrest s.p. operators is to charge them with obstructing the traffic, and if they are operating in a back lane it is extremely difficult to catch them. If we are to allow s.p. betting to continue, let us make an attempt to clean it up. The Bill will not do that, but at least it will legalise something that is now illegal. Then, once we have legislation on the statute book we can amend it or add to it in the future according to the circumstances that arise.

Hon. A. F. Watts: That is childish.

Mr. YATES: It might be childish, but I am expressing my point of view. I do not think I am childish. I have given this matter every consideration and, believe me, I am being ridiculed throughout the length and breadth of the State for the action I have taken. Whether the Government is right or not remains to be seen, but the Bill is a start and a step in the right direction. We have heard members quote remarks made by other parliamentarians on legislation that has been introduced in other parts of the Commonwealth, but they have not painted the whole picture. Remarks made by members in those States who have opposed this type of legislation have been referred to, but nothing has been said about the statements by members who supported it.

Mr. Hutchinson: Who did support it?

Mr. YATES: References were made only about those who objected to it. When the community is divided on a question, one half is in favour of it and the other half is against it.

Mr. Nalder: Why did not you quote some of the speeches by members who were in favour of it?

Mr. YATES: I did not have enough time. The time limit provision prevented me from saying all that I wanted to say. Even if a Bill or an Act of Parliament is not satisfactory to all sections of the community, there will always be some who favour the legislation. I trust that when the Bill, if it becomes law, has been given a trial, serious attempts will be made to strengthen it further along the same lines as the Queensland legislation. All sorts of drastic alterations have been made, or were intended to be made, to the Queensland law. If that pattern can be followed in this State, and if the Bill is passed, there will be a law on the statute book to enable improvements to be made. I am certain that in a few years' time Western Australia will have starting price betting not as a growing evil but as a diminishing evil.

MR. NALDER (Katanning) [5.32]: I rise—

The Minister for Lands: Here comes the expert.

Mr. SPEAKER: Disregard the interjection.

Mr. NALDER: If any member speaks, we have a right to hear what he says. If a charge has been made, I want to hear it and to reply. I oppose the third reading of this Bill. I have nothing to add to what I already said during the second reading except to lodge a very strong protest. In the country, not only in districts included in the Great Southern but in many other portions of the State, there is a very strong move to impress on the Government the fact that the general public is in opposition to this legislation.

I have received many letters and many signed petitions, with hundreds of signatures, all in opposition to this Bill. I voice my strongest protest on behalf of those who have written to register their objection. The Premier mentioned that I need not go into s.p. betting shops if they are legalised, but the possibility is that I might be charged with obstructing the traffic in trying to prevent others from going in. I think that the harm done, especially to young people, would be the greatest curse introduced into this State. I do not intend to delay the House except to lodge this protest against the third reading.

HON. J. B. SLEEMAN (Fremantle) [5.34]: I am not anxious to take part in the third reading debate but, because the Government has been abused for not stopping betting, I want to make a few remarks. The member for Subiaco when in Opposition said that any Government could stop betting and that the then Government only allowed betting to continue for the revenue it could derive through it. When her Government took office, she said the only way it could be stopped was by prayer.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Will you refer to the Bill as it left the Committee?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Fremantle will resume his seat. The hon. member must confine his remarks to the Bill as it left the Committee stage. I have asked everyone else to do the same.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I shall do that. The Bill provides that betting shops shall be legalised. I am not a great betting man myself, and I only go to the races sometimes. I have never frequented s.p. shops. When betting was legalised in South Australia, members opposite spoke about women outside the shops in Adelaide. I went to Adelaide especially to see betting shops in operation.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: So did I.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I saw very few women in them.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: I saw one shop full of women and children only.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: We should have gone together, and I could have shown the hon. member what I saw and she could have done likewise. I went to the man who knew more about this than anybody else.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Who was he?

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Commissioner Lean.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: So did I.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I went to him and told him I came from Western Australia to investigate the betting shops. He replied, "You can see what you like, hear what you like; and after that, you can say what you like. I am not frightened

of what you will say. This is one of the greatest things that has taken place in Adelaide, and a hundred per cent. better than before. I will send you a motorcar with an inspector, and you can go throughout the length and breadth of the metropolitan area." I did so, and spent one whole day going from one suburb to another.

During the inspection, I spoke to the bookies in the main part of Adelaide and they said they did not bet with women because they were a nuisance in the shops. I went to Port Adelaide and other suburbs, and the only place I saw with more than two women in it was a betting shop in West Adelaide. There were also a few in the betting shops in Port Adelaide. What I saw there was better than what goes on in Western Australia. What happens here is disgraceful, and it is time we improved on it. If this Bill does not improve existing conditions, the Government in power can alter its provisions. We were also told that there is licensed betting in Port Pirie, one of the biggest industrial centres in South Australia. If it is right there, then it is right anywhere else.

I shall vote for the third reading because it will make conditions a lot better than they are at present. As I said before, I have seen bookmakers here in lanes, with lavatories all around, conducting their operations. I am satisfied that the people who are opposing the Bill heatedly are doing it more from a religious than a realistic point of view. I am satisfied that they will agree with this legislation once it gets going. We do not believe in betting or horseracing, but we believe the Bill will improve the present position. If I did not, I would not vote for it.

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

Ayes	22
Noes	19
Majority for	3

Ayes.

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Brady	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Graham	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heai	Mr. Norton
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Yates
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Brand	Mr. North
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Owen
Mr. Doney	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Nalder	

(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

[135]

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [5.45] in moving the second reading said: Members will see that the Bill deals with one specific proposal, namely, to provide that the State Government Insurance Office may engage in what may be termed insurance for schoolchildren. Briefly I may mention that approximately two years ago, representations were made by the Parents and Citizens' Association Federation to ensure that children should have insurance cover, not only whilst at school but also during the time occupied in travelling to and from school. It has been the practice for the Education Department to recompense parents where children met with injuries at school due to the negligence of the department, but that has no reference to the general insurance of school children.

As from the 1st July of this year, after a series of negotiations had taken place, insurance was effected for State schoolchildren. Representations were made to give denominational schools, which in round figures represent 25,000 children, insurance cover, and this Bill would have the effect of extending insurance over the whole field for State schoolchildren and for those attending efficient and denominational schools.

This afternoon I asked the manager of the State Insurance Office to inform me of the number of children who are insured under the scheme. There are about 45,000. I am giving this information to outline what has been done in regard to the insurance scheme that has been in operation since the 1st July. The premiums have been collected through the respective parents and citizens associations in conjunction with the teachers, and where there are no schools with such associations, the children have not participated, but consideration must be given to this phase at an early date.

The premium which has been agreed upon between the parents and citizens associations and the Government is 3s. 6d. per child per annum with a maximum of 10s. 6d. per family. The maximum benefit is £50 for expenses incurred for medical, hospital and like costs as enumerated in the Bill, and, in addition, there will not be a limit of one claim per child per annum. Each claim would stand by itself. Where death resulted from an accident or injury within the scope set out in the Bill, an amount up to £35 would be paid to the parent or guardian.

A little while ago the member for Blackwood asked a series of questions as to the insurance cover for school children, inasmuch as numbers of them travelled long

distances in school buses, after the school had closed. The cover would include travel from the time the bus left the school until the child arrived home, provided that on leaving the bus the child proceeded home within reasonable time.

Mr. J. Hegney: Does that apply also to a child going to school?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes, and would include children going to and fro on foot.

Mr. Nalder: What about a child who left the school to go, say, to a dentist before proceeding home?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Offhand I am not prepared to answer that question, but I can say that the manager of the State Insurance Office has adopted a policy of being as fair and reasonable as possible in covering certain fields, and I would say that, broadly speaking, if a case of that sort came within the provisions of the Bill, it would be covered. The hon. member should not take that as gospel because it would form the subject of one of the conditions under the insurance policy.

Mr. Nalder: Will you find out and let us know?

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: I can make inquiries for the hon. member. I should say that if a child were boarding and met with an injury during school hours or while at play at school or engaged in organised sport, he would be covered, but if a child were having a bath at 8 o'clock at night and met with an accident in the bathroom, he would be in the same position as a child living with his parents at home, to whom insurance cover would not extend. Quite a number of such instances, which would be on the borderline, could be quoted and it would be difficult for anyone to give an answer at a moment's notice. The clause clearly states the extent to which insurance will extend and it will have the effect of covering all schoolchildren in the State.

Mr. Bovell: Children attending Government schools are already covered.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Yes; I have explained that they are covered provided that the school they attend has a parents and citizens association affiliated with the Parents and Citizens Federation. The number of children attending State schools is about 90,000, of whom about 45,000 are covered. Obviously, consideration is being given to extending the scheme to all the schools irrespective of whether parents and citizens associations are attached to them or not. The thought occurs to me that, if there is no parents and citizens association attached to a particular school, the State Insurance Office might be entitled to charge a little higher premium because of the extra cost entailed in collecting it.

This is the first State that has adopted such a scheme. South Australia has followed suit, and New South Wales and Victoria have made inquiries from us and I understand that if they have not already schemes in operation, consideration is being given to the introduction of some form of insurance to cover school-children.

Mr. Hutchinson: The teachers did collect the premiums, but that is now being done by the parents and citizens' associations.

The MINISTER FOR LABOUR: Discussions took place between the federation and the Education Department for approximately two years, and when the scheme was launched as from the 1st July of this year, the teachers did a good job by arranging for the collection of the premiums. Then the parents and citizens associations took over that responsibility. The federation has much work to its credit. It has devoted quite a lot of time, energy and research to having this scheme brought to fruition. If the Bill be passed, the State Insurance Office will be entitled to engage in insurance of schoolchildren, no matter in what part of the State they are located. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—SOIL FERTILITY RESEARCH.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [5.58] in moving the second reading said: This Bill has been introduced to meet the wishes of the Farmers' Union and particularly the wheat section of that union the members of which are willing and anxious to contribute towards research at the Institute of Agriculture. Last year I was approached by the union to ascertain whether the Government would introduce legislation for this purpose. At that time a levy of ¼d. a bushel was suggested as the basis of payment to be collected under the fund, and a Bill would have been introduced then but for some legal difficulties which quickly became apparent.

One of the difficulties is that in legislation of this sort, it is impossible to impose a collection of money that could be called a tax. We have had some experience in this direction in connection with other Acts of Parliament—notably the Milk Act in relation to the cattle compensation fund—and we found it impossible to proceed with the legislation we had in mind

for the establishment of a fund because of the danger of its being ruled out of order.

It was therefore necessary to evolve legislation that would establish the scheme completely free from Government control, and in a form which could not at any time be challenged on the ground that it constituted a tax. Negotiations between the Farmers' Union, the Crown Law Department and myself have proceeded over the past year in an endeavour to solve the problem. I think this Bill is satisfactory in every way to meet the wishes of the wheatgrowers and that it will not be open to challenge. It seeks to impose no tax on wheat but provision is being made in the wheat industry stabilisation measure, which will follow immediately after this Bill, to enable a grower to assign, of his own free will, a certain sum of money for research purposes.

Mr. Perkins: Has every grower to do that?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: No, I have explained the position.

Mr. Perkins: Then that is not what the Farmers' Union wants:

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, it is. I repeat that this measure has been brought down after collaboration with the union. Twelve months ago we thought we could make a compulsory levy or tax, but discovered that we could not do that and so we have been endeavouring in the past 12 months to evolve legislation to overcome the difficulty.

The grower who wishes to contribute to this fund will be asked to assign a certain sum—whatever is agreed upon. I feel certain it will not be more than ¼d. per bushel, although the Bill does not lay down any amount, because it is a voluntary scheme. After all, no more money can be collected than the farmers are willing to contribute. The farmer will be asked to sign an agreement during certain periods of the year—I think it is specifically laid down—authorising a deduction when he is signing his bulk wheat receipt claim for payment, a document which has to be signed by every grower delivering wheat grown in Western Australia to the Australian Wheat Board.

Mr. Perkins: Who will canvass the growers for their signatures?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That will be done through the Wheat Board. I understand that the wheat section of the Farmers' Union will be involved in regard to obtaining information. What we are attempting here is already widely known and the Australian Wheat Board is prepared to make these deductions from the farmers' accounts.

Mr. Perkins: But someone has to get the signatures of the growers.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: They will possibly be canvassed by the wheat section of the Farmers' Union because they were the principals in the application to the Government for this legislation.

Mr. Perkins: This is not what the growers anticipate.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The hon. member can take part in the debate in due course. I have taken great care to find out what is required and this, in principle, is the measure suggested by the Farmers' Union. We have knocked it into legal shape.

Mr. Nalder: Is there any legislation such as this in the other States?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I fancy the farmers in other States do contribute to something like this, but I do not know whether it is along the same lines. This is a levy voluntarily agreed to by the farmers who need not contribute unless they wish to. From the information I have received from their representatives, so much has already been said about it that the Farmers' Union feels it will get almost 100 per cent. support for the proposal. We cannot impose a tax for this purpose, but can arrange for a note to be signed by the individual farmer, at a time convenient to him and the board, for a certain amount of money to be deducted from the returns for his wheat. The State Government has agreed not to charge stamp duty in connection with the collections and that will make it easier for the growers.

Mr. Nalder: Has the Australian Wheat Board power to collect the money?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes, that has been attended to. The fund will be controlled by five trustees who will be the president of the wheat section of the Farmers' Union of W.A. Incorporated, two vice-presidents of the wheat section of the Farmers' Union of W.A. Incorporated, the director of the Institute of Agriculture of the University of Western Australia, and a person nominated by the trustees of the wheat pool of this State. It can therefore be seen that the fund will be controlled only by interested persons, and the Government will have no power at all in its collection or distribution.

Mr. Perkins: The Bill says nothing about the Government not collecting stamp duty.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is dealt with in the wheat stabilisation measure, which is to follow this one.

Mr. Perkins: That is a funny way of doing it.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I am informed that unless this Bill is first passed, we will be unable to get authority to make deductions, by means of the other

Bill. I have taken a lot of care, in the last 12 months, in finding out that this is the right way to proceed. The Bill will not affect in any way the 1953-54 harvest because there has not been time to get the signatures of the growers concerned. I repeat that we felt originally that it could be done through some sort of tax, but the Crown Law Department ruled that out of order and we are advised that this is the only way to meet the requirements of the wheat section of the Farmers' Union in this regard. We have had many discussions with that body over the last months, and even further back.

Mr. Nalder: You referred to the 1953-54 harvest. Did you mean the 1954-55 harvest?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It is to work from now on. We have been endeavouring to obtain something of this nature for a long time. First of all, we thought it could be made to apply to the 1953-54 harvest but could not circularise the growers quickly enough to obtain their opinions and signatures, and so it will take effect in relation to the 1954-55 harvest. The measure establishes a fund controlled by five interested trustees on behalf of the growers and on behalf of the Institute of Agriculture, for the purpose of building up a substantial fund for research.

This will greatly augment the work already being done by the State Government and will, I am certain, be of the utmost benefit to the wheatgrower generally. It will enable the Institute of Agriculture to have on hand a large sum of money to further its researches. We must bear in mind that it is only as a result of its efforts that we are able to get qualified officers to take on further research work and extension work under the Department of Agriculture. I think that, for the first time in the history of the wheatgrowers in this State, they have made a wise decision in approaching the Government in this regard. I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Nalder, debate adjourned.

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

BILL—WHEAT INDUSTRY STABILISATION.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [6.10] in moving the second reading said: Members will recognise as true the statement that when the present Government took office early last year the subject of wheat was highly controversial, and that it was urgent at the time for all the States to agree to a common marketing policy in regard to both export and home consumption wheat, in an endeavour—and in time—to enable the growers themselves to conduct a ballot on the proposals that would have been placed before them on stabilisation. It was also necessary at the same time to provide machinery of that kind in order that Commonwealth Government might enter into the International Wheat Agreement on behalf of Australia.

There is no doubt that the Commonwealth Government and all the State Governments were heartily in accord with the principle of stabilisation and that each of those Governments made a declaration along those lines, the Government of this State not being behind the others in that respect. We all felt that, in the light of the experience of the wheat industry over the years—and bearing in mind the most uncertain future; it is even more uncertain now—it would be in the interests of the growers to have a form of stabilisation which would be of as long duration as possible.

The trouble was that when it came to talking stabilisation, although all the State Governments agreed, in principle, on what they required, when we began to discuss the home consumption price of wheat, not only as flour but also for the pig, poultry and dairying industries, we found there was no possibility of attaining unanimity of thought between the wheatgrowing States. From that moment, we realised how difficult it would be to arrive at some agreed plan in time for the Commonwealth Government to endorse, on behalf of Australia, the requirements under the International Wheat Agreement.

The States of New South Wales, Western Australia and South Australia were first of all in agreement on a home consumption price of 15s. per bushel but Victoria stood fast against that and would not agree unless the Commonwealth Government continued to make available the subsidies it had hitherto paid—and it flatly refused to do that. The Commonwealth had entered upon a policy, so the Commonwealth Minister told us, of tapering off subsidies to primary industries until they eventually, and in the comparatively near future, would completely disappear. Thus we were left with no alternative but to try to evolve a plan outside of any

form of subsidy payments by the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth Government at that time met the Wheatgrowers' Federation and, knowing quite well that there could easily be some disagreeable happenings in relation to the sale of wheat, over the borders of some of the Eastern States when the price was 15s., agreed to the figure of 14s. That price was accepted by the Governments of Western Australia, South Australia and New South Wales, as well as being agreed to by the Farmers' Union of Western Australia.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Before the tea suspension I was giving some background of the negotiations between interested parties in wheat. I got to the position of describing the stand taken by Victoria, and also by the opposition in Queensland. This position caused the three remaining States to enter into an agreement with the Commonwealth Government to enable the Australian Wheat Board to continue to be the marketing authority, and to permit the Commonwealth Government, on behalf of Australia, to sign the International Wheat Agreement. This move brought matters to a head, and Victoria came into line with the other three big wheat producing States.

At that period, time did not permit of the holding of a ballot concerning the future of stabilisation, so the Government of the day agreed to legislate for what later became known as the reserve plan. This enabled the Commonwealth Government to ratify the wheat agreement and gave growers a guaranteed home sale price. In my opinion, there is very little security in this reserve plan as it relates to the growers. The recent action of America and Canada in their price-cutting policy should shatter any illusion that growers might have that the International Wheat Agreement would protect them.

Because of uncertain conditions overseas, and more so in other States than in Western Australia, it was necessary to make provision for adequate storage. To assist in this matter, the State Government recently made a site available at Midland Junction to Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. for a period of 20 years, and at the same time guaranteed what I consider to be generous freight concessions to compensate the growers against their wheat and other grain for export being sidetracked at Midland Junction rather than being railed direct to the port.

Ever since the reserve plan was put into operation, the Commonwealth Government and the States have continued negotiations in an endeavour to get unanimity from all the other wheatgrowing States on a home consumption price in order that we could have a properly constituted stabilisation plan. Victoria wanted a home consumption price for the three years and the last two years of the stabilisation plan; it wanted the price to be at the cost of production. In an endeavour to put a stop to this unhappy situation, members will recall that the Prime Minister called a meeting of Premiers and their Ministers of Agriculture in July of this year. At that meeting agreement was reached by all parties concerned.

Until that July conference the Commonwealth Government, on behalf of the wheatgrowers, had retained in its possession some £9,000,000 belonging to a previous stabilisation scheme. All State Premiers without exception were adamant that this amount should be paid back to the growers to whom it belonged, and that any fresh stabilisation scheme should be based on new money. This was done, and the stage was set for proposals to be submitted to the growers through the Commonwealth; those proposals based on stabilisation received an overwhelming majority in every State.

The total for the Commonwealth was 46,492 in favour of the plan and only 2,934 against it. The figures for Western Australia were 7,886 for and 919 against. So it can be seen that the growers all over the Commonwealth were in favour of the stabilisation plan according to the proposals put by the Commonwealth in agreement with the States. This legislation has passed all stages in the Commonwealth Parliament, and all States have complementary legislation which is considered to be urgent, and which should be passed through all stages if possible by the 1st December.

Mr. Lapham: Are all the Bills similar?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I believe they are identical, but Western Australia differs to some extent by reason of the extra freight allowance allowed to the State because of its geographical position. That works out at 3d. per bushel, which was agreed to at all conferences of all States. The next phase is that 1½d. per bushel is an allowable charge to cover the cost of freight to Tasmania for its share of the wheat, and, thirdly, there is provision in the Bill for the collection of the levy to which I referred when introducing the Soil Fertility Research Bill just prior to the tea suspension.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Is that a difference of 4½d. all told?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Yes. With those exceptions, the Bill is identical in every way with those being dealt with by all the other States.

Hon. A. F. Watts: We have got to pass it without amendment, or it will not work.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. It is complementary in every way to the Commonwealth legislation and it is looked at in that light. The present Bill will actually repeal the 1948-53 Wheat Industry Stabilisation Act. It is considered to be preferable from everybody's point of view—from the point of view of Parliament in studying this measure, from the department's point of view, from the wheatgrower's point of view, from the point of view of the Farmers' Union and of all those associated with it—to have a completely new Act which will include everything not in question from the old legislation, plus what is being introduced on this occasion.

Following the wheatgrowers' vote recently taken and found to be in favour of the stabilisation plan, it is proposed that a new Act shall supersede the 1953 orderly marketing legislation and operate before the next harvest. The effect of this Bill is to graft the specific features of wheat stabilisation on to the orderly marketing arrangement. These stabilisation features may be briefly stated as a guarantee by the Commonwealth of export returns, the establishment of a stabilisation fund and a tax on wheat exported from Australia. The new plan will follow directly on the old five years' stabilisation plan, which expired with the 1952-53 crop.

When the orderly marketing legislation was passed last year it was made clear that the Commonwealth was willing to legislate for a stabilisation plan, but because of lack of agreement by one State on a fundamental point, it was unable to do so before the 1953-54 crop could be harvested. It was essential that the existing wheat marketing structure with the Australian Wheat Board in the centre should be preserved, and if anything were attempted even at this stage, I believe nothing but chaotic conditions would result so far as wheat marketing is concerned both inside and outside Australia.

It has been necessary also to make the application of this Bill retrospective, so that it will include the 1953-54 crop now being marketed by the Australian Wheat Board. This gives continuity to stabilisation and is unavoidable in all the circumstances. What might have been behind the Federal Government's mind is the replacement of some portion of the £9,000,000 which it had to refund to growers and which belonged to a previous scheme. So that this could start on a reasonable basis, the Bill has been made retrospective to cover the 1953-1954 harvest, and to that extent will be responsible for recovering some of the levies. I do not know how much is involved; I have not the slightest idea, but it should be a considerable amount of money.

Mr. Perkins: It depends how much they sell their harvest for.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is so. The period of the wheat stabilisation plan is five years and it is to apply to wheat crops of the seasons 1953-1954 to 1957-1958 inclusive. The Australian Wheat Board is to be the sole authority for the marketing of wheat within Australia and for the marketing of wheat and flour for export from Australia for the period of the plan. The other main points are enumerated as follows:—

3. The Commonwealth Government will guarantee a return to growers of the ascertained cost of production in respect of up to 100 million bushels of wheat exported from Australia from each of the five wheat crops covered by the plan.

4. Stabilisation Fund: A stabilisation fund will be established by means of an export tax to be collected at the rate of 1s. 6d. per bushel when wheat export prices exceed the cost of production by this amount or more, and by that portion of 1s. 6d. by which the export prices exceed the cost of production when the excess is less than 1s. 6d. per bushel. The export tax will apply to the 1953-1954 and later crops.

5. Size of Fund: The maximum amount of the stabilisation fund will be £20,000,000. As the moneys in the fund accumulate beyond this figure, repayments from the excess accumulations will be made, after recommendations by the Australian Wheat Board, to the oldest contributing pool so as to form a revolving fund.

6. Use of Stabilisation Fund: When average export realisations fall below cost of production, export returns will be raised, in respect of up to 100 million bushels of wheat from each crop, to the cost of production level, first by drawing upon the stabilisation fund.

When the fund is exhausted, the Commonwealth Treasury will meet the obligations of the Commonwealth guarantee.

7. Home Consumption Price: The home consumption price for f.a.q. wheat will be not less than the cost of production determined for each season. This is fundamental to the plan.

Subject to this understanding that at no time will the price fall below the cost of production, however, the home consumption price for f.a.q. wheat sold for domestic human consumption and for pigs, poultry and dairy stock, will be determined by this State legislation at 14s. a bushel, bulk, f.o.r. ports. This price will vary downwards to conform to the International Wheat Agreement price current at the commencement of each season, if the International Wheat

Agreement price should be at that time less than 14s. a bushel, bulk, f.o.r. ports.

Similarly, if Australia should not be a party to an International Wheat Agreement, the home consumption price of f.a.q. wheat sold for domestic human consumption and for pigs, poultry and dairy stock, will vary downwards in conformity with the current price for export sales by the Australian Wheat Board at the commencement of each season, if the board's export price should be at that time less than 14s. a bushel, bulk, f.o.r. ports.

8. Premium on Western Australian Wheat: A premium from export realisations will be paid on wheat grown in Western Australia and exported from that State, in recognition of the natural freight advantage applying to Western Australia owing to the proximity of that State to the principal overseas markets for wheat. The premium shall be 3d. per bushel.

9. Freight on Wheat to Tasmania: Provision will be made for a loading on all wheat sold for consumption in Australia to the extent necessary to cover the cost of transporting wheat from the mainland to Tasmania in each season of the plan.

This will not affect the pool returns to growers in any way.

It is no longer necessary to argue in favour of the orderly marketing of wheat through an Australian Wheat Board. The principle is accepted by Australian Governments, irrespective of party, and it has had the unswerving support of growers' organisations over many years. This Bill incorporates the provisions for orderly marketing which were passed by Parliament in 1953, and adds new features. It is these new features which require explanation since the others have previously come under review.

The new plan covers the marketing of the five crops of the seasons 1953-1954 to 1957-1958 inclusive. The first of these crops, which is now being marketed in accordance with the existing orderly marketing legislation, is brought within the scope of this Bill which also covers the following four crops.

The Commonwealth will guarantee a return equal to cost of production on exports of up to 100,000,000 bushels from each of the five crops. This provides security in respect of returns from exports in any season up to that quantity. Therefore, in a normal year it may be said that, as part of the stabilisation plan, the Commonwealth underwrites the whole of the exports on a cost of production basis, and anything more than that 100,000,000 bushels, which is exported from the Commonwealth, will not be subject in any way to the stabilisation provisions or the guarantee, but will go into the common pool for refund to the growers in the normal way. The limitation of the Commonwealth guarantee is therefore 100,000,000 bushels.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Will we be expected to send some wheat to Tasmania?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Australian Wheat Board will determine which wheat in the Commonwealth will be used for Tasmania. I should imagine that it would normally use Western Australian wheat for export as far as it could; and possibly some of the wheat from the Eastern States, which are closer to Tasmania, would be required for Tasmania's needs.

The stabilisation fund to which I have referred is, in fact, a trust fund, and is to be used to meet the Commonwealth guarantee commitments. If the fund is exhausted at any time, the amount needed to meet the guarantee will be transferred to the fund from public revenue. If there is any balance in the fund at the end of the five-year period, it will be retained to assist in financing another stabilisation scheme should that be required by the growers of the Commonwealth and be acceptable to the Governments of that day. If the Commonwealth Minister for Commerce and Agriculture has any reason to believe that a continuation of the scheme would not be acceptable, that sum will be refunded to the growers.

It can be seen that the Commonwealth Government, and—I am sure I am right in saying—all State Governments, are even at this time thinking of a continuation of the scheme at the conclusion of another four-year period. Of course, the growers can please themselves what they do; but my own personal view is that although the wheat industry has been on a good basis for some seven years, it is going to face considerable difficulties within the next four or five years.

Mr. Perkins: Can you visualise the Commonwealth Government paying anything out of Federal revenue towards the price?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It will do so if the fund cuts out.

Mr. Perkins: Do you think that is likely to happen?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: A little while ago, under the International Wheat Agreement, we had a price of 18s. 3d. per bushel. On the free market it was 20s., and I believe that in one case it went to 21s. But the price of wheat being sold on the market today is as low as 14s. 4d. That is an extraordinary drop in a short space of time. Actually, it is only 4d. above our own home consumption price within Australia. If that can occur in such a short time, I can well imagine that the price of wheat could come down to the cost of production, which is again legislated for this year at 12s.

Mr. Perkins: Overseas prices are going up again.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: That is all to the good. But what we must do is to have provision in some Act to enable the promises of the Commonwealth Government to be carried out should the circumstances to which I have referred actually come about.

I have already introduced a Bill for the establishment of a soil fertility research fund. That Bill is tied up very closely with this one, inasmuch as in the Bill before us provision is made for the collection of the money for that fund. I am informed that the contribution will not exceed ¼d. per bushel. There is also provision in the Bill to enable a grower to assign a contribution to the soil fertility research fund payable to the trustees of that fund.

There is a tie-up between the two Bills; and as we are going to repeal the existing wheat legislation and re-enact it, with the additional features that are included in this Bill, we need to have reference in this measure to the collections for the fund to which I have referred, because it is only in our existing Act of Parliament that the Australian Wheat Board is mentioned at all, and it is that authority which is being asked to undertake this duty. That is an explanation of what I said this afternoon concerning the necessity to have this reference in the Bill. On the one hand, we have a measure to establish a fund and a trust for the disbursement of the money; and, in the second Bill, we give authority to the Australian Wheat Board so to act.

I am informed that under the old stabilisation scheme, the wheat board in this State was an agency board of the Australian Wheat Board. However, last year, under the reserve plan, this board became the Western Australian Wheat Board and a licensed receiver of the Australian Wheat Board. That set-up is retained in the Bill, and it is most essential that that should be so. The only change in relation to the board is in regard to the terms of office of the members.

The Commonwealth desired to establish uniformity in regard to the period of membership of grower-members of the Australian Wheat Board. Therefore, it made provision in its legislation that the terms of office of all members of the Australian Wheat Board should in future run concurrently. The present terms of office of the Victorian and South Australian grower-members coincide, but those of the grower-members from other States terminate at different times. The Commonwealth did not consider—and I agree with it—that this was a satisfactory arrangement, as it militated against efficient administration. It is sought to overcome that disability by means of this Bill.

Each full board is to have a definite life of three years, commencing from October, 1953, when the Wheat Marketing Act was proclaimed. This Bill contains a similar provision in relation to the State board of Western Australia. The representation on the board is the same as under the reserve plan. It is a board of seven comprising—

(a) four persons elected by the Farmers' Union of Western Australia (Inc.) appointed to represent the interests of wheat-growers;

(b) one person being the occupant for the time being of the office of manager of Co-operative Bulk Handling Ltd. appointed to represent the interests of licensed receivers;

(c) one person whose name is selected by the Minister from a panel of three names submitted to him by the W.A. Flour Millowners' Association appointed to represent the interests of flourmillers; and

(d) one person nominated by the Western Australian Government Railways Commission appointed to represent the interests of that commission.

That is the set-up required by the Commonwealth legislation now in force and required by the Commonwealth from all State Governments so far as the orderly marketing of wheat under stabilisation provisions is concerned. The matter was very controversial for a long period, and this is the first time since I have been Minister that we have been able to reach an agreement in such a way as to give growers some feeling of security for five years of their wheat marketing operations. Bearing in mind that the Commonwealth and the State Governments are in accord in their desire to continue stabilisation of the wheat industry, I feel that the growers should be thankful that they have Governments with those ideas, whether they be Liberal or Labour.

To my mind, there is nothing surer than that there is no security with regard to the marketing of wheat at present—or very little—and I am inclined to think that the position will get worse. It is therefore to the growers' own advantage to support the provisions of this Bill as they have been supported whole-heartedly by growers in other States. Some States have already passed legislation, and I am informed that it is important to have legislation passed through all States, if possible, before the beginning of December. I do not say that in order to hurry members, but to indicate what is most desirable from the point of view of the Commonwealth. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, debate adjourned.

BILL—PETROLEUM ACT AMENDMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn) [8.0] in moving the second reading said: The parent Act was enacted in 1936—18 years ago—which was long before oil was determinedly sought. The spasmodic attempts that were made to discover oil before that time led the Commonwealth, first of all, to move in the matter of enacting legislation to make the necessary provision in the event of success eventuating. The majority of the States then followed with more or less complementary legislation based on similar foundations and couched in almost the same terms. That Act has been amended on three occasions—in 1940, 1949 and 1951.

Any member who has taken the opportunity to study the legislation will agree with me that, after the passing of the last amendment, the Act became very difficult to interpret and so caused quite an amount of confusion among those who desired to become acquainted with its provisions and to know what they meant. For the purpose of clarifying to some extent the amendments made over the years, I caused, in July last, a reprint to be made of the legislation as it existed at that time. Copies of the reprint are available to all those who wish to read it and who are desirous of speaking on the Bill. For the purpose of being able to understand more clearly the intention of the amendments, they will find the reprint very handy.

Oil was discovered in November, 1953, and it was immediately found that some amendments were required to bring the legislation into true perspective for the working of oil in this State. In the light of experience, it was decided that the amendments be brought down this session. For the purpose of making them as complete as possible, some delay has been occasioned. I rather regret that the measure has come to the House so late in the year.

The Bill contains 39 amendments, the majority of which are not of a very important nature in some respects, but, of course, they could have an important bearing on the future activities of the State in the event of copious supplies of oil being discovered. The present Act limits control to the low-water mark. It is quite possible that oil deposits may extend under the seabed. In many countries, the incidence of oil appearing some distance off-shore has become quite a factor in the huge extent of increased oil findings that have taken place in later years. With that thought in mind, we felt that our jurisdiction should be extended to the territorial limits which are defined on a three-mile basis. For this purpose it was necessary to amend the Act; and so the Bill contains an amendment to cover that situation.

Another provision deals with wardens. The present definition of "warden" really includes only the person for the time being who occupies the position of Under Secretary for Mines. Because it is necessary for activities to be carried out on his behalf in so many parts of the State, far removed from his normal place of business, it is felt that "warden" should be defined to include wardens already employed by the department and stationed at various outposts. At Carnarvon the clerk of courts does the warden's work, and at Kimberley and Geraldton we have men performing similar duties to those of the chief warden. They are all skilled men in the matter of dispensing mining law. This amendment will simplify the operation of the Act in general.

Another point is that the Under Secretary for Mines is far too busy to go to various parts of the State to carry out the duties of a warden. Therefore it has become necessary for the appointment of those men who are already wardens to be included in the measure so that they will be able to act in various parts of the State. Some of the major matters that would be handled by wardens would include operations on private property.

When it becomes necessary to enter a pastoralist's property for the purpose of oil search, his fencing, roadways, sheepyards or other improvements may have to be disturbed. Fences or other improvements may have to be removed, and it would cause unnecessary delay to have to refer such matters to the central warden for permission, and then for him to refer them back to the local warden. Again, the necessity for the protection of the rights of both the petroleum people and the pastoralists is something that can be dealt with on the spot by the average warden in outback areas. We therefore feel that the widening of the term "warden" is necessary.

Another provision deals with the transfer of licences to prospect and the transfer of petroleum leases. It is considered desirable that the transfer of any title whatsoever should be subject to ministerial approval. It is felt that the necessity for such transfers to come under the notice of the Minister will tend to prevent trafficking in licences and will also ensure that the Government will have full knowledge of whatever transactions are to be put into operation before the disposal of the licences or leases is finalised. Such a provision would prevent titles being taken up purely on a speculative basis.

We have had many instances in the past 12 months of permits to explore being sought purely for the purpose of speculation. I think it would be entirely wrong if some person were to get a lease or licence or permit and then, after having disposed of the area on the share market, immediately escape any acrimony that might eventually be sheeted home to him. We feel that before the transfer of a licence is issued, the person concerned should be made subject to the Minister so that he has to obtain permission to make the transfer.

It has been found necessary to alter the compensation section. The object of this amendment is to provide that work shall not be undertaken on private land until the operator has tendered or paid to the owner the compensation agreed upon or assessed by the warden. If a fairly substantial removal of fences were to take place on private property, without any agreement having been reached as to compensation, and damage resulted it would obviously be wrong from the point of view of the owner of the property, because it might be almost impossible for him eventually to get compensation. We feel that this amendment is necessary from that point of view. It will be a safeguard against the undertaking of any activities unless they are first brought under the notice of the warden and fairly assessed.

The new provision will clarify the position in regard to compensation because it will cover loss or damage to any surface improvements. As the Act stands, every private block has to be referred to the Minister before a petroleum operator can start working on it. The amendment will enable the work to be commenced as soon as agreement is reached between the petroleum company and the person who owns the property concerned. Once agreement is reached and the warden is satisfied, the company can go ahead.

In the Bill is a restrictive subclause dealing with licences and leases relating to certain private lands. The section at present governing this position was taken originally from the Mining Act of 1904. It aimed at preventing the disfigurement of private property by open cuts, shafts or other mining activities. It is just too silly to say that the section which covers the ruining of yards, gardens, orchards, cultivated fields and so on should apply in the search for oil. In fact, it would mean that in all our southern areas, where cultivated lands abound in every district, the search for oil would be restricted. It is realised that oil exploration does not have the same damaging effect as the use of open-cut mining and therefore it is not as necessary to have the section retained in this Act as it is to have it in the Mining Act. The section still remains in the Mining Act and will apply to the mining of gold, minerals and other metals.

A new section is added setting out the compensation payable to the lessee of a pastoral lease in the event of damage caused. Under the Act as it stands a pastoral lease is Crown land, as regards the search for petroleum, and therefore pastoralists have no right to compensation. We are endeavouring to correct that position so that, if compensable, there will be a provision in the Act under which a person whose property is damaged can apply for redress.

There is another section in the Act which is a relic of the 1904 Mining Act and this concerns partnerships. We feel, in the light of experience gained, that it should be repealed. It was included in the original Act in 1936 apparently because of a lack of knowledge of what might transpire in the event of oil being discovered; or perhaps it was a hand-down from the Mining Act without any real thought that its application could have any meaning. Under the section two or more individuals can apply for titles. It is recognised today that the search for petroleum requires such highly technical knowledge, such enormous sums of money, such huge equipment, and such vast spaces have to be covered, that an individual can no longer undertake it. As a result, the partnerships section is redundant and we feel it should be repealed. This section will still apply in the 1904 Mining Act and will not be struck out of that statute.

There is a section dealing with the duties of a holder of a permit to explore and we consider that it is not sufficiently explicit. The definition does not cover the full position as we know it to exist today and there is an obligation on the holder of a permit to explore to report his activities to the department. The Act provides that a report shall be furnished 30 days after the end of the quarter. Earlier in the first session this year, the member for Mt. Lawley questioned me on several aspects of this matter. The Act at present provides that a full quarter can elapse before it becomes necessary for the operating company to furnish a report to the department. In addition, he has another 30 days, so that oil could be discovered on the 1st January in any year and there would be no necessity, according to the Act as it stands, for the department to be notified until the end of April.

Mr. McCulloch: Was the member for Mt. Lawley correct in his assertions?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: He was partly right. It has not been obligatory on any company to render a report to the department until 30 days after the end of the quarter. We feel that that should be rectified and for the purpose of getting right on to the spot we say that immediately oil is discovered, the company concerned should notify the department and furnish details in regard to the known

composition, the quality, and data on the oil-bearing structure. That information has to be furnished now although the period allowed is much longer.

It is proposed to reduce the period of licences to prospect. At present the Act provides that a licence to prospect shall remain in force for four years and that the Minister may grant renewals, on a 12 monthly basis, for two years. In other words, the Act provides that a licence to prospect can be operative for a six-yearly period. In the light of experience gained it has been found that that could be embarrassing to whoever is in control of the Mines Department in this State, and we consider that the period should be shortened.

The amendment preserves the terms of licences granted before the 1st January, 1955. In other words, Wapet, which has 20 licences, and Freney's, which has three, will not be subject to this amendment. Their licences have been granted prior to the 1st January, 1955, and nothing can interfere with them. I can assure members that careful consideration has been given to this aspect and our considered opinion is that the six-yearly period should be shortened. The proposal in the Bill is to shorten the term of a licence so that operations can be reviewed.

We propose to reduce the first period from four years to two years so that we can bring under review the activities of anyone holding a licence to prospect. All these people are not imbued with the high ideals of some of the major companies and a lot of marking time can take place, and has been taking place. As a result, it would be unwise for us to leave such a long period in which very little activity might take place. It might be a case of striking while the iron is hot; there may be a lot of capital from overseas that would be invested almost immediately if the areas to prospect were available. But, of course, as the Act stands, they could be tied up four years and, on the basis of a further two years, upon application to the Minister, the period becomes excessive and, in our opinion, should be reduced.

The proposal is the reduction of the period first granted from four years to two years and the renewal, instead of being on a two single-year basis, should be extended to a three single-year basis so that the coverage is actually a five-year period as against six years which now exists. The advantage is that a review of the activities of the holder of a licence can take place from two years onwards and it should be of distinct advantage in the operations of the Act.

I have already dealt with the matter of a permit to explore and the reporting of the discovery of oil. We feel that the same conditions should apply with regard to the licence to prospect and if any noteworthy activity takes place within the period it should be obligatory upon the company to report the occurrence, particularly the discovery of petroleum, in a manner similar to that under the permit to explore, if that amenment in the Bill is agreed to.

Mr. May: Do all the oil companies have to be domiciled in Australia?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, there is nothing to say that they shall be. A new section, dealing with all licences to prospect granted after the 1st January, 1955, if oil is discovered, is included in the Bill. Under the Act at present, the holder of a permit to explore is entitled, within six months after he has discovered oil, to make an application for the area, and that will be known, in the future, as a licence to prospect. I want to make it clear that a licence to prospect is the second stage and once it is reached the holder has to determine the extent of the structure that he intends to include in the licence to prospect. Having made that determination we say that the State has a right to an equity in that area in the future

In many parts of the world the Governments concerned have a right to every second area and I will have something to say on that at a later stage. Many of the areas are worked on what is known as a grid system. For example, the company may decide to take up an area of ten square miles under its licence to prosepct and the Government would then take an area surrounding that tract so that no other licence to prospect could be issued for an area beyond the boundary set out in the licence to prospect already granted. I have discussed this aspect with companies generally and they say it would have a stifling effect on expansion and that they would have great difficulty to operate if such circumstances prevailed.

Further, some companies take up alternate structures, others take 25 per cent. of the area specified and again others would take a larger percentage. With regard to licences that are current up to January, 1955, we envisage that so much of that area can be applied for, not exceeding one half of the structure. Therefore, if the Bill becomes law, it will mean that a company that has a licence to prospect an area of 200 square miles, would have the option of selecting half the structure, which half could cover any portion of the whole.

I might add that when a structure is applied for, it is only recognised after it has been geologically examined by a State geologist. A determination is made by the geological section of the Mines Department of the true boundaries of the structure and therefore it is not possible for a company to apply for double the area it requires, with the idea of retaining half for its own use and hand the

other half back to the State, unless, of course, a mistake or some unfortunate circumstance occurs.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: If the structure were a small one, the company could get only half even although it was small.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and the other half would be reserved to Her Majesty. Virtually, the application for a licence to prospect by a company made after January, 1955, would be subject to the provision that all licences to prospect granted prior to that date would be recognised under the existing Act. If and when, after half of the area specified in the licence to prospect has been reserved to the State, the Government decides to dispose of the reserved area, the discoverer will be given first right to acquire that area on the terms and conditions that relate to its disposal. It would be possible for the Government of the day to subdivide the area and to auction or call tenders for any part of it.

Personally, I feel that 200 square miles is a large tract of country to be granted in a licence to prospect having in mind that the holder of it is fully entitled, on the discovery of oil, to divide that area of 200 square miles into as many leases as he desires and the Government of the day, by legislation, is compelled to grant those leases. In the event of a licence to prospect being granted, the company holding that licence could divide the area into 10 or 20 smaller blocks, each of which would become a lease in the sole right of the company, and no one else.

Under this provision, however, half of the structure would be held by the company that had expended its money and the other half, or subdivisions of it, which is reserved for the Government, could eventually be possessed by the original discoverers of the oil. However, if they were not sufficiently interested, the Government of the day would be entitled, after the first refusal by the company, to sell, lease, auction or call tenders for the area or act in any way it thought fit, under the provisions of the section.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Does that mean the portion of the structure that is oil bearing?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It could or could not mean that, according to the development of the structure. Normally, a structure has a defined shape and area and it is developed on the same lines by drilling as Wapet has done at Rough Range. In that area the company proceeded to bore on No. 1 site, which it considered was the middle of a structure, but subsequently it discovered that it was on a perimeter and, after finding oil, it moved its drill to No. 2 site, in the hope that it would be drilling nearer to the centre of the structure, after having confirmed the opinion held by it that it had been drilling on the perimeter.

After boring on No. 2 site had failed, No. 3 drill was put down at a spot almost diagonal to No. 1 drill hole. That drill also proved to be dry and it was then decided to alter its plans and eventually No. 4 bore was put down with a negative result. Now, No. 5 drill hole is nearing the point where oil was struck in No. 1 well. So there is nothing definite about the drilling methods. Although geologists can be reasonably sure from the outline of the structure and its surface indications, and from their seismic readings, that oil is likely to be discovered, it is still only conjecture, and the result obtained by drilling is the only means of being certain of the correct dimensions of the structure.

Thus, there is no definite method of development. The hit-and-miss method is still the prevailing one, although over the years much geological data has been gathered and therefore knowledge on this subject has been widened. The experts in this field are able to read from the surface indications and definite trends what the possibilities and the value of a structure may be. The Act provides for applicants to mark grounds on the basis of rectangular or irregular shaped areas. We now seek an amendment to the Act providing for boundaries to be in the direction of the meridian and at right angles to the meridian on what I termed a few moments ago, as the grid system. This system has been adopted universally.

By the use of this system, it means that by marking the maps of all countries, it would be possible, without the use of surveyors, to read and understand what is explained in a description of any area of land in any territory in any part of the world. This system, of course, is based on the meridian and brings into relief the entire area—in this case the State—that is marked off in relief according to this system. So, without any trouble we can, under the grid system, mark off in the Perth office of the Mines Department, every area that is applied for and we will be able to base some of our future applications on the reading of those maps.

We have also been able, to some extent, to base some of the past applications on the grid system. That will be a safeguard, at least, against some applicants in the future and it will simplify the activities of the department. Provision is also made to clothe the Government with authority in regard to applications for licences for an area on which oil has been discovered. As the member for Mt. Lawley will appreciate, it is necessary, under this new amendment, for the Government to have some authority over the territory that will be retained by it.

At present, it appears that, under the Petroleum Act, there is no section granting any authority of that nature. Further, authority is sought for the right to sell

those areas by tender, auction, or under any such conditions as the Minister thinks fit. Those conditions would be determined by a number of factors. The conditions may relate to the geographical position or the oil may be discovered in territory which is proved to be inaccessible.

Furthermore, it may only be a small oil strike which has little, if any, commercial possibility. There may be a number of circumstances. Nevertheless, we consider it is necessary that the Government should have power to exercise control over the area in whatever manner it thinks fit, according to the particular circumstances.

The parent Act provides for a royalty of not less than 5 per cent. and not more than 10 per cent. The rate is to be fixed by the Minister and under prevailing conditions. In the case of Wapet the amount has been fixed by agreement; from memory that company has the right to continue operations and to pay only 5 per cent. in royalties. It has a 15-year period to operate before it can be brought into line with other companies. Before its agreement with the Government can be altered, that period must elapse. To some extent that would be a reward for the enterprise it has shown in coming to this State.

If oil is produced in any large quantities the concession will undoubtedly reach a colossal figure by the expiration of the 15-year period. This period of 15 years and the rate of 5 per cent. does not commence until the first of the company's wells produces oil. If a well is established in two or three years time, the company will still have 15 years to run under the agreement. It appears that the company has a tremendous advantage if it is able to consolidate on the success it has already obtained and on its future operations.

Mr. McCulloch: Does that only apply to Wapet?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That applies only to the agreement now existing with Wapet, and to no other company. The only other holder of a licence to prospect and which has not yet achieved any great success, is Freney's. Its operations are in an initial stage at present and, of course, it will come under the Act and not the agreement applying to Wapet. The 10 per cent. maximum is much lower than the maximum for most countries where the rate varies from 12½ to 15 per cent. In some cases it is as high as 16⅔ per cent.

So it will be seen that in the event of Western Australia becoming a major oil producer, it will not gain a very great advantages unless there is more elasticity in the imposition of royalties. The Government considers that the 5 per cent. minimum must be retained because on many occasions it may be necessary to put a producing company on the minimum. It can be explained that in many cases the incidence of oil is verging on commercial proportions, but not sufficient to attract a big company to bring in operatives or to lay costly pipelines or to go through the necessary arrangements to extract a small quantity of oil.

Obviously that would be unattractive to a large company. As in other countries, it would become attractive to small operators. It would mean that the Government of the day would have discretion, according to the valuation of a particular well to be opened up, to reduce the amount of royalty down to possibly the minimum of 5 per cent. The Government feels that the maximum of 10 per cent. is far too low.

Provision has been made in the Bill to enable the Government to increase the maximum from 10 to 15 per cent., but it does not mean that the Government will impose 15 per cent. It might be justified in imposing only 10 per cent., but, on the other hand, with a very heavy gush of oil or a very heavy producer being found, the Government could impose a higher rate of royalty. Therefore, the sliding scale should be used to embrace the range from 5 to 15 per cent.

Mr. Hutchinson: Who makes such changes?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The valuation is made by the Minister in charge on the assessment of the oil strike. As I explained, it is a matter of discretion. Obviously it would be silly to impose 12½ per cent. if a well could only carry a 7 per cent. royalty. It would be just as stupid for the Government to impose a 5 per cent. royalty on a well that could carry 10 or 12 per cent. Every individual well would be evaluated and a determination would be made as to the royalty that area could carry. Some of the factors to be taken into consideration are the geographical position, the cost of production, the output of the particular well, marketing and transport costs.

Mr. Hutchinson: And possibly the extent of development elsewhere.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. All those factors would receive consideration before imposing a royalty. I think it could be easily arranged under that principle. There does not seem to be any obstacle to prevent a proper perspective to be obtained. It would be silly for the Government to attempt to kill the goose that laid the golden egg, because this would be detrimental to the interests of the State.

There are several consequential and small amendments. The Bill as presented will find general appeal. Its main provisions have been discussed with the oil people themselves. They know what it contains and are happy with the method of administration and with the intentions contained in the amendments. They realise they are fully protected in their operations up to the end of this year, and their future operations will be governed by the new provisions. When it is realised that at present the company holds under licence

to prospect about 4,500 square miles of territory, which is a big area in any country, it is a big undertaking.

Once a licence to prospect is granted, a company can apply for the entire area under licence to be converted into leases. Neither the Minister nor anyone else will have any jurisdiction to refuse. He would be obliged to grant leases for the areas so developed. Naturally the company must comply with the conditions embodied in a lease. The conditions are not cumbersome and will not embarrass a company if it finds oil in this State. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 18th August of the debate on the second reading.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: As this Bill requires a constitutional majority to pass the second reading, I shall call for a division.

Division taken with the following result:—

Ayes	22
Noes	19
Majority for	3

Ayes.	
Mr. Andrew	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Brady	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Graham	Mr. McCulloch
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Moir
Mr. Heal	Mr. Norton
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. May
	(Teller.)

Noes.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Brand	Mr. Nimmo
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. North
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Court	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Doney	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Wild
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Yates
Mr. Manning	Mr. Bovell
Sir Ross McLarty	*(Teller.)*

Pairs.	
Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. Tonkin	Mr. Ackland
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Hill
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Mann

Mr. SPEAKER: As a constitutional majority is necessary to enable the Bill to pass the second reading, and as the division does not disclose a constitutional majority, the Bill fails to pass the second reading.

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading—Defeated.

Order of the Day read for the resumption from the 14th September of the debate on the second reading.

Question put and negatived.

Bill defeated.

BILL—ELECTORAL DISTRICTS AND PROVINCES ADJUSTMENT.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [9.2] in moving the second reading said: This Bill if it becomes law will take the place of the Electoral Districts Act, 1947. The first and last redistribution under that Act was in 1948 and the result of the redistribution of electoral boundaries applied at the 1950 and 1953 general elections for the Assembly and for all Council elections that have taken place since 1948.

At present, on the basis of the existing Act, 15 Assembly districts are 20 per cent. in excess of the quota ascertained under the provisions of the Act and two Assembly districts are short of the ascertained quota by that percentage or more. Most of the Assembly districts 20 per cent. or more in excess of the ascertained quota to any considerable extent are in the metropolitan area, and the two districts which are less than the quota by 20 per cent. or more are in what we might call the outer goldfields district.

It is well known that the change in population has been considerable in recent years, most of the additional population having found its way into the metropolitan area. Today there would be well over 55 per cent. of the total population resident within the metropolitan district.

The new Bill, just as did the existing Act, proposes to set up an independent commission, the personnel being the same as that of the existing commission, namely, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, the Under Secretary of Lands and Surveys and the Chief Electoral Officer of the State Electoral Department. I believe that everyone in the State has confidence in the members of the commission, and I am sure that everyone would have confidence in their independent outlook and in any decisions they might make in the future.

The Bill proposes that, as soon as practicable or possible after the measure becomes law, the first redistribution of boundaries shall take place. On the Bill becoming law, there would be no necessity

to issue a proclamation to authorise the commission to go ahead and make the first redistribution of boundaries; the passing of the Bill of itself would automatically create the situation that would enable and authorise the commission to go ahead.

In more than one respect, the Bill is different from the existing Act. One respect in which it is different is the provision that there shall be a limitation to the number of redistributions that could take place in any particular period. Under the existing Act, a redistribution could take place once every three years. Under the proposed law, apart from the first redistribution, there could be no subsequent redistribution to an extent greater than once in every seven years. Most members, if not all, will agree that it would not be desirable to have a redistribution every three years. The Bill endeavours to meet that situation by providing that, after the first redistribution, there shall not be another more than once in every seven years.

It is necessary, as well as desirable, that there should be some stability in the boundaries of electoral districts once they are established on a new basis. It would not be at all a happy situation if, at the general election every three years, members had to face up to new boundaries and go through all the rigmarole—if it may fairly be described as such—of having new boundaries created, new rolls compiled and so on. Therefore I consider that the proposal to limit reasonably the number of redistributions that may be made from time to time will commend itself to members of this House and, I hope, to members of the general public.

Under this measure, the North-West area of the State as defined in the present Act would remain as at present; in other words, the North-West area would have the same boundaries as an area and would retain three Assembly districts and continue as one province in connection with the Council. It would still be within the power of the commission, as it is under the existing law, to alter the boundaries of the three Assembly districts in the North-West, but the boundaries of the total area would remain as at present.

The Bill proposes to create three new areas apart from the existing North-West area. The first new area to be created would be known as the metropolitan area and it would have 23 Assembly members. The second new area to be created would be described as the agricultural and central mining area and would also have 23 members. The third new area to be created would be known as the pastoral and outer mining area and would have three Assembly members.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Are the areas fixed by the Bill?

The PREMIER: No, they are not defined in the Bill. The Government considers that as much discretion as possible should be given to the commission because of its being completely independent. We feel that it would not be right and proper for the Assembly, or for Parliament as a whole, to define the boundaries of any of the areas except the North-West area. That area really defines itself, and it is necessary for Parliament on this occasion, as on the previous occasion, to lay down in respect of the North-West not only the boundaries but also the number of Assembly and Council members to be given to that area. This Bill makes no alteration whatever to the existing situation in the North-West.

As I have suggested, the Bill leaves entirely with the commission the discretion and authority to define and lay down the boundaries of the proposed three new areas —metropolitan, agricultural and central mining, pastoral and outer mining. I believe that most, if not all, members would agree that the existing metropolitan area is now too restricted in view of the very substantial growth that has taken place in recent years, which increase is continuing.

In fact, I think that the metropolitan area is likely to continue to grow in population as time goes on, and the Government believes that the commission should decide just where the boundaries of the new metropolitan area shall be placed. Similarly, we think that the commission should make a like decision in regard to the agricultural and central mining area, although that to some extent decides itself, and a like decision of the boundaries of the proposed new pastoral and outer mining area, although there, too, to some extent, the boundaries decide themselves.

This Bill, the same as the existing Act, lays down a weighing of votes as between one area and the other, except in relation to the North-West. No weighting of votes is required in connection with that area as against other areas because the North-West of the State is decided clearly by the legislation. The weighting of votes as between the three proposed new areas will be on the following lines:—Every three electors in the proposed metropolitan area will count as one elector; every three electors in the agricultural and central mining area will count as two electors, and every one elector in the pastoral and outer mining area will count as one elector. Under the present Act, every two electors in the metropolitan area count as one; every one elector in the rest of the State except the North-West counts as one elector.

It will be seen that an attempt is being made in this measure to carry a reasonable weighting of the value of votes, as

between the metropolitan area and areas outside the metropolitan area, to a more logical conclusion than was done when the original Bill was passed and than is done naturally under the Act which developed out of that Bill. Under the existing set-up, we have the metropolitan area votes weighted and then we have all the rest of the State, except the North-West, weighted on the same basis. Obviously, there ought to be some reasonable differentiation between the value of a vote at, say, Gosnells in the district represented by the member for Dale and the value of a vote cast in Wiluna, Meekatharra or some other centre far removed from the metropolitan area.

In other words, if it is a reasonable proposition to give an elector 20 miles from Perth double the voting value of an elector at Victoria Park, it is equally reasonable to give an elector 500 or 700 miles from Perth some greater voting value than the elector at Armadale, Kalamunda or some other place close to the metropolitan area. That is why, in this measure, we have introduced a third weighting system. Under the Act, there are two weighting systems; one in the metropolitan area and one in the rest of the State except the North-West, and in the Bill now before us there are three weighting systems; one for the metropolitan area, one for the agricultural and central mining districts, and the third for the pastoral and outer mining districts of the State.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do the commissioners define the metropolitan area?

The PREMIER: The commission will do so. As I explained, this Bill proposes to give the commission all the discretion and authority possible. We feel it should be the responsibility of the commission and not Parliament to fix the boundaries. We know that when Parliament comes to fix the boundaries, there is always the temptation for the party in power with a majority to fix the boundaries a bit its own way, if that is reasonably practicable and if the result desired is capable of being achieved within the Parliament.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Does the Bill allocate the number of seats for each area?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Will they remain the same?

The PREMIER: Yes. The number of seats provided for in the Bill will remain the same, but the commission will decide the boundaries of each proposed new area. There will be 23 seats provided in the Bill for the proposed new metropolitan area, but the commission will decide the boundaries of that area.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: From time to time?

The PREMIER: As soon as possible after the Bill becomes law and thereafter not more than once in every seven years.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: In every seven years it can alter the boundaries but not the number of seats in particular areas, I take it?

The PREMIER: That would be so.

Mr. Hutchinson: Would they alter them according to a quota—

The PREMIER: The commission would always have discretion and authority to alter the boundaries of the areas and of individual districts within a particular area, but it would never at any time have power to increase the number of members in a given area. That would be the responsibility of Parliament if at any time a situation arose in which it became necessary to increase the number of members in one particular area, as against another. It seems to me that would be a problem which the Government of the day would be in duty bound to bring to Parliament for consideration and decision.

Mr. Hutchinson: But there is no quota for them as a term of reference for any alteration they may possibly make in seven years' time?

[*Mr. Brady took the Chair.*]

The PREMIER: They would operate on the basis of this Bill, in the form in which it became an Act and would, in seven years' time, if a redistribution was then justified by the necessary alteration up or down, in a sufficient number of districts, bring about another redistribution of boundaries and if, after the passing of seven years from the first redistribution under this proposed law, there was not sufficient justification for a redistribution at that time, no redistribution would take place. For a redistribution to take place seven years after the first one, there would have to be the basic necessity as established by the required changes up or down in a sufficient number of Legislative Assembly districts.

The quota of electors for each area is to be obtained by applying the ratio, which I have explained briefly, and the method of calculation is set out in considerable detail in the Bill, where I think members will find it on pages 8 and 9. I believe they will find it easier to comprehend what is involved in that detailed description in that way than they would by having it told to them by me or anybody else.

Under the Bill, the commissioners will be given the right to use a marginal allowance for each proposed new area. The marginal allowance permitted for the metropolitan area is 2½ per cent., above or below. For the agricultural and central mining areas it is 5 per cent. above or

below, and for the pastoral and outer mining areas, 15 per cent. over or below. These proposed marginal allowances would be used at the commission's discretion and would enable it to define clearly the external boundaries in regard to the respective areas.

The Bill will also allow the commissioners, as a discretionary right, a marginal allowance of 15 per cent., over or below, in respect of the quota for each individual district. I think the existing Act provides for a marginal allowance of 10 per cent., but when the commissioners carried out the redistribution in 1948, they found that the 10 per cent. marginal allowance above or below was so restrictive as to justify a recommendation from them on this occasion to increase it from the 10 per cent. specified in the Act to the 15 per cent. laid down in the Bill.

The proposed adjustment to the Legislative Assembly districts, if agreed to, will naturally make necessary some adjustments to Legislative Council province boundaries, and the Bill gives the commissioners authority to adjust province boundaries as they think reasonable and just.

The total number of members of the Legislative Assembly contemplated in the Bill is 52 as against a total number of 50 at present. It is thought that this is justified on two grounds; firstly, that a redistribution under the existing Act would reduce the number of Legislative Assembly seats in the country and increase the number of Assembly seats in the metropolitan area, and the second, and perhaps stronger, reason is that the population of Western Australia has increased considerably since the present number of 50 members for the Legislative Assembly was first decided upon.

Another reason, if one is required, is that the work which members of Parliament are called upon to do in these days —particularly as regards Assembly members—has increased out of all knowledge. I think that would be true even if we took into consideration only the period since the war. Members who have been in this House for over 30 years will know that a member of Parliament is called upon to do not only a great deal more work than 25 or 30 years ago, but also a much greater variety of work.

Hon. L. Thorn: That is something upon which we can agree with you.

The PREMIER: Consequently, I think the proposal in the Bill to increase the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly from 50 to 52 is thoroughly justified. However, I have some further information which I wish to place before members in connection with that matter.

In the year 1899, which is over 50 years ago, the number of members in the Legislative Assembly was increased from 33 to 50. Accordingly, Western Australia in the year 1899 had as many members of the Legislative Assembly as it has today. The population in 1899 was 170,000; but today it is getting on towards 650,000, if it has not already passed the figure. That increase in population since 1899 is well on towards 400 per cent.; yet during all those years, and despite the fact that our population has increased so substantially during the period, there has up to the present time been no increase at all in the number of members of the Legislative Assembly.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Why is it considered two extra members are sufficient?

The PREMIER: The Government would not be wedded to the proposed increase of only two members; we decided on two as being perhaps the minimum increase that would be justified by circumstances. For instance, some members argue that we should have an uneven total number of members in the Legislative Assembly. I have no doubt it would not be difficult to put up a convincing argument to show that the total number in the Legislative Assembly should be increased to more than 52. However, the Government chose the figure of 52 but, as I mentioned a moment ago, I do not think we are unalterably wedded to that figure.

It does provide an indication, however, that the Government believes there is justification now to give serious consideration to increasing the number of members in this House. If we consider it for a moment we will find that the Federal Parliament works upon a system which is more or less automatic in the number of members who go to that Parliament from this State and from any other, as a sufficient increase in population takes place from time to time. Originally, Western Australia had only five members in the Federal Parliament.

I think that situation continued until a few years ago when our number, because of an increase of population in this State. rose from five to eight members. I understand that increase of our membership in the House of Representatives took place in 1948. According to other information supplied to me, our State will, in the reasonably near future, gain one additional member in the Federal House of Representatives. When that takes place, we in Western Australia will have nine members going to the Federal House from this State; that would be an increase of from five in 1947 to nine in, say, 1955, which would constitute an increase of nearly 100 per cent in a period of about eight or nine years.

Mr. J. Hegney: A new quota will be struck because of the increase in population.

The PREMIER: Yes; it will be brought about because of the relative increase in population in this State as compared with

other States. I believe two of these States will lose a member when this Federal redistribution takes place. We will gain an additional member, and, if I remember rightly, so will South Australia. I think Queensland and New South Wales are the two States that will each lose a member.

I would like briefly to give a comparison of the distribution of members over the various parts of the State in the Assembly at present. In the comparison, figures will also be given to show what might be likely to happen if the existing law were put into operation; and further figures to show what would happen if the present Bill were to become law. The present set-up is that we have a total of 50 members of the Legislative Assembly; 20 of them come from the existing metropolitan area, three, of course, from the North-West, and the other 27 from the remainder of the State.

If the present Act were put into operation and the redistribution of Legislative Assembly electoral boundaries were to take place under the provisions of that Act, the probable position would be 22 members in the metropolitan area—under the boundaries which now exist for the metropolitan area; the North-West would have three, as at present; this would make 25, leaving 25 members for the balance of the State.

Under the proposed new set-up contemplated in this Bill, the metropolitan area would have 23 members. No one would know just where the boundaries of the new metropolitan area would run, but presumably they would expand beyond the existing boundaries. I think that would be inevitable, and, in addition, it would be very necessary and desirable. The North-West would have three members, as at present, which would make 26, and the balance of the 52—namely 26—would be in the rest of the State, with three of that 26 in the pastoral and outer mining areas, and the balance—namely 23—in the agricultural and central mining districts.

I would think the commission in its consideration of what would constitute the central mining district would undoubtedly take the area of Kalgoorlie, Boulder and possibly Coolgardie. As I said earlier, the commission will have absolute authority and complete discretion to define the boundaries of these new areas, as seems right and reasonable and proper to do. The commission will have the further discretion and authority of deciding the boundaries of the individual districts within the proposed new areas once they have been defined by the commission.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Do you not think it would be more satisfactory for us to clearly define who the deputy commissioner shall be, and not leave it for the Governor to decide?

The PREMIER: The Government would have no objection to the deputy commissioner being defined.

Hon. D. Brand: Does such a provision exist in the old Act?

The PREMIER: I think the present Act does provide in a specific way for deputies. We find the following provision contained in Subsection (2) of Section 2 of the principal Act:—

> The Governor may, in the absence of the chairman, appoint some other judge of the Supreme Court to act as a commissioner in his place, and may appoint any fit person to act temporarily as a commissioner in place of the Under Secretary for the Lands and Surveys Department of the State or the Chief Electoral Officer.

The present Act lays down that a judge of the Supreme Court has to be appointed in the absence of the chairman of the commission, who is the Chief Justice. However, the present Act leaves it to the discretion of the Governor-in-Council to appoint deputies when they may be required to take the place temporarily of the other two commissioners.

If any member of the House wishes to lay down specifically that a particular officer or person should act as deputy, the Government would not raise any objection to such action being taken. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that we should take every precaution to ensure that the commissioners shall be above reproach, and completely independent and detached from politics or party. I think it would be logical to make the same provision in relation to the deputies we may require to appoint from time to time. Accordingly the Government would favourably consider any reasonable amendment along those lines when the measure is in Committee.

The Bill represents an effort on the part of the Government to deal fairly and reasonably with a situation which is never easy, and to solve it to the satisfaction of all concerned. I do not suggest this will satisfy everybody in Western Australia; that would be altogether too much to hope for when some people are always prone to look at a proposition such as this in a manner which is more or less one-eyed. There is no doubt that the present situation in regard to the change and the increase of population is one which calls for remedial action. It is probably a great pity that the population in the metropolitan area has grown so greatly and so rapidly. However, much as we might all be saddened by that development, it appears to be inevitable in the scheme of things. There are several reasons for the development or that change in population.

I think that one important reason is the mechanisation of the farming industries. That mechanisation has been so

quickly and thoroughly carried out in recent years that the number of men directly employed upon individual farms today is nowhere near what it was 20, 30, 40 or 50 years ago. As a matter of fact, it is simply amazing what a farmer and his son are capable of doing on a farm these days when the property is highly mechanised.

On the other hand, as we know, Western Australia is becoming industrialised, and most of the industrialisation is taking place in the metropolitan area. We might all desire this to be otherwise, but practically all that industrialisation is being carried out by private companies, and they decide where they will establish their particular enterprises. Governments might try to encourage them to go to Bunbury, or Northam, or Narrogin, or some other country place.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Not forgetting Albany.

The PREMIER: No. Finally, the decision of location rests with the company or the businessman concerned with the establishment of the enterprise. In my experience, I have found that businessmen—especially those in business in a big way—like to be in the metropolitan area. There are economic and social reasons for that. The main economic reason is that most of the market is in or near the metropolitan area, which is always close to shipping facilities and other suitable transport. The metropolitan area is also usually the financial centre of the State, and big businessmen like to be closely in touch all the time with the financial centre.

On the social side, there is naturally a desire, if not an anxiety, on the part of big businessmen—particularly manufacturers—to be in an area where there are other manufacturers, so that they can live together, play together, consult together and generally carry on as closely in touch one with the other as possible. Those seem to me to be the practical difficulties of a very difficult situation. I know that, when it was in office, the previous Government did everything reasonably within its power to prevail upon established manufacturers to go to the country. I think that every State Government in Western Australia has, during the last 20 or 30 years, done the same thing.

Mr. May: And got nowhere.

The PREMIER: They have not progressed very far in decentralising secondary industries. The answer is that finally the decision is in the hands of the company or the individual proposing to establish the industry. Those are some of the factors that have caused the population in our metropolitan area to increase so rapidly in recent years. In addition to the overall increase in population in the metropolitan area, there has, within that area, been a remarkable change in the location of population.

For instance, as the city area, if we care to call it such, has expanded, considerable numbers of houses have been demolished to make way for warehouses, factories, offices, and even retail shops. Consequently, many hundreds of families who lived in those since demolished houses in the city area, or close to it, have had to shift into new areas. There is, of course, also the housing programme that has been very solidly carried out by the State Housing Commission during the last 10 or 15 years. The commission has established new townships just outside the metropolitan area, and those new townships have shifted the location of considerable numbers of families.

All of those processes have had the effect of reducing the total number of electors in one district, and of considerably increasing the total number in another district within the metropolitan area or close to it. So there is not any room for argument as to whether a redistribution of electoral boundaries is required and justified at present. I think all members will agree that a redistribution is justified.

Mr. J. Hegney: Have you any figures as to how many districts are above or below their quotas?

The PREMIER: Yes, and I think I mentioned earlier that at least 15 Legislative Assembly districts are 20 per cent. or more above the quota, and two are 20 per cent. or more short of the quota. Therefore, at least 17 Legislative Assembly districts are now very much out of balance in regard to the quotas that were decided under the provisions of the Act that was passed through Parliament in 1947.

A redistribution of electoral boundaries would be inconvenient to every one of us; because, in the very nature of things, a redistribution would alter the boundary of every Legislative Assembly district within the State. Some of the boundaries would be altered not very considerably; others would undoubtedly be altered to a very great extent. However, individual feelings and desires and wishes have to be subjugated to the greater consideration, which is that population within the State; within different areas within the State; and within individual districts, is now so much out of balance as to suggest an alteration of boundaries in the near future. In view of that, I think we would all, with every confidence, leave the task—and it would not be a very easy one—of first of all defining the proposed new areas and then of adjusting and establishing the new districts within those areas to the independent judgment and good sense of the members of the proposed commission.

Mr. Perkins: If this Bill is not passed, will you have a distribution in accordance with the Act as it stands before the next election?

The PREMIER: I should think so. But there are some provisions in the existing Act which are most unreasonable. That Act was passed in 1947. A considerable amount of water has run under the bridge since then; and it seems to me that this Bill is much more adequate to the new situation in Western Australia than is the Act which was passed in 1947. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 3).

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [9.55] in moving the second reading said: My colleague, the Minister for Justice, would describe this as a very small Bill. It is complementary to the one which was just introduced. It proposes to amend the Constitution Acts Amendment Act which, as members know, provides for a membership of 50 for the Legislative Assembly. The Bill which I explained to the House a few moments ago is based on a Legislative Assembly with a total membership of 52. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce this separate measure to provide for an increase in the membership of the Assembly from 50 to 52. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. V. R. Abbott, debate adjourned.

BILL—BUSH FIRES

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 2, 6, 8, to 13, 17, 19, 20 and 22, did not insist on No. 16, and had agreed to the further amendment made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment No. 4.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments insisted on by the Council.

Question put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council and that the managers for the Assembly be the member for Roe, the member for Collie, and the mover.

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

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1954-55.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the 16th November; Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Miscellaneous Services, £1,801,259:

Item, Surf Life Saving Association, £400.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I wish again to represent the financial need of the Surf Life Saving Association, and make reference to a short speech I made on this item last year. I also wish to refer to a question I asked the Premier two or three months ago. My remarks last year were to the effect that the time was ripe for an increase on the amount of £400. I instanced the extension of the activities of the association throughout the State, and at Bunbury, Albany and Geraldton in particular. I mentioned too that the large number of new Australians had greatly increased the responsibility of surf clubs, and that as a result the Government should consider increasing the amount of £400.

Briefly the position is that a Labour Treasurer in Mr. Willcock made the inaugural grant of £100 annually. That was increased in 1951 to £400 by the then Treasurer, Sir Ross McLarty. At that time he said he realised the sum was not as much as I had asked for, but it was a step in the right direction. On that occasion I referred to the annual grants made by the Eastern States Governments to their respective surf life saving associations. Members must realise the disparity between what is granted in the Eastern States and what is received by the association here.

Last year I asked the present Treasurer to give favourable consideration to increasing the annual grant, and in reply he said—

This item, together with some others under this heading, will receive favourable consideration within the next few weeks.

A couple of months ago I asked the Treasurer whether he would consider increasing the amount, and I admit that I did ask, "If not, why not?" which is an expression I do not much like. I used it for the sake of brevity. The Treasurer gave a reply saying that he was not accustomed to granting an increase as a result of such a blunt request—a form of tit for tat, perhaps.

However, the Treasurer has had a year in which to consider the request made by me. I do not know whether he requires an official request from the Surf Life Saving Association; but he did say 12 months ago that he would give favourable consideration to what I put forward. If the annual grant is increased to something like what is made available in the Eastern States, we will be doing only what we should do. The Queensland Government is the most generous, but both New South Wales and Victoria give more than twice the sum which the Western Australian Government makes available.

The Treasurer: If the hon. member would get the association to write to me, we would do something about it.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

Mr. NIMMO: I support the member for Cottesloe. The Surf Life Saving Association has increased its activities on the beaches. Most of the life saving clubs come within my district. The City Beach club is assisted to some extent by the Perth City Council, and the Scarborough club gets a small amount from the Perth Road Board. Lately another club was formed at Trigg Island. The club at North Beach has extended its activities to Waterman's Bay and now it is thought it will have to extend them to Marmion.

These lads and young ladies do a marvellous job by patrolling the beaches on Saturdays and Sundays. They cannot attend one Saturday or Sunday and then miss two or three because while they are patrolling they are going through examinations. It is up to the Government to give them all possible support. We wanted a boat at North Beach, so we made a house-to-house collection to get the necessary money. Another boat for North Beach has been ordered to assist in patrolling the Waterman's Bay area and on to Marmion. These boats cost well over £400, which is a lot of money to work for.

Other equipment is also needed. At Scarborough and City Beach the lads and young ladies have run dances at the Leederville Town Hall out of which they have done very well. The running of these dances means a lot of work for those concerned. These young people deserve a little more help from the Government. The Treasurer hinted to the member for Cottesloe that he may be able to give more support, and if he does it will be welcomed by the Life Saving Association.

I would like to get certain modern equipment for North Beach and Waterman's Bay, but I am afraid that is not possible because of the cost. A certain machine that was purchased by the Scarborough club cost over £500; and that is the only club which has this particular machine. I would like to see these machines on all our beaches.

Item, Mandurah Road Board for foreshore and river improvement, £90.

Item, Murray Road Board for foreshore and river improvement, £40.

Mr. BRADY: I have river foreshores in my district, and I was wondering whether similar payments could be made available to all electorates.

Mr. JAMIESON: I ask the Premier to consider making far more money available to the local authorities that are bounded by rivers, because it is necessary for them to have such funds if they are expected to improve the foreshores. If they are given finance, they will do their utmost to keep their foreshores clean and tidy for the use of their ratepayers and visitors.

There are quite a number of foreshores in the Canning electorate, and the road boards concerned find it takes all their time to cope with the necessary amenities, without spending money on cleaning and maintaining them in a reasonable condition. I would like the Treasurer to give consideration next year to making more finance available to those local authorities in built-up areas that have foreshores within their boundaries.

The TREASURER: The note I have about Item 31 is that it refers to boatshed and jetty licences collected from the Mandurah Road Board's area and taken into revenue. The item in the Estimates provides for the payment to the road board of an equal amount, to be used by it on foreshore and river improvements. It would seem that the road board collects the licence fees for the use of boatsheds and jetties and that money is taken into Government revenue and the Government, in turn, makes a similar payment back to the road board for foreshore and river improvement. It appears to be largely a payment for services rendered and Item 32 is similar and applies to the Murray Road Board.

With regard to the general question raised by the member for Canning, I undertake to have an investigation made for the purpose of seeing whether it would be possible for the Government to assist the road boards concerned to carry out foreshore and river improvement.

Item, Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery of Western Australia, £50,000.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I feel it my pleasing duty to express some appreciation of the recognition that the Treasurer has given to the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery. The figures show that the vote in 1953-54 was £34,720 and the actual expenditure was £56,681, whilst the estimate for this year is £50,000. There are a number of members here who appreciate that in the course of years that cultural centre has somewhat lowered its standard

because insufficient money has been spent to keep it modern and up to date. I remember reading a speech of the Minister for Housing who spoke at some length, and forcibly too, on the requirements of that cultural institution. There has been much more generous recognition of the financial needs of that institution by the present Government, and I feel it my duty to congratulate the Treasurer on it.

Although there will not necessarily be any entanglement between this institution and the Library Board, there is some doubt as to what will ensue in future in regard to the library services of this State. On one hand we have the Library Board, created by a comparatively recent Act of Parliament, and on the other we have the Public Library controlled in a different fashion. I do not think I am saying anything that I should not, but I believe there is a move afoot to amalgamate those two bodies. How that will be effected remains to be seen. The requirements of this cultural institution are great and must not be forgotten by any Government. The condition of the interior and the exterior requires the expenditure of a good deal of money, and it is pleasing to note that the Government has seen fit to make this much more generous grant.

Item 37, Royal Mint—Additional grant, £70,000.

Hon. D. BRAND: I would like to ask the Treasurer to explain this item which shows a decrease of £17,000.

The TREASURER: The note I have in connection with this item points out that under the Royal Mint Act the State finds only £25,000 to meet the expenditure of the mint; the excess expenditure for the year is provided under this item. The mint's two main functions are, firstly, the smelting of gold received from producers, and, secondly, the minting of coins under contract from the Commonwealth Government. The reduction in expenditure this year is due to an anticipated reduction in minting orders from the Commonwealth.

I might explain that the Commonwealth Government has already established, or proposes to establish at Canberra in the near future, a new mint on a large scale and all the minting requirements of the Commonwealth will be met by that mint. Up to the time this Canberra proposition came into operation, all the minting for the Commonwealth was done in Melbourne and Perth.

Whether the Commonwealth is doing the right thing in establishing its own mint at Canberra is perhaps open to argument. The fact is that the Commonwealth is pursuing that policy and if the mint at Canberra is not already established and operating, there must have been a great reduction in the amount of coins which it required to be minted in Western Australia during last year as the orders placed with the Perth mint were much below the total orders placed in previous years.

Hon. D. Brand: That would mean that the minting side in Western Australia would be closed down entirely and only the smelting section would remain.

The TREASURER: That is so.

Hon. D. Brand: What interest has the British Government in the mint?

The TREASURER: As far as I am aware, the interest of the British Government is largely theoretical. I think it has some say in the appointment of the Master of the Mint and the State is not authorised to appoint a master without the approval of the British authority. The running of the mint and its administration is completely under the jurisdiction of the State Government.

Item 40, University of Western Australia—Additional grant, £283,795.

Mr. JOHNSON: I wish to take this opportunity of reviving, if that is necessary, the matter of the future practice of medicine in this State. Not long ago a statement appeared in the Press to the effect that in future Western Australian students of medicine would not be admitted to certain Eastern States universities to which they had been in the habit of going for training. At present we have youngsters sitting for their Leaving examination with the object of eventually becoming doctors. As a result, it becomes increasingly urgent to find some room for training them in this State. We supply a great deal of money to the university, although why it should come under Miscellaneous Services and not under Education I do not know.

It is absolutely essential to have plans for the training of at least a small number of local graduates in medicine and which will allow for the expansion of training in this direction. The number who would enter a medical school in each year would probably be small—I would say less than 50—and examinations being what they are, no doubt there would be some wastage. The buildings required would not need to be large, and as additions are being made to the Royal Perth Hospital, some portion of it could be made available for at least a part of the training. I take this opportunity of requesting that something be done in this regard because although I have no doubt that steps are being taken, I think some announcement should be made as to the plans so that the youngsters concerned and their parents could make their plans accordingly.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I suggest to the Treasurer that he give some consideration to the annual grant laid down

for the university. The figure set down at £40,000 operated when the university first started. No doubt the Treasurer faces the same difficulty as I did for many years when I received the university budget—what amounts can we afford to provide in this regard? The estimate for 1954-55 is £283,795—that is additional to the £40,000. The next two items also deal with the university because they refer to the Chair of Education and the Faculty of Dental Science, the amounts being £13,822 and £14,917 respectively.

No doubt the Treasurer will agree that the figure of £40,000, compared with the actual expenditure today and the anticipated expenditure is rather absurd. It would be better from a business point of view, for us to decide on a practical sum, and in the future, when the Treasurer is faced with the problem of having to meet the university budget as presented by the senate, it would be easier to decide what amount could be made available.

If a medical school is to be established, the actual grant to the university will be considerably increased because a medical school is extremely expensive to staff and maintain. Of course, I do not want it to be thought that that is an argument for not establishing a medical school in Western Australia. As time goes on, it is likely that other chairs will be established at the university and those, too, will increase the costs. Our university is free and we accept students from outside countries. That, of course, is a good thing. Nevertheless, the grant to the university requires an overhaul with a view to making a more practical approach to the question.

As on other occasions, I suppose I shall be asked why I did not take any action in regard to this matter. I did raise the question with Mr. Reid, who was then Under Treasurer, and pointed out that the position was unsatisfactory and that something should be done about it. What the actual grant should be I am not in a position to say. However, I would think that it could not be less than £300,000 per year because, on the figures before us now, including the Chair of Education and the Faculty of Dental Science, it amounts to over £312,000, and I suppose it is reasonably safe to say that the demands upon the Treasury for additional grants will increase as each year passes. I think the Treasurer would agree that it would be more satisfactory to him to have a practical figure for the grant than the one that exists at present, namely, £40,000.

The TREASURER: As to the establishment of a medical school, I would advise members that much inquiry and investigation has been carried out. It has not been easy to arrive at the truth of the situation. On several occasions it has not been easy to refrain from developing a suspicion that a great deal of propaganda has been mixed with the advocacy of the establishment of a medical school here, and it has not been difficult to realise that certain organisations have been pushing this propaganda along.

As between real need and propaganda—which is not necessarily associated with real need—there has been considerable difficulty in trying to decide what the merits of the situation might be. The latest move made by me was to communicate by letter, firstly, with the Premier of Victoria, and, secondly, with the Premier of South Australia. The object of forwarding those communications was to obtain some direct official advice from those Premiers on what might be the actual situation thought likely to develop in the medical schools in Melbourne and Adelaide in regard to their reception and training of students from Western Australia after 1956.

To date, I have had a reply from the Premier of Victoria. Naturally, he depends for advice upon the heads of the medical school at the university, and they seem to be not altogether certain of what the position will be in 1957. They have asked what are likely to be the number of students that will be sent to that university from Western Australia in 1957, and we will endeavour to get that information for them. They do not say that they will not take our students in 1957, or in subsequent years. Probably a reply will be received from Mr. Playford in the near future, and when it is we shall have a better appreciation of what the Adelaide University will be able to do for Western Australian students in 1957, 1958 and 1959.

There is quite a long story about this matter, but I have no desire to delve into the whole of it this evening. Suffice it to say that with the growth of population in this State, it will doubtless become necessary to establish a medical school in the not very distant future. However, there would be no justification in rushing ahead and establishing such a school unless it were absolutely essential. All members know how very great is the strain on the State's financial resources. Even if we take into consideration the needs of only primary schools, we know that the State has not at its command all the finance necessary to provide the schools, classrooms and other essential needs to give our children adequate primary education in reasonable conditions.

So I think at this stage we are entitled to obtain all the official and reliable information we can from Melbourne and Adelaide in regard to what the capacity of their universities might be in four, five or six years' time as far as accepting medical students from this State is concerned. When it becomes necessary to establish a medical school in Western Australia, I hope that the Commonwealth Government will contribute £ for £ with the State towards

the cost of establishing the required school. I think that would be a legitimate charge upon Commonwealth revenue, and I hope, when that time arrives, the Commonwealth Government of the day will feel that the sharing, £ for £, with Western Australia would be a proposal that it could embrace and improve.

With regard to the point raised by the Leader of the Opposition, undoubtedly there is much merit in the suggestion he has put forward. The grant of £40,000 was inserted in the appropriate Act several years ago.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Many years ago.

The TREASURER: Since that time, the needs of the university have increased substantially. I suppose there could be no end to the absorption capacity of the university. Probably there could be no end to the expansion that could take place there. Here again we have to weigh the demands and needs of the university against the many other needs of the community. This Government has not been able during its term of office, and I am sure the previous Government was not either, to grant to the university all the funds it considered necessary for urgent requirements. However, the Government tries to do the reasonable thing for the university.

Just what figure we might substitute for the present amount of £40,000, would not be easy to decide. The Leader of the Opposition suggested £300,000. After three years the figure might have to be raised to £500,000 if the suggestion is accepted. However, I agree that the present amount is unreal and I am prepare to give serious consideration to providing a sum related to present day values and to the foreseeable needs of the university in the near future.

Item, Western Australian Symphony Orchestra, £7,000.

Mr. McCULLOCH: A vote of £7,000 has been included in the Estimates under this item. This is a substantial sum. The Treasurer has stated that the finances of the State are strained. I understand the Perth City Council will also contribute an amount to this orchestra. I feel that this money can be spent in a better way. I am not musically minded, but some members will agree that funds should be expended to encourage brass bands in the various districts.

People residing in the country have no opportunity of hearing the orchestra. I do not know whether it is intended to engage conductors like Sir Thomas Beecham. I assume the orchestra would not be employed full time. The amount of £7,000, together with the contribution by the Perth City Council, would not be sufficient to keep this orchestra alive. I wish to know if this amount will be spent in bringing out musicians from Southern Europe and Britain. The brass bands in this State are giving good service. A few weeks ago they gave a concert in Perth and there were 6,000 people listening to the performance, which was highly appreciated. I see nothing in the Estimates to indicate that financial assistance will be given to bands.

The TREASURER: With regard to this grant, I would point out that it is a contribution by the State Government to assist this orchestra to keep afloat. I have no figure of the total cost of keeping the orchestra in operation, but I know it is very much greater than £7,000 a year. The A.B.C. manages the orchestra and provides the greatest proportion of the funds needed. As far as I understand, the members of the orchestra are employed full time and they undertake country tours. Admittedly, they would not be able to visit the main country centres more than perhaps twice a year. They perform over the radio frequently. It can be said that the orchestra is making a very important contribution towards musical culture in this State.

Like the member for Hannans its music does not appeal to me the same as other types of music. I am not referring to modern music because that appeals to me less than orchestral items. There are many people within the State who are keen on orchestral music. In making this contribution the State is assisting musical culture. I agree with the point raised that there are other musical combinations in the State, including brass bands, which can be considered for receiving assistance.

A deputation representing the W.A. Brass Band Association waited on me recently and put up a case for financial assistance. What we did was to decide recently to make some grant for the service which the bands rendered during the Royal visit, and we also decided to give an assurance that if they could develop a band competition in Western Australia on a large scale, somewhat similar, although not as large as those which take place in Ballarat each year, the Government would be prepared to help them to finance such a competition once every year.

Mr. Sewell: Would the Scottish Pipers be included?

The TREASURER: Yes.

Item, Dairy cattle compensation—cattle destroyed due to t.b. infection, £3,500.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The vote last year was £6,000 and the expenditure £3,690, and the estimate for this year is £3,500. This testing has been going on for some years and I was under the impression that t.b. in dairy cattle had been just about wiped out. Will the Treasurer indicate why such a large sum is required this year?

The TREASURER: The money was used to compensate the owners of cattle that were destroyed on account of t.b. infection.

Under the fund, the producers contribute to the extent of 1/20th of a penny per gallon of milk produced and the Government provides an equal amount. Evidently last year £7,000 was expended in paying compensation of which the Government provided one-half and the producers the other half.

Item, Rail freight rebate on flour, £57,000.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Last year the expenditure under this heading was £57,366. What does that represent?

The TREASURER: This is a rebate on freight where wheat is sent to the flour-mill for conversion into flour and the flour is sent to the port for export. It is designed to reduce the cost of freight to what would apply to an unbroken journey from the town of origin of the wheat to the port. This is obviously a concession granted on the railways when wheat is milled and the flour exported.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It is called through-the-mill freight.

Item, Rent reductions prefabricated houses—Reimbursement to State Housing Commission, £22,260.

Mr. WILD: Does not the Treasurer consider that he is establishing a dangerous precedent by allowing a rebate of £22,260 a year on the rent of Austrian prefabricated houses? Is the rebate allowed under the Commonwealth-State rental agreement taken into consideration after this subsidy, which works out at about 15s. a week? Has the Grants Commission looked into this item and will it not take a dim view of our subsidising house rents while people in the Eastern States are called upon to make up the difference?

The TREASURER: The decision was made by the Government because of the very high rentals being charged for Austrian and Sims-Cook houses. We considered that the rents being charged were out of all reason, and felt that the people who were compelled to live in those houses were entitled to a reduction. So far as I am aware, the Grants Commission would not yet have considered this matter. If it does so, the best evidence we, as a Government, could present in justification of its action would be to take members of the commission to see the houses. If they did so, I am sure they would agree that the rentals now being charged are quite high enough, if not too high.

Mr. Wild: Could not we have done what has been done in the other States and could not the Grants Commission put that up as an alternative?

The TREASURER: If so, the Government would give serious consideration to the suggestion.

Item, Purchase of land for police stations, £100.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: The vote last year was £100 and the estimate for this year is £100. Not much land could be purchased for that sum. At Mundijong, the road board has been pressing for a police station, and I think one should be provided there. Rented premises are being used, the lease of which will soon expire. Why has an amount of only £100 been provided for this purpose? No doubt the Minister for Police has been pressing for additional amounts.

The Minister for Housing: Just a nominal figure to give you an opportunity to talk.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: We shall have to see about getting the amount increased.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member cannot do that.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am aware of that. For the purchase of land for schools, £5,000 is provided, but for police stations only £100. Is there any prospect of the Government's purchasing land for police stations.

The TREASURER: No money was expended under this heading last year and not many police stations have been constructed in recent years. Where they have been constructed, the land has been available. Probably the Police Department buys land ahead and then has a battle to get the greater amount of money required for the building. However, the Leader of the Opposition may rest assured that, if additional money is required this year to purchase land for new police stations, it will be made available.

Item, Refunds of Revenue (not otherwise provided for) £25,000.

Mr. JOHNSON: As this amount comes in an expenditure item, I wondered what it was. Item No. 76, Incidental, seems to cover much the same ground.

The TREASURER: The item referring to refunds of revenue provides for the refund of amounts carried to revenue in previous years. The principal items which come under this heading are probate duty and land tax. The other item, if I might refer to it, covers incidental expenditure not otherwise provided for, the main headings being fares covering travelling expenses of officers to Premiers and Treasurers conferences, and freight on literature for international exchange.

Vote put and passed.

Vote—Child Welfare and Outdoor Relief, £271,655:

THE MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [11.2]: The Child Welfare Department

is an important one. Following on the presentation of the Hicks Report, a new position was created in the department, namely, Director, Child Welfare Division. The first person to be appointed to the new position was Mr. J. A. McCall, an officer of the Education Department. Mr. McCall's appointment was for a period of 12 months. He was seconded from the Education Department where he held the position of District Superintendent of Guidance and Handicapped Children's Branch.

Mr. McCall was not prepared to accept a permanent appointment to the new position, because he considered that, as a result of practical experience in it, he might find he had a greater love for the position from which he was seconded. It was therefore agreed by the Government, with him, that he would carry on in the position for 12 months, at the end of which time the matter would be reviewed. I think he has now been in the position for five to six months.

The need for the establishment of a training school under departmental control for delinquent boys has been recognised, and certain proposals are being investigated at the present time. The provision of a remand home is also recognised as being of great importance in assessing the mental and physical requirements of children who are arrested. This proposal will be accorded a high priority when a suitable site for the proposed home has been obtained. The child welfare reception home at Mt. Lawley has been considerably improved. A married couple has been appointed to administer the home, the husband acting as superintendent and his wife, a qualified nurse, supervising the health and domestic side of the establishment.

Plans and specifications have been approved for the modernisation of the main building, including redesigning and rearrangement of the dormitories, extension of the internal playing area and the provision of more modern laundry facilities, bathrooms, etc. A small building adjoining the main structure has been converted for use as a small dormitory, with sleeping and recreation facilities, for older boys in transit. A room has been furnished and made available as a sitting-room for the older girls in the home, thus giving them privacy for reading, writing and radio entertainment.

In addition to the ordinary leisure-hour activities, a film projector with sound has been installed and suitable films for children are shown two or three nights a week. Generally speaking, every endeavour is being made to give the establishment a much more home-like appearance by the provision of new furnishings, suitable pictures, curtains and so on. Additional shrubs, gardens and lawns have been planted in order to improve the surroundings.

For some years, chronically ill babies have been accommodated at this home after discharge from hospital, thus necessitating the employment of a number of trained nurses. It is hoped in the near future to make provision elsewhere for such children—either in other institutions or in the care of foster mothers—so that the reception home can function solely as a transit centre for children who come under the notice of the department.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported.

BILL—BUSH FIRES.

Council's Message—As to Reviving Council's Message.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have to announce that wrong procedure was adopted in regard to Message No. 61, because the message was considered in the House itself instead of in Committee. It is necessary to revive the message. I would therefore ask the Minister to move that I do now leave the Chair on Message No. 61, in which the Council notified the Assembly that it insisted on its amendments, Nos. 2, 6, 8 to 13, 17, 19, 20 and 22, did not insist on No. 16 and had agreed to the further amendment made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment No. 4.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

> That Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair, and that the House do now resolve itself into a Committee of the whole to consider the Legislative Council's Message No. 61.

Question put and passed.

In Committee.

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

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

> That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

Assembly's Request for Conference.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I move—

> That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and that the managers for the Assembly be the member for Roe, the member for Collie, and the mover.

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

FRIDAY SITTING.

As to Hours.

The PREMIER: Before moving to adjourn the House I would like, with your permission, Mr. Speaker, to advise members that the House will be asked to sit on Friday next at 2.15 p.m. and that I hope it will be possible to adjourn at teatime.

House adjourned at 11.12 p.m.

Legislative Council

Wednesday, 24th November, 1954.

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

QUESTIONS.

POLICE ACT.

As to Issuing of Warrants.

Hon. H. HEARN asked the Chief Secretary:

Will the Minister for Police consider introducing legislation to amend Section 85 of the Police Act, to provide that warrants under that section shall be issued under the hand but not the seal of the justice issuing the warrant?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

Yes. Consideration will be given to the amendment as suggested.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

As to Resumption and Sale of Business Sites, Queen's Park.

Hon. A. F. GRIFFITH asked the Chief Secretary:

In regard to the three Maniana business sites situated in Wharf-st., Queen's Park, which were sold at auction on Saturday, the 20th November, for £3,360—

(1) What are the lot numbers and areas of the three blocks in question?

(2) When were they resumed by the State Housing Commission?

(3) What price was paid to the owner on the resumption?

(4) If the owner has not been paid, what will be the price that will be paid to him?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Lot 1: 4.5 perches.
Lot 2: 4.5 perches.
Lot 3: 6 perches.

(2) 25/9/53.

(3) No claim for compensation has been lodged and no assessment has been made

(4) Answered by No. (3).

S.P. BETTING.

As to Number of Convictions.

Hon. J. J. GARRIGAN asked the Chief Secretary:

How many starting-price betting convictions were there in Western Australia from the 30th June, 1953, to the 30th June, 1954?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

There were no convictions for starting-price betting, but 134 convictions were obtained for keeping or using premises as a common betting house; and for obstructing the traffic in the street under the traffic regulations where such obstruction was associated with betting transactions, 2,006 convictions were obtained.

MOTION—ADDITIONAL SITTING DAY.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, resolved:

That for the remainder of the session, the House, unless otherwise ordered, shall meet for the despatch of business on Fridays at 2.15 p.m. in addition to the ordinary sitting days.