Legislative Assembly

Tuesday, 9th November, 1954.

CONTENTS.

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

SITTING DAYS AND HOURS.

The PREMIER: With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I desire to inform members that the House might be asked to sit after tea on Thursdays in future. In regard to the coming Thursday, I will advise members further before the House adjourns tomorrow night.

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

(a) As to Use of School Buildings as Community Centres.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Education:

With reference to my representations concerning the need to retain existing school buildings at Rosa Brook, Metricup, Osmington and Bramley for use as community centres, will he state what the Government's intentions are with respect to these buildings when consolidation takes place at Margaret River at the close of the present school year?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Education) replied:

The request for the retention of these buildings for social purposes will be considered. The urgent need for extra classroom accommodation in many places, however, must be the department's first consideration. If any of these buildings is urgently required elsewhere to provide much needed accommodation for children, it would be difficult to justify the retention of school buildings for other purposes.

(b) As to Agricultural Course, Harvey Junior High School.

Mr. MANNING asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Is it intended to award certificates to students completing their agricultural course at the Harvey Junior High School?

(2) Will this be in addition to, or in conjunction with, their Junior certificates?

(3) Would these certificates be of any value to students desirous of securing a position with the Agricultural Department?

(4) If not, what is the value of the course to students other than those who return to farms?

(5) Would this position be similar in all junior high schools with an agricultural wing incorporated?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Education) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No. The boys following the agricultural course do not study for the Junior except in rare cases.

(3) Much higher qualifications, such as a university degree or a Muresk diploma, would be required for professional or advisory posts in the Department of Agriculture. The certificate awarded to boys who have successfully passed through the agricultural course at Harvey would undoubtedly be of value to one seeking a position involving the practical side of farming.

(4) The course is designed to suit lads who intend to leave school within two or three years of completion of their primary

school course and who wish to follow farming occupations on leaving school. It is also a good preparation for many other vocations.

(5) Yes.

(c) As to New School Site, Roleystone.

Mr. WILD asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has a decision been made in regard to a new school site at Roleystone?

(2) If "Yes" is the answer to No. (1)—

(a) where is the land located;

(b) when is it expected that work will commence on the new school?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Education) replied:

A decision has not yet been made, but the selection of a site is receiving consideration by the school sites committee.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Land Resumptions, Westminster Estate.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What was the area of land resumed by the State Housing Commission in the Wanneroo district, known as Westminster Estate?

(2) Was this area resumed by a blanket resumption?

(3) How many resident occupiers of homes were involved?

(4) Were any of them compelled to vacate their homes?

(5) Is there any truth in the statement that the State Housing Commission has sold, or proposes to resell, any of the land referred to above?

(6) Are any houses being erected on the Westminster Estate?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 261 acres. This resumption was carried out by the previous Government.

(2) Yes, except that existing dwellings were excluded. These homes were situated on normal housing sites.

(3) None.

(4) No.

(5) No.

(6) Yes, the commission has under construction or completed approximately 170 homes. Private persons are also building on land that was released to them from the resumption.

(b) As to Resumptions, Bayswater, Belmont and Fremantle.

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) What are the areas of the current resumptions—

(a) at Bayswater;

(b) at Belmont;

(c) at Fremantle?

(2) How many resident occupiers are involved in each area?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) Approximately 337 acres.

(b) Approximately 492 acres.

(c) Approximately 1,200 acres.

(2) (a) Approximately 40.

(b) Approximately 44.

(c) Approximately 45.

TRANSPORT.

(a) As to Re-routing Road Service to Subiaco.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) In view of the published intention of the Government to re-route the road transport service to Subiaco, has he fully investigated the possibility of replacing trams in Hay-st. from the car barn with buses.

(2) As the proposed route via Ord-st. will increase traffic congestion, has the Traffic Advisory Council been asked for its advice in this matter?

(3) Is the main objective of the new proposals to serve the State flats at Subiaco?

(4) Are not these flats well catered for by existing services?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. The investigation revealed that commencing in 1950 a track relaying programme in Hay-st. was approved, the cost being £55,000. The replacement of this tram service with motor-buses could have been considered at that time, but would hardly be considered economic at the present time, as it would entail the purchase of new buses and the scrapping of existing trams and a new track.

(2) No.

(3) Yes.

(4) It is believed existing services will not be adequate.

(b) As to Holiday Bus Services.

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he give some consideration to starting the week-end and holiday bus services a month earlier than usual to City Beach, via Victoria Park, Mt. Lawley, and embracing Subiaco, Leederville, Wembley and Floreat Park, en route?

The MINISTER replied:

To introduce the service earlier than the beginning of December would not be justified because of the uncertainity of weather conditions.

UNIVERSITY OF W.A.

As to Proposed Medical School, Cost, etc.

Mr. BRADY asked the Treasurer:

(1) What is the approximate capital cost of setting up a medical school at the University of Western Australia?

(2) What is the estimated annual upkeep of such a course?

(3) What years (if any) in the medical course are catered for at the University of Western Australia?

(4) What subsidy (if any) is given by the Commonwealth Government to the University of Western Australia at present?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) £234,000, if use is made of some temporary buildings.

(2) £129,000, when fully in operation and teaching 60 students a year.

(3) First year.

(4) £108,677 for 1954. The State Government is contributing £328,686 this year.

CEMENT.

As to Importations and Supply Position.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) With reference to the answers given to my questions on the 20th October, 1954, regarding cement supplies, is he able to advise the result of the inquiry to estimate what, if any, cement importations would be necessary in the New Year?

(2) Can he indicate the extent to which the current cement supply position has been eased or otherwise varied?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Advice has been received that this inquiry is continuing and will not be finalised for approximately three weeks. Further advice is to the effect that the local cement works will continue production throughout the Christmas holidays, thus ensuring a stockpile being available to builders, distributors and the company itself when the building trades resume work.

It is anticipated that the supply of local and imported cement will be sufficient until approximately mid-February, but no further forward planning is contemplated until the inquiry has been completed.

(2) Inquiries indicate that the cement position generally has improved, but to what extent is difficult to determine.

WATERSIDE WORKERS' DISPUTE.

(a) As to Loading and Unloading State Ships.

Mr. NORTON (without notice) asked the Premier:

(1) Can he advise the House if the State ships will be loaded and unloaded in the normal way during the present waterside dispute?

(2) If not, are any steps being taken to ensure that necessary supplies for the North-West will be maintained?

The PREMIER replied:

Through the Minister for the North-West, the Government has made representations to the executive of the Waterside Workers' Union in Sydney per medium of the general secretary of the State A.L.P., Mr. Chamberlain—who is in Sydney at the moment attending a meeting of the A.C.T.U.—with the object of having the ships that trade on our North-West coast loaded and unloaded during the currency of the present dispute.

As far as I understand the situation at the moment, lumpers at Fremantle will load the State ship "Koolinda"—which is now at Fremantle—with perishables and essential commodities for North-West ports. That ship will be unloaded without any difficulty when she calls at North-West ports because waterside labour at those ports is associated with the A.W.U. and not with the Waterside Workers' Union. The Minister for the North-West was again in touch with Sydney this morning trying to get further approval for State ships being loaded or unloaded in addition to the "Koolinda", and I hope that we will find in the very near future—perhaps tomorrow—that other ships, which serve the North-West ports, apart from the "Koolinda", will be loaded and unloaded.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Three cheers for the wharfies!

Mr. Lawrence: Hear, hear!

(b) As to Handling Essential Supplies for Western Australia.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

Should he be successful in his approach to the Waterside Workers' Union to have some consideration given to the loading and unloading of State ships serving the North-West, would he use the same avenue, because of our isolation, to press the claims of Western Australia, as against those of the Eastern States, for the loading of steel and other materials, which are so urgently required for water supply and other State projects?

Mr. Lawrence: Why do not you ask your mate that?

The PREMIER replied:

The Government will make every possible endeavour to have handled urgently needed supplies for the people of Western Australia.

POULTRY INDUSTRY.

As to Financial Condition.

Mr. JAMIESON (without notice) asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is he aware that the poultry industry in Western Australia is in a parlous financial condition?

(2) Would it be correct to assume, taking into consideration the recent additional impost of 3d. per dozen stabilisation fee by the Egg Board, and the £2 10s. per ton increase on mashes, that the return to the producer had decreased to an uneconomical level?

(3) Would he have an immediate departmental inquiry made into the costs of poultry food, production, and marketing as applying to this industry?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) I am aware that the financial conditions in the poultry industry have been seriously affected by the high stabilisation costs which have, necessarily, recently been imposed to meet the collapse in the export market price. Food costs have also risen during the past few months which have added to the difficulties of the industry.

(2) This is probably so in at least a number of cases and a submission for assistance to the poultry industry was recently made to the Commonwealth Government.

(3) Following our submission a cost of production survey is now being undertaken in this State by the Bureau of Agricultural Economics as part of an Australia-wide survey.

MILK.

As to Sterilised Product from Africa.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Last Thursday I promised to make an endeavour to have released three bottles of milk which the member for Vasse so urgently needed. I have now been informed that milk is a totally prohibited import under the Commonwealth Quarantine Act. Customs officials impound imports of this nature and pass them over to the Department of Agriculture, which has no authority to release.

PARLIAMENTARY SESSION.

As to Anticipated Conclusion.

Mr. BOVELL (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of his statement this evening that from now on the Legislative Assembly will be required to meet on Thursday evenings, will he indicate to the House when the Government intends to conclude its business this session, in order that country members may make the necessary arrangements for the festive season?

The PREMIER replied:

When I was much younger and had much less experience of parliamentary affairs than I have now, I made estimates and indulged in anticipations and prophecies as to when Parliament would finish. Now I am not prepared to indulge in such prophecies except to say that I think we should be able to finish—but this would depend on 100 per cent. co-operation from all members of both Houses—on Thursday, the 2nd December.

TOWN PLANNING.

As to Release of Prof. Stephenson's Report.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Premier:

Before the Premier becomes much older, will he inform the House when Prof. Stephenson's report on town planning will be made available to the public? We are becoming quite anxious, and furthermore the contents of the report will be of immense interest to all sections of the State.

The PREMIER replied:

As far as I am aware, the report has not yet been made available to the Government.

ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

1, Government Employees (Promotions Appeal Board) Act Amendment.

2, War Service Land Settlement Scheme.

BILL—MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Third Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [4.47]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [4.48]: I oppose the motion and appeal to the House, at this stage, to reject the Bill. In its present form it is not acceptable to members of the Opposition or the members of the dairying industry who are so vitally concerned. The lessons we have learned from our past experience have indicated to us that it is far more desirable for the Milk Board of Western Australia to be composed of three members and that its personnel should not be increased to five of which number the board was comprised prior to 1948.

During the debate on the Bill, I pointed out to the Minister for Agriculture that the Milk Board, because of the particular industry which it controls, functions far more efficiently as a small unit. The constitution of the board, as proposed under the Bill in its amended form, is not acceptable to the Farmers' Union. I quote from a statement made by the Farmers' Union on this subject as published in "The West Australian" of the 6th November. It says—

> Milk Board Proposal Is Not Favoured.
>
> The proposal to increase the membership of the Milk Board was a retrograde step, the president of the milk section of the Farmers' Union (Mr. N. L. Marsh) said yesterday.

Past experience has proved that a board of five had not worked as efficiently as the existing board of three.

The milk industry in this State was second to none in Australia and the Government proposal could severely handicap and retard the smooth-working and progressive milk industry.

Organised producers had been seeking representation on the board since 1952 and in 1953 representations had been made seeking equal elected producer-representation.

The present proposal to give producers one member on a board of five was considered by producers to be most unsatisfactory and unjustified.

In the interest of the industry, producers had foregone their representation on the board some years ago.

The Farmers' Union, when it approached the Minister on this subject, asked for equal representation. To give the dairying industry one representative in five is a long way from equal representation. The Minister has claimed that even with the additional representatives, the original board would still have the majority vote and would determine the policy to be adopted until such time as the Act might be further amended. If this be so, why load the board with representatives of whom the Milk Board takes no notice?

The Minister claims that the original board would determine the policy, but I say that the placing of two additional members on the board would be of no value whatsoever. I contend most emphatically that the proposed representative of the consumers could not tell the Milk Board anything it does not already know. I contend that the representative of the dairymen licensed under this Act could be of considerable assistance to the Milk Board and to the milk industry. I have mentioned more than once during the debate on this Bill that representation of licensed dairymen would be of great value in considering the many problems facing the industry.

At the present time the Milk Board is going in for extensive advertising which, from the producers' point of view, is not very valuable. On the other hand, we notice that the board is instituting proceedings under the Health Act against dairymen who fail to provide milk of the required standard. On the one hand, the Milk Board, by advertising, is urging people to buy milk, but, on the other, it is giving the impression that the milk supplied is not up to quality. If we had viewed all such points as they should have been, we would have arrived at some agreement in retaining a small board with a producers' representative on it with something like equal voting representation.

At this stage, I appeal to the House to reject this measure, because it will not be of any value to the milk industry and it will have an upsetting effect on the board. It is suggested that the additional members will have no say on the policy to be adopted by the board. If that is so, I see no value in their appointment, either from the industry's point of view or from that of licensed dairymen. I oppose the motion.

MR. WILD (Dale) [4.55]: I, too, join the member for Harvey in opposing this Bill. Looking at the history of the measure during the last week, I would point out that the Minister said, firstly, that he believed in a small board, and that he thought a board of three was very commendable. Following a request from the wholemilk section of the Farmers' Union, he decided to put a producers' representative on the board, this being a policy of the party he represents.

Whilst members on this side of the House agreed with the principle of producer representation, we did not agree to increasing the membership of the board to four as it would become unwieldy and would give the producers a smaller voice. We suggested that when one member retired by effluxion of time, he should be replaced by the nominee of the Farmers' Union. This would satisfy to some degree the wishes of the Farmers' Union, although it claims equal representation. At least such a suggestion would be a start, and would conform to what the Minister said in the second reading; that is, the desire for a small board.

After that, we experienced a complete about-face. The member for Fremantle, who has been consistent in urging for consumer representation on boards, moved an amendment to add a consumer, and straightaway the Minister assented. He agreed to increase the board to five, and the member for Subiaco moved a further amendment to ensure that the fifth member was a woman. I would point out that there is already a majority of consumers on the board of three. Are not Mr. Stannard and Mr. Wade consumers, just as much as anybody else? Now it is proposed to have a farcical board of five if this Bill becomes law. I for one hope it will not.

Over the week-end, when I attended the Byford show, I discussed this Bill with many of the producers. As I said last week in this House, the measure does not suit the producers who have to work 365 days a year and 14 to 15 hours a day. I can assure the Minister that if a board of five is to be appointed, the producers would sooner see the Bill withdrawn. With

a board of three, producers have at least witnessed stability in the industry during the last seven years.

The Minister for Agriculture: Do you think the Government ought to introduce a Bill similar to the one submitted by your Government in 1950?

Mr. WILD: I do not know what the Government did in 1950. The fairest way would be to withdraw this Bill and introduce another framed in such a form that one of the three members of the board would be a producer nominated by the wholemilk section of the Farmers' Union.

The Minister for Agriculture: Your Government tried that in 1950, but the Legislative Council threw the Bill out.

Mr. WILD: This is not the Council, but the Assembly. I am speaking as the member for Dale representing many of the wholemilk producers of this State. I tell the Minister that the producers do not want the Bill in its present form. The producers do not wish to return to the rabble days of 1947 when cans of milk were thrown about.

The Minister for Agriculture: Your Government made a mess of it in 1950.

Mr. WILD: Even though it was against the principles of the late Hon. G. B. Wood, who believed in primary producer representation on boards, he was agreeable to forget his principles and accepted a board of three entirely divorced from the industry. The present board is the best one we have had. Never before in the history of the industry in this State has there been such a good, stable, steadying influence as we have had in the past few years. The Minister now wishes to disrupt it.

The Minister for Agriculture: I do not.

Mr. WILD: Yes, he does, because he has supported a board of five, and it has become a shambles.

The Minister for Agriculture: I hope you realise that I have not the right of reply, so do not stand there telling lies.

Mr. WILD: The measure was introduced with the intention of appointing a producer to the board, and now it has been carried beyond that to the stage of having a representative of the consumers who shall be a woman. This can have only one effect and that is to cause the board to revert to the former rabble stage.

MR. BOVELL (Vasse) [5.1]: I join with the member for Harvey in opposing the third reading of the Bill. We have traversed the pros and cons of the proposals during the second reading and the Committee stages, and I appeal to the Minister to withdraw the measure.

The Minister for Agriculture: I am not permitted to say anything on this discussion.

Mr. BOVELL: The Minister has the power to withdraw the Bill because it does not meet the requirements of the producers. Members of this House represent primarily the electors that return them, and dairy farmers are primarily my electors. It has always been my policy, and still is, to give producers equal representation on any board handling their commodity. At present we have a board of three, and it has functioned satisfactorily since the amending legislation was introduced by the McLarty-Watts Government in 1950. Now the Minister has approved of a proposal to increase the strength of the board by including a representative of the consumers when there are, as the member for Dale has stated, already representatives of the consumers on the board.

Such a board would be unwieldy. During the second reading I suggested that, in the near future when one of the present members of the board retired, he could be replaced by a producer, and that would give the producers as nearly as possible equal representation without increasing the numerical strength of the board. We have too many boards, some of which are necessary and some unnecessary, but I repeat that the Milk Board has rendered sterling service for the industry. If we approve of a board of five, when the Bill goes to another place, some member there might consider that there is need to grant representation to the retailers, which would mean increasing the strength of the board to six.

I make this final appeal to the Minister because the representation that this Bill proposes to give the producers will not be of any moment whatever. It cannot assist the producers, and the only escape from the unsatisfactory position that has arisen is for the Minister to withdraw the Bill and submit a measure that will be more satisfactory to all concerned.

MR. BRADY (Guildford-Midland) [5.5]: Unless the Bill be passed in its present form, we shall have an unbalanced board. As I pointed out the other night, the consumers are the main people to be considered. They consume the milk and have to pay the price for it.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: They are the ones.

Mr. BRADY: Members on this side of the House are unanimous that a representative of the consumers should be on the board. The members for Claremont, Maylands, Cottesloe and Subiaco all supported the idea of consumer representation, so it would be undemocratic to drop the Bill at this stage. I hope that the measure will be passed in its present form.

MR. OLDFIELD (Maylands) [5.6]: I oppose the third reading for the reasons given by the member for Harvey. It is

true, as the member for Guildford-Midland said, that during the second reading stage, I said I favoured the appointment of a representative of the consumers to the board, but I added a qualification.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Maylands will resume his seat. I must draw the attention of the member for Mt. Lawley that he has been moving to and fro between the speaker and the Chair, and he has done so on other occasions. This is definitely against the Standing Orders and I must ask that the practice be discontinued. The member for Maylands may proceed.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The qualification was that I would favour the appointment of a consumer's representative only in the event of the second reading being passed. The Bill had set out to provide for the appointment of a producers' representative. In the first instance, I was opposed to the measure because I considered that the present board of three was functioning efficiently and that, if we were going to increase the strength of the board, it would be only fair to give representation to the consumers. Unfortunately, I was not present on Wednesday evening; otherwise I would have endeavoured to get representation for the treatment plants and retailers, because they constitute an important part of the industry.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: You are in favour of having a representative of the consumers?

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes, if we are to have sectional representation. We ought to be fair, and we should endeavour to get a balanced board. The treatment plants and retailers should have representation in view of their expenditure of hundreds of thousands of pounds on the installation and maintenance of their plants and the expense entailed in complying with the dictates of the board.

The Minister for Agriculture: I gather that you really do not know what you want. Is that right?

Mr. OLDFIELD: If the Minister would only listen to me instead of talking with his colleague, he would understand.

The Minister for Agriculture: You seem to be a bit fogged.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Minister should recall that I opposed the second reading, but pointed out that if it were passed and the Minister persisted in having a producers' representative on the board, I would support the member for Fremantle to have a representative of the consumers appointed but I would also like to see representation given to the treatment plants and retailers. If we are to give representation to sectional interests, all of them should be represented.

The Minister for Agriculture: You would favour a board of six?

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes; in those circumstances I would. My main objection to the Bill is that I consider the present board should not be tampered with. It is functioning as effectively as any board—doing quite a good job, which is more than can be said for a lot of our boards. However, when we start fiddling with these things, inefficiency can creep in, as well as partiality, as a result of which certain interests might gain benefits at the expense of others. Under the existing board, all sections concerned in the industry have been relatively happy. Therefore I shall oppose the third reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FORESTS ACT AMENDMENT.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—VERMIN ACT AMENDMENT.

Report.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

> That the report of the Committee be adopted.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! Members must be aware that they should not wander about the Chamber while the Speaker is on his feet putting a question. Yet they are constantly doing it.

Question put and passed.

Report adopted.

BILL—BUILDERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [5.14] in moving the second reading said: This is a very small Bill containing a simple amendment to put into operation one principle only. If members agree with the principle, they will support the measure.

The Act at present requires that any person applying for conditional registration shall, amongst other things, be a natural-born or naturalised British subject. About 50 builders have been endeavouring to obtain registration as conditional builders, but have not been able to do so because they are not British subjects. They are quite competent and anxious to engage in the work, but they could not obtain registration because they were unable to meet that requirement.

Because of the desire to have as many builders as possible engaged in actual building, it was felt there should be no unnecessary bar to the admission of these people. The question was therefore referred to the Builders Registration Board, and I was advised on the 7th September last that the board felt that naturalisation

was an unnecessary requirement and served no good purpose. Accordingly, the board recommended that the Act be amended to permit the admission of persons who were not naturalised or were not natural-born British subjects.

That is all there is in the Bill. It proposes an amendment of the Act to provide that, for registration as a conditional builder, it shall not be a necessary requirement to be a natural-born or naturalised British subject. This step is being taken because of the shortage of builders and the necessity to have as many builders as possible engaged in the erecting of homes and other buildings. In addition it is felt that if we encourage people to come from other lands to increase our population, we should enable them to make a living when they get here.

There does not appear to be much logic in looking for immigrants, assisting them to come to our country and then, when we get them here, imposing restrictions upon them in respect of the work which they usually undertake.

Hon. D. Brand: Did you approach the Master Builders' Association or the Builders' Guild with regard to the amendment?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. We approached the Builders Registration Board where the view-point of those persons would be expressed, and the board recommended to the Government that as this requirement served no useful purpose, the Act might be amended to remove that provision from it. The services of these conditional builders are urgently required, and for the reasons I have given, they will be able to become registered.

Mr. Bovell: Do you know how many there are likely to be?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The board advised me that in September, 50 persons had applied, but they could not be granted registration because of this requirement. So it is fairly safe to say that the number exceeds 50, although I am not in a position to say what the exact number is.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Must an applicant have tradesmen's qualifications?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS. No. All the other requirements applying to conditional builders remain as they are. The Act is to be amended merely to remove this particular provision. The only purpose it serves is to restrict the registration of conditional builders to natural-born or naturalised British subjects.

Hon. L. Thorn: The point is that amongst them were some excellent builders, and they were employed by master builders but were not allowed to take on contracts themselves.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is so. The amendment is limited to conditional builders and does not apply to the registration of Class A builders. A conditional builder is permitted to erect buildings of a maximum value of £4,000. It is considered desirable, in order that we may have buildings erected in greater numbers, and to encourage people to come to our State to populate it, that we should not impose upon them unnecessary restrictions; or to say to them once they get here, "You cannot get registration under our building laws until you become naturalised."

That imposes upon them a lengthy period during which they cannot be conditional builders in their own right. We feel that restriction is not warranted. They ought to be encouraged to engage in building, and no harm can be done to anyone by permitting them to have registration under this section of the Act. Accordingly, the Bill is introduced for the purpose of effecting this simple amendment. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. D. Brand, debate adjourned.

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. L. F. Kelly—Merredin-Yilgarn) [5.22] in moving the second reading said: The Bill actually deals with four sections of the Act, one of which concerns diamonds and the others, coal. In regard to the provision dealing with diamonds, although years ago some interest was shown in this State in mining for diamonds, and some success was achieved in the Nullagine round about the turn of the century, little has been done in the matter of hunting for diamonds over a great number of years. In order that the section dealing with diamond prospecting shall be attractive enough to achieve the end that is desired, it now becomes necessary to alter the Act in one main particular, together with a few consequential amendments.

At present the Act enables temporary reserves up to 300 acres, to be granted for the purpose of prospecting for most minerals. The Minister has the power, on application by companies and others interested, to grant that area of territory on a temporary basis only. It is not regarded as a lease, but merely as a temporary reserve which enables the company to search on a wide area in order to determine eventually the smaller and more precise piece of land which will be fully worked. We desire to engage in the hunting for diamonds in this State. It would be a nice industry to add to the imposing list that comes under the control of the Mines Department.

Mr. Bovell: Have any diamonds been discovered in Western Australia?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. Diamonds were found in the Nullagine about the turn of the century and a year or two previously. The area was never very well defined, but nevertheless diamonds of quite a high order were found there.

Mr. Bovell: Do you know that if all the diamonds in the Union of South Africa were mined, each one would be worth about twopence? Production of diamonds has to be restricted in that country because there are so many of them.

Mr. May: That does no apply here—yet!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The interest that is being shown in the diamond search here emanates, actually, from South Africa, so it is hard to line up the hon. member's statement with the interest that that country is showing in the search for diamonds in Western Australia.

Mr. Bovell: Probably they want to create a monopoly; they are protecting their interests.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not thinks so, because the monopoly would not be created from the point of view of South Africa. Those interested here are the members of a syndicate composed mainly of jewellers and one or two medical men. They got the idea that they would like to go diamond hunting, and they spent some time in the Nullagine looking around. In addition to endeavouring to find diamonds there, they got in touch with some members of the industry in South Africa from which country they got an undertaking that it would be interested in the matter of diamond seeking here.

The local syndicate is interested to this degree, that it will be necessary to put into the field a survey party under the guidance of a geologist experienced in diamond mining and also in diamond prospecting. Such a geologist would naturally have to come from South Africa because we, in Australia, apparently, have no one who is skilled in the prospecting for diamonds.

Mr. May: Would not the oil companies be interested in this?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think so.

Mr. May: They use diamonds in their drills, do they not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, but they are commercial diamonds and not the diamonds that are used in the jewellery trade. If we are to encourage this industry, it is necessary to allow the people who are interested in it to have a much bigger tract of land than is permitted under the Act. They, themselves, suggested 10,000 or 20,000 square miles. From the departmental angle, it was felt that such an area was too large to tie up. On giving full consideration to the matter, we decided to ask Parliament to enable us to grant, for the purpose of diamond prospecting, an area of 5,000 square miles on a temporary basis only.

The existing conditions provide for 300 acres as the maximum, and we now say that, from a departmental point of view, we would like to be able to grant 5,000 square miles. We think such an area is sufficient for a company to get on with the job of diamond prospecting; and it is an inducement to bring the necessary technical men from South Africa. I want to make it quite clear that the rights of prospectors for gold or minerals of any kind will not be interfered with; neither will there be any interference with the leases granted in respect of any other metals, if any such leases happen to have been granted in the area.

As I intimated earlier, the second portion of the Bill deals with the coalmining industry. Under the Act at present, there is provision for appeals to be made by either the companies or the unions in regard to decisions made by the Coal Industry Tribunal. The Arbitration Court can be requested to hear appeals by either the companys or the unions. It is quite clear that the Coal Industry Tribunal is an expert body; its members understand the industry and have at their fingertips all the necessary knowledge that control of the industry demands.

That decisions made by the tribunal have, in some cases, to be passed by the Arbitration Court appears to be redundant. The members of the Arbitration Court are not as well informed on the coal industry as are those who comprise the Coal Industry Tribunal, and the fact that decisions of that body should have to run the gauntlet of the Arbitration Court is anomalous. It is felt that several sections of the Act, dealing with that aspect, should be deleted, and the deletion of one of these sections will abolish the right of the Arbitration Court to review decisions made by the tribunal.

Mr. May: How does that compare with the Eastern States, where they have a coal industry tribunal?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Commonwealth Government recognised the special nature of the industry and appointed the Joint Coal Board. The decisions of that body do not come up for review by the Arbitration Court.

Mr. May: Our tribunal is analogous to the Joint Coal Board.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It should be, but it is not.

Mr. May: But it should be.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, and that is why I think the repeal of these three sections will bring about the desired effect. For instance, Queensland appointed its own coal board and in that State the final say rests with that body. The same applies in New South Wales, where they

have a joint coal board. The principle has been recognised by the Commonwealth and those two States, and their arrangements have worked very well. As a result, we consider that these three sections are redundant and should be deleted. That is all the Bill contains. Two of the latter amendments are consequential, and one deals with the section which refers to the Arbitration Court.

Mr. May: That would put all the States on the same footing.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes, the whole of Australia will be on the same footing, if this Bill is agreed to. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

BILL—DRIED FRUITS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [5.36] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this small Bill, more than anything else, is to endeavour to bring the Act into line with similar Acts in New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. As far as I can see, there is nothing contentious in it, and we are simply endeavouring to clear up one or two anomalies.

Legislation to control the marketing of dried fruits was first introduced in this Parliament in 1926. However, it was not of a permanent nature and had to be renewed every year. These circumstances existed until 1947 when somebody forgot to introduce the necessary legislation. As a result, a position existed where there was a board with all the necessary powers and the machinery required for the marketing of fruit, but there was no legality attached to its actions. This oversight was corrected as quickly as possible in that year and the Act has not been amended since then.

The amendments in this measure have been asked for by the Dried Fruits Board and will make its work easier, apart from bringing our Act into line with those that exist in the States I mentioned. In every sense, the board is a growers' one, although the chairman is appointed. The other four members represent the growers and are elected by them. They have a system of financing the board by contributions from the growers, and the Act lays down that the maximum that can be charged by way of levy is 1/16d. per lb. of dried fruits produced during the preceding year. In the case of a new grower, the levy is based on the quantity of dried fruits it is estimated he will produce during the current year. Although the sum I mentioned is the maximum, it has never been charged; the maximum would amount to 11s. 8d. per ton, but only 5s. 3d. per ton has been charged to enable the board to carry on.

As one might imagine, the board has absolute powers in the marketing of dried fruits in any year. It has authority to decide where and in what quantities the output of dried fruits produced shall be marketed. Under the Act, each grower and dealer affected by the determination must be advised by the board as to what his particular requirements or duties may be. This Bill, in one of its clauses, will extend the responsibilities of the board so that not only the grower and the dealer shall be informed as to its policy and requirements but also the owners of packing sheds will have to be informed of its deliberations and decisions. The board considers that if this amendment is agreed to, its functions as a marketing authority will be more efficiently and effectively carried out than is possible at present.

Under the Act as it stands, once a grower has been registered he need not make any further application for renewal of registration. That is unlike most other Acts dealing with the marketing of particular products. All that the grower has to do is to register once, and nothing is done to inform the board as to whether he continues as a grower, sells his property, or anything else. Therefore, an alteration is proposed in this measure. When the mistake occurred in 1947, the board was without any lawful means of marketing dried fruits, and two specific years had to be mentioned in the Bill of that year—the years 1947 and 1948—and there is a minor amendment in this measure which will strike out reference to those two years because the continuity which they gave at that time has been amply provided for in another section of the Act and they now have no effect whatever. Those minor amendments were worth mentioning in passing to show that the Act is being tidied up.

As in the past, a renewal of registration has not been necessary, the board has experienced considerable difficulty in keeping accurate records. It has requested that provision shall be made so that it will be notified if a property is sold, leased or otherwise disposed of. This provision will apply to any grower who has produced dried fruits during the current year or the year immediately preceding it. Notification will have to be made in writing within 14 days advising the full name and address of the new owner. This reasonable requirement will enable the board to know at all times the names of growers in the industry, and to take any action which it may consider necessary and which comes within its powers under the Act.

For the same reason, the board desires that dealers shall be registered each year. That is another peculiar part of the set-up. Under this Act, a dealer is required to

register within 14 days of his intention to take up business as a dealer, but no further reference is made to him, and no further registration fee other than the initial £1 1s. is paid. As a result, the board has no up-to-date knowledge of the growers or dealers in the industry. Therefore, there is a provision in the Bill that dealers shall be charged an annual registration fee of £1 1s. From this information, the board will know from year to year who is actively engaged in the business of dealing in dried fruits, and the annual fees will provide further finance for the board. When the Bill is proclaimed, all dealers' registrations will automatically be cancelled and new registrations will have to be taken out. They will have 14 days in which to effect the new registration, and these will expire each year on the 31st December.

The only other amendment in the Bill is with respect to regulations. At present, the powers of the board are limited in the matter of inspections and regulations, and it is proposed to widen those powers. As I said earlier, the amendments contained in this measure will bring the Act into line with those operating in the other three States and, if the Bill is passed in its present form, our legislation will conform to that of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia. That will be a very good thing from our point of view, and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [5.46] in moving the second reading said: This is another small Bill designed to amend the Marketing of Eggs Act, 1945-51. It has been specially asked for by both the Egg Marketing Board of Western Australia and the Poultry Producers Association.

The position is that if for any reason this board were to be wound up, no power is provided anywhere for the disbursement of its assets; they would automatically go to the Crown. Considering the size of the assets and the contribution that has been made over a great many years by poultry farmers generally and by the Egg Marketing Board in its trading operations over the last four years, this would be quite wrong. Accordingly, the Poultry Farmers Association has requested that the Act be amended to give the producers some equity in these assets. During the period in question, each succeeding Minister has agreed that it is the right and proper thing for this request to be granted. Nobody, however, has ever done anything about it.

When the matter was referred to me, I saw the sense of it and the reason for it, as did the Government, and, as a result, this measure is before the House to give effect to the wishes and the requirements of the Egg Marketing Board and the Poultry Producers Association. In order to give members some idea of what is involved I would like to quote the schedule of assets under the control of this industry. They are as follows:—

Fixed Assets:—

	£	£
Land and Buildings—		
Fremantle	34,714	
Welshpool	1,296	
Bunbury	9,669	
Narrogin	3,266	
Geraldton	354	49,300
Equipment and machinery at most of those places		43,167
Motor-vehicles		3,963
Total fixed assets		96,430
Current Assets—		
Consumable stores, stocks, sundry debtors, cash at bank		193,918
Total assets		290,348

The Act would have had to come up for renewal in 1956, and if for some reason Parliament refused to pass this continuing legislation, then all these assets, representing £290,000 odd would revert to the Crown. All this Bill seeks to do is to correct that position, and to provide that the Governor will apply these assets for the benefit of the egg industry of Western Australia. The Poultry Farmers Association is very anxious to see the Bill passed and, because of that, and the unfairness of the present position, I have no hesitation in commending the measure to the House. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

MR. WILD (Dale) [5.51]: This measure is obviously of vital interest to the egg marketing industry, because all its assets are tied up with the board. As the Minister has pointed out, if this legislation is not re-enacted, the assets would automatically pass to the Crown. That would be most unfair because over the years the growers have had to contribute to the board's assets. The Poultry Farmers Association has asked the Government to bring this measure forward. There is nothing contentious in it and I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—CORNEAL AND TISSUE GRAFTNG.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 4th November. Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Railways in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—Authorisation for use of eyes and other tissues (partly considered):

Mr. OLDFIELD: I would like your advice, Mr. Chairman. If my amendment, which is on the notice paper, to delete all words after the word "shall" in line 15, page 1, down to and including the word "with" in line 4, page 2, is not acceptable to the Committee, will it be in order for me to deal with words in line 2, page 2?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Perhaps the member for Maylands would be prepared to move to delete all words down to the word "spouse" in line 2, page 2, and after that was considered, I would be in a position to go on with my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that the member for Maylands move to delete all words down to the word "any" in line 2, page 2, as that will give the member for Mt. Lawley an opportunity to deal with his amendment.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I appreciate what the member for Mt. Lawley desires to do but actually I have something else in mind. I move an amendment—

> That after the word "shall' in line 15, page 1, the words "unless he has reason to believe that the request was subsequently withdrawn, or that the surviving spouse" be struck out.

This clause sets out, first of all, to make available the cornea of the eyes of deceased persons for the purpose of grafting to the sightless eyes of the living. Secondly, it provides for the medical profession to be in a position to take from the bodies of those who have signified their willingness, during their lifetime, any such tissues which may be of advantage to the profession for storing in a bank for subsequent use by grafting on to the bodies of living persons in order to save life or limb. We are dealing with something in regard to which time is the all-important factor. It has been admitted in all medical circles, and by the Minister in charge of the Bill, that 12 hours is the deadline for the removal of the cornea from the eye of a deceased person.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: Why?

Mr. OLDFIELD: I do not know. I am a layman. But I understand that after 12 hours the cornea deteriorates rapidly.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: How do you know a person is dead?

Members interjected.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That is a very important question.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I think it is; but I am not qualified to certify to a person's being dead, though I think I could tell whether such was the case with a reasonable degree of accuracy. But no body would be dealt with until life had been pronounced extinct by some qualified person, such as a medical practitioner.

Hon. Dame Florence Cardell-Oliver: They have been wrong.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I feel that the member for Subiaco may have in mind something that we do not understand. There are certain people who acquire an understanding of matters of which lesser people are ignorant. I refer to such matters as the transmigration of the soul from a deceased person to another world, and its return to earth in some other form of life. However that may be, I think we can regard the human body as a machine, or a motorcar; and although the engine—the spirit—may be quite sound, the body wears out, and the putting of the engine into a new body does not stop the scrapping of the original body.

If that is what is worrying the hon. member, I am afraid I am not in a position to argue along those lines. But looking at the matter from as realistic a point of view as is possible for one not altogether versed in medical or spiritual matters; considering what has been embodied in English and American legislation; and knowing that cornea must be removed in 12 hours—six hours is the deadline for the removal of tissues or arteries, and 12 hours for the removal of cornea—bearing in mind those facts, we have to realise that time is the essence of the contract.

Mr. Court: Are not tissues the more difficult to deal with?

Mr. OLDFIELD: Tissue has to be removed under the most hygienic conditions and the process must take place in an operating theatre. I understand that the tissue is frozen to six degrees centigrade, and stored at that temperature. I can readily agree that the operation must be done within six hours of the death of the person, because I have seen bodies that have reached a great degree of decomposition soon after that period of time.

I cannot see what advantage the Bill will be in connection with the setting up of arterial banks. One thing the clause will do is to permit a person, during his lifetime, to bequeath his body for therapeutic purposes. But then the Bill provides for all types of objections from all types of relatives, so that the medical profession is virtually allowed no latitude

whatever, and there is not much consideration for the wishes of the deceased; because, despite the fact that the person may have bequeathed his body, any objection from the surviving spouse or any surviving relative could prevent advantage being taken of the bequest.

What I am attempting to do is to keep within the spirit of the Government's measure, having at all times regard for the rights of survivors. I want to make it a little easier for the medical profession to operate by providing some time limit on account of the time factor which enters into the situation. If the Bill were passed in the form in which it was introduced, the onus would be on the hospital authorities, or the persons who were to deal with the body, to contact the surviving spouse or any surviving relative to ascertain whether there was any objection.

It was said by the Minister that if a person were knocked over and killed on the way to work, it was customary for the police to break the sad news to the widow. He went on to say that the widow would be grief-stricken and would possibly faint; and he said, "Fancy putting it to her to ring up the hospital and object to the body of her husband being used for medical purposes!" Conversely, I would point out to the Minister that if a person died in hospital, the hospital authorities would have to ring up the widow, tell her that her husband had bequeathed his body to allow the cornea of the eyes or the arterial tissues to be used by the medical profession, and ask her if she had any objection.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: She would naturally say, "I have."

The Minister for Railways: We are not going to agree to that state of affairs.

Mr. OLDFIELD: That is what is in the Bill.

The Minister for Railways: Nothing of the kind!

Mr. OLDFIELD: I would like the Minister to tell me how the hospital authorities would know whether any objection had been raised, and how long they would have to wait to find out. The body would have to be dealt with inside six hours. There might be no objection after four or five hours; but 12 hours later an objection might be raised.

The Minister for Railways: The organisation would have to be provided beforehand and not after death.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Bill provides that a person may express a desire that his eyes or other tissues of his body shall be used for therapeutic purposes after his death. It goes on to say that—

> The party lawfully in possession of his body after death shall, unless he has reason to believe that the request was subsequently withdrawn, or that the surviving spouse or any surviving relative of the deceased objects . . . . authorise the removal of the eyes or other tissue from the body.

The Minister for Railways: That has nothing to do with the amendment. That is your subsequent amendment.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I have read what is in the Bill.

The Minister for Railways: Deal with your proposed amendment to this part.

Mr. OLDFIELD: That is what I am dealing with.

The Minister for Railways: You are not.

Mr. OLDFIELD: We are dealing with Clause 2, and I want to know how the hospital authorities will be aware of any objections unless they contact the people concerned.

The Minister for Railways: If you will sit down, I will tell you what would have to be done, They will not be allowed to do it your way.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I will resume my seat and allow the Minister to explain.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: In this discussion I do not propose to attempt to explain. I want to point out what the hon. member has on the notice paper.

Mr. Oldfield: You told me that if I sat down you would explain what the hospital authorities had to do.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Evidently the hon. member does not understand what he is attempting to do in the first place, according to his amendment on the notice paper. The Bill provides that a person may express during his lifetime, or in the presence of two witnesses during his last illness, a wish that his eyes or other tissues of his body be used for therapeutic purposes after his death. He is able to indicate what he desires to have done with his body, which is not permitted under the existing law. What he requests can be done unless an objection is raised by his spouse or another surviving relative.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Before tea I was endeavouring to explain that this Bill has one purpose only and that we do not propose to allow any additions to its provisions at present. The law today debars a person during his or her lifetime from giving any direction as to what shall become of his or her corpse after death, and the purpose of the Bill is to remove that bar. The measure provides for that, with the condition that should the remaining spouse or any surviving relative object, it shall be taken as a direction that the wishes of the deceased person shall not be

carried into effect. The amendment moved by the member for Maylands would do away with the right of the objector—

Mr. Oldfield: Not at all.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Evidently the hon. member does not understand what would be the effect of his amendment, if agreed to. He proposes to strike out all the words after the word "shall" in line 15 on page 1, down to and including the word "with" in line 4 on page 2. If agreed to, that amendment would remove the right of objection—

Mr. Oldfield: What about the words I propose to add in lieu of the words struck out?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: There is no doubt that the intention is to do away with the discretion in the matter, and the Government has considered this question closely. It was first put up to the Government that we should conform strictly to the English Act which does not permit of an objection being made by a surviving spouse or any relative; but we do not agree with that. The second amendment that the hon. member proposes to move provides for other matters and I intend, as I said earlier in the evening, to explain what, in my opinion, should be done and what will have to be done if the measure is to be of full value.

Mr. OLDFIELD: I am surprised at the statement of the Minister that my amendment would do away with the right of the surviving spouse or relatives to object, when on the notice paper I have a further amendment, the purpose of which is really to restore in different form what the first amendment would take from the measure, so as to provide a time limit for an objection. During the debate on the second reading I pointed out that we should remove from the hospital authorities the onus of contacting the relatives to see whether they had any objection, and make the relatives themselves responsible for notifying the hospital of any objection they might have. I repeat that if the Bill is passed in its present form it will not be possible to deal with the body in time for it to be of much use.

As members are aware, arteries have to be removed within six hours of death and a cornea within 12 hours. Having moved my amendment, I resumed my seat at the request of the Minister who said he would explain to the Committee what the procedure would be if the clause were passed as printed, but he has not done that, and I would like him to do so. Apparently the position of the hospital authorities would be similar to that of trustees of an estate, in that they would have to contact the people concerned to see whether they had any objection to the body being dealt with under this measure. How could the hospital authorities discover whether any interested parties had any objection, in time for the body to be dealt with?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know what the set-up is in England, but I am certainly not agreeable to the proposal contained in the amendment moved by the hon. member.

Mr. Oldfield: Well, will you tell us what the procedure will be according to the provisions in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I will if the hon. member will keep quiet. Under the clause in the Bill it would be possible for a young married man to leave his home early in the morning and be killed in a traffic accident. It has been suggested to me that the medical practitioner should be permitted to whisk the body away without the permission of his widow, father or mother, and use portions of it for therapeutic purposes. As outlined by the hon. member, if a person dies in hospital, he suggests that the onus should be on the spouse to raise any objection to the use of any of the body tissues by the medical profession within three hours after death.

In effect, what would happen would be that the police would have the duty of notifying a widow that her husband had died. No doubt she would be prostrate with grief and would be in a state of collapse. Yet the hon. member suggests that the onus should be on her to notify the hospital authorities within three hours of her husband's death that she objected to the cornea of his eyes or his body tissues being removed for therapeutic purposes. Under the Bill what will be done is that no person will wait until death to make the necessary arrangements for the medical profession to use any body tissue that it may require.

If the legislation is to be of value, a good deal of organisation will be necessary. Possibly an office attached to the Public Health Department will have to be established and an appeal made to the public for donors to come forward to offer their bodies, after death, for therapeutic purposes, in the same way as blood donors are called for. It is, of course, understood that only bodies of persons aged between 16 and 30 years will be of any value for this work. An appeal will have to be made to that section of the public to report to the office that will be handling this work to indicate that they are prepared, after death, to have their bodies used for therapeutic purposes.

Such a person would be obliged to notify his executor of what he has done. The onus would then be on the executor to report to that office and lodge his objection, if any. Assuming, of course, that objection was to be raised, it would not be advisable to wait till after the death of the person concerned, to lodge the objection. In 99 cases out of 100, if a person expressed in writing his desire for his body to be used for therapeutic purposes, his wishes would be put into effect

by the executor who had the lawful custody of his body after death. Therefore, I do not think we need waste any time discussing what might happen if an objection were lodged.

Mr. Court: How long would relatives have to lodge an objection? There is no time factor mentioned in the Bill, but there would be a time factor for the medical profession.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: What I want is to have on record an expression of opinion from the spouse, mother or father that the person concerned is willing to have his body used for therapeutic purposes. Following that, the consent of the executor can be obtained. Then, immediately death occurs, and if no objection has been lodged, the members of the medical profession can go ahead with the removal of the body tissues they require for their purposes.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The Minister has explained what he thinks would be desirable to meet the circumstances, but we are dealing with legislation as printed and what will become law. If the Minister desires to put into effect what he has in mind, why did not the Bill contain such a proposal in the first instance? Why did he not indicate his wishes when he introduced the Bill, or is the Minister merely submitting such an argument in opposition to the amendment?

The Minister for Works: What merit is there in your amendment, anyhow?

Mr. OLDFIELD: The way the Bill reads now, it means that should a person die in hospital, after he has completed all the necessary formalities in the presence of two witnesses, the members of the medical profession have to make sure that there is no objection from his widow or near relatives to the use of his body for therapeutic purposes.

The Minister for Works: Where in the Bill does it say that they have to make sure that there are no objections?

Mr. OLDFIELD: The clause contains these words—

> If any person, either in writing at any time, or orally in the presence of two or more witnesses during his last illness—

It could be a matter of hours before his death. Continuing—

> —has expressed a request that his eyes or other tissues of his body be used for therapeutic purposes after his death—

Before the body can be dealt with, any surviving spouse or relative has to be notified of the death. They then must be told the wish of the deceased and asked whether they have any objection. I admit that a spouse may be grief-stricken upon being so notified, but the medical profession is up against it for time if they wish to use the body tissues of the deceased. They have only six hours within which they can deal with the tissues of the body and 12 hours to use the cornea of the eye. The Minister now, in the second day of the Committee stage, suggests that an organisation would be required to be set up to deal with the position. The Bill as printed will deny the members of the medical profession the use of the tissues of any deceased.

Mr. COURT: Since the protracted debate on the Bill last Thursday, I discussed this provision with members of the medical profession to ascertain their reactions to it in its present form. They assured me that it will have no practical value to them as far as the cornea and other body tissues are concerned.

There are two methods of approach to this problem and that which is planned by the Minister and that suggested by the amendment are really modifications of one method, whereas the second and more drastic method is followed overseas, where apparently the coroner or the medical officer can authorise the removal of the body tissues without reference to anybody, if he considers it proper.

The time factor has been expressed sufficiently by several members, but I would point out that the difference in time necessary for the use of the cornea, as distinct from the time required for the use of other body tissues is because the process of freezing, which has been perfected in respect of exterior tissues such as the cornea of the eye, is completely ineffective for the use of internal tissues. A period of about two days must elapse before the freezing process is effective on the internal body tissues. By that time the damage has been done.

The most distressing part about this requirement by the medical profession is that doctors have a very limited field from which to obtain these tissues. As regards the cornea of the eye, the age of the deceased must be from 16 onwards, and for other tissues between 16 and 30. There is one important requirement and that is that the tissues must be sterile. It follows, therefore, that the average person expressing such a wish during his last illness is not a suitable subject for the extraction of other tissues, but I believe that the cornea can be used. I agree with the Minister that we should move cautiously in accepting something fairly new in this State, that is accepting the direction of a coroner or medical practitioner that the tissues be removed. I am given to understand that the words proposed to be deleted by this amendment are so restrictive that a reasonably cautious person in charge of the body of a deceased person would not authorise the removal of the cornea or other tissues.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What does the English Act say?

Mr. COURT: In England, the equivallent of the district medical officer can authorise the removal of such tissue. There they do not have to seek the approval of the relatives of the deceased. I doubt whether the prior consent of the deceased is necessary. The use of tissues has advanced to such a degree that the medical profession is conscious of the fact that the only subjects of value are the bodies of persons meeting with sudden death. From experience it is found that such people are the ones who have not made a will or bequeathed their bodies for scientific or therapeutic purposes. Such matters are usually neglected by young people.

The amendment goes a long way to meet the wish to operate the provisions in a very modified way, compared with overseas practice. If the amendment is accepted, a wide publicity campaign will have to be undertaken to ask people to bequeath their bodies. After a person has offered his body for therapeutic or scientific purposes, it is grossly unfair to distress the relatives within two or three hours of death by asking whether the request can be complied with.

The Minister for Works: The relatives might be more distressed if they found out subsequently that the eyes of the deceased had been gouged out and they had known nothing about it.

Mr. COURT: It is logical to suppose that the deceased person would have discussed his intention with his near relatives. It is not uncommon for a man and wife to offer themselves as donors at the one time. It is very distressing to ask relatives two or three hours after death whether they want to implement the wishes of the deceased.

The Minister for Works: Where does it say that must be done? In the very circumstances you mentioned, it would not be necessary.

Mr. COURT: Once these words are included in the legislation, a normally prudent person would check up. Executors are always cautious when such a provision appears in a will or a statute, because experience has proved that trouble might be caused by someone who claimed that an objection had been raised. In the case of a trustee company, such a request might have been received but, through some mischance, the officer responsible did not hear of it.

The Premier: They need have no reason to believe they objected.

Mr. COURT: It has not worked out in that way. Any prudent person would take the necessary action to check up. The amendment throws the responsibility on the relatives to say that they do not desire effect given to the wish of the deceased. Assuming that in most cases relatives would have knowledge of any such wish, the provision would not be a good method of implementing the desire to make these facilities available to the medical profession. I support the amendment.

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

Ayes	15
Noes	16
Majority against	1

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Ackland	Mr. North
Mr. Brand	Mr. Oldfield
Mr. Court	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hill	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Bovell
Mr. Manning	*(Teller.)*

Noes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Moir
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Norton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. Heal	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Styants
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. May
	(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Sir Ross McLarty	Mr. W. Hegney
Mr. Perkins	Mr. Andrew
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Guthrie
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Nalder	Mr. Lapham
Mr. Doney	Mr. Johnson
Mr. Owen	Mr. Lawrence
Mr. Yates	Mr. O'Brien

Amendment thus negatived.

Mr. OLDFIELD: In order to remove some of the restrictions of this clause, I move an amendment—

> That the words "or any" in line 2, page 2, be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I do not know the intention of the amendment. I oppose it. The member for Mt. Lawley has intimated his intention to move an amendment in that subclause, to which I am agreeable. If this meets the wish of the member for Maylands he might withdraw his amendment.

Mr. OLDFIELD: The purpose of the amendment is to delete the words "of any surviving relative" from the subclause. As the Minister is agreeable to the proposed amendment of the member for Mt. Lawley, I ask leave to withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

> That the words "surviving relative" in line 2, page 2, be struck out and the words "of the next of kin" inserted in lieu.

The Bill provides that objection can be made by the widow or widower, as the case may be, or any surviving relative. The term "relative" is very wide because it

includes any blood relation at all. I suggest that we limit the objections to those received from the widow or widower, or from the next of kin.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Subclause (2) reads—

> Without prejudice to Subsection (1) of this section, the party lawfully in possession of the body of a deceased person may, but only with the written approval of the surviving spouse of the deceased person, or if there is no surviving spouse, with the written approval of the next of kin of the deceased person, authorise the removal of the eyes or other tissues from the body for those purposes.

We have been told that if the eyes or tissues are to be of any use, they must be removed within a reasonable time. In the event of the surviving spouse not being in the State at the time of death, the next of kin should be authorised to give the requisite authority. I move an amendment—

> That after the word "person" in line 11, page 2, the words "if in the State" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

> That after the word "spouse" in line 11, page 2, the words "in the State" be inserted.

This is consequential on the amendment just passed.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If there is no surviving spouse in the State, provision should be made for approval to be given by the next of kin. I move an amendment—

> That after the words "approval of" in line 12, page 2, the words "one of" be inserted.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Subclause (4) reads—

> Authority for the removal of eyes or other tissues shall not be given under this section if the party empowered to give the authority has reason to believe that an inquest may be required to be held on the body unless the coroner consents to the authority being given by that party.

The reason for the subclause evidently is that, if there is any suspicion that a person has met with death wrongfully, no portion of the body shall be removed until the coroner has granted permission; otherwise, embarrassment might be caused if tissues were removed. I think that would be a worth-while risk, but probably the Government would not consent to taking it. However, we may safely go so far as to delete the necessity for notifying the coroner when the cornea or eyes are to be removed, because in that case there would be little possibility of difficulty being caused if an inquest were necessary. I move an amendment—

> That the words "eyes or" in line 25, page 2, be struck out and the word "tissues" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

> That the word "tissues" in line 26, page 2, be struck out and the words "than eyes" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Subclause (6) reads—

> In the case of a body lying in a hospital, any authority under this section may be given on behalf of the person having the control and management of the hospital by any officer or person designated in that behalf by the first mentioned person.

We should make it clear that the authority may be given by the person in charge of the hospital and that he may designate another person for that purpose. I move an amendment—

> That the words "on behalf of" in lines 36 and 37, page 21, be struck out and the word "by" inserted in lieu.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

> That after the word "hospital" in line 38, page 21, the word "or" be inserted.

This is consequential on the preceding amendment.

Amendment put and passed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

> That the following words be added to Subclause (6):—"who is deemed to be in lawful possession of the body."

This will make it quite clear that the management of the hospital is in possession of the body.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—BETTING CONTROL.

Message.

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

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [8.31] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is one to provide for—

> An Act to authorise, regulate and control, betting and bookmaking on horseracing; to regulate the assessment, collection, and allocation of a tax on money paid or promised to bookmakers as consideration for bets, to repeal certain Acts; to amend certain Acts; and for other purposes.

A Bill of this nature is no stranger to the Chamber, there having been four previous attempts made to pass a measure of this kind for the purpose of the legalisation of off-course betting on horseracing and trotting in this State. Attempts were made in 1935 and 1937 by the late William Marshall; in 1938 by the then Minister for Lands and Agriculture, Hon. Frank Wise; and in 1946 again by the late Mr. Marshall, who was then Minister for Police.

It is well known to everyone that all forms of betting in this State are illegal with the exception of betting on the totalisator. To bet on a racecourse or a trotting course is just as illegal as to bet in Hay-st.; or in a lane, or in any premises away from a registered racecourse or trotting course. The Bill proposes to legalise betting by bookmakers on and off courses. I do not propose to speak at any length this evening, but just to make some brief remarks in explanation of the provisions of the Bill.

All members will agree that for the last 30 years a most undesirable condition of affairs has grown up in connection with off-course betting. With the advent of wireless, this state of affairs has increased considerably. In addition to the attempts to legalise and control off-course betting, a Royal Commission was authorised in 1948 by the previous Government, but after it made certain recommendations the Government of the day did not legalise them. I want to read an extract from the "Police Review," which is a leading and recognised organ of the British police. If one did not know that this article originated in England, one would think it was a report from a like journal of the Police Department in this State. It is headed, "Law in Contempt" and states—

> At last month's conference of the Association of Chief Police Officers of England and Wales, the President (Mr. G. E. Scott of Sheffield) twice referred to the pressing need for an amendment of the law relating to betting and lotteries. Much of the present law lacks public support, and as a result, it is impossible for the police to enforce it effectively. This is inclined to bring the police, as well as the law, into contempt, and Mr. Scott's plea that parliamentary time should be found to bring the law into step with public opinion will be supported by all police officers. Nothing has yet been done to implement the recommendations made in 1951 by the Royal Commission on betting, lotteries and gaming. The commission found that the law dealing with betting, lotteries and gaming was obscure, illogical and difficult to enforce—a fact of which the police have been painfully aware for a long time—and urged that the law should be simplified and amended and consolidated in one statute. The most important of the specific recommendations made was that off-the-course cash betting should be permitted at licensed betting offices. If this were done the provisions of the Street Betting Act, 1906, now more honoured in the breach than in the observance, would become a dead letter, and the police would be relieved of the unwholesome and well-nigh impossible task of trying to prevent street betting. Other much needed reforms were recommended by the commission, and one wonders how many more years are to be allowed to pass before they are put into effect. Sir Harold Scott's hope (expressed at the luncheon given to celebrate the publication of his book on Scotland Yard) that "some Government of the future will have the courage to tackle the jungle of ill-assorted, chaotic, illogical, ridiculous things known as the gambling laws of this country" is shared by all policemen.

This report, in effect, clearly portrays the reports of our own Commissioners of Police which have been presented to this House on many occasions. Not only has the present Commissioner of Police drawn the attention of the House to the difficulty that is experienced in enforcing the laws, but his predecessors have, too. We have the subterfuge of charging s.p. bookmakers under a traffic regulation. The commissioner finds that s.p. betting is increasing in great volume, and he also refers to the ill effects which, in his opinion it is having on the morale of the Police Force.

The same position that operates in this State is operating to either a greater or lesser extent in the other States of the Commonwealth. Some months ago, when I was collecting information for Cabinet to consider in deciding whether it would make an attempt to put s.p. betting on a legal footing, I communicated with the Premiers and my counterparts—the Ministers for Police—in the other States of Australia, and asked them if they would let me know what the position was in their respective States in this connection. In every instance, the same story was told, with the exception of Tasmania where s.p. betting has been legalised since 1932.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Is it not legal in South Australia?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: There is only one district in South Australia where there is s.p. betting. In the metropolitan area it is taboo and not permitted, legally, in any circumstances. South Australia has a law under which a betting control board is established, and if the board receives a request from a country area for s.p. betting, the board journeys to the particular centre and holds something in the nature of a Royal Commission which is open to the public. Anyone can attend and give evidence either for or against the proposal, and if the board decides that a sufficiently strong case has been put up to warrant the legalisation or registration of s.p. betting shops, it is able to register them. But the Premier of South Australia said, in a letter to me only a few months ago, that there was only one district in that State where this condition of affairs operated.

Mr. Ackland: Did it not operate all over South Australia at one time?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Yes, until 1942, I think, when the Government there decided, as a wartime measure, to abolish or suspend horseracing. Upon the resumption of horseracing, after the war, the legalisation of s.p. bookmakers was not proceeded with, but the Betting Control Board still existed then, and it does now, and it has the powers which I have just outlined. There is, however, no provision for the legalisation or registration of bookmakers or licensed premises in the metropolitan area in South Australia.

Hon. D. Brand: Did the Premier of that State suggest in his letter that it would be wise to legalise s.p. bookmaking?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: He did not express any opinion as to whether it would be or not. I have here the report of a Royal Commission on this matter which was held in Queensland in 1952. This report deals with what has operated in South Australia and what operates there at the present time, as well as what is going on in all the other States of Australia. It is very largely the same story right through. With the exception of Tasmania, where s.p. betting is legalised, it flourishes in all the States despite the efforts of the police, with certain controls, to suppress it.

As Minister for Police, I am not one who believes that s.p. betting could not be suppressed if we vigorously opposed it. I believe that if the penalties were made sufficiently severe and the s.p. operators were raided every Saturday, we would do away with 95 per cent. of s.p. betting; but I am not going to say I would advocate that. I believe there is a large and insistent public demand for s.p. betting facilities in this State, and that some consideration should be given to the wishes of the public in that direction. In addition, within the last few weeks a conference of police commissioners has been held in this State. Commissioners of police of every State in Australia, as well as New Zealand, attended the conference in Perth.

I came into contact with each one of those commissioners on a number of occasions, and I discussed with them the question of s.p. betting in their particular States. They confirmed the opinions which I had received from the Premiers and Ministers for Police in the various States, that although it was illegal to bet off-course, nevertheless, despite vigorous action taken by the police in many of the States—in the northern portion of Queensland, little or no effort was made to prevent s.p. betting—the fact remained that s.p. betting activities had increased and were flourishing to a very large extent.

As I have said, in Tasmania s.p. bookmaking in registered shops, under the control of a betting commission, has been in operation since 1932. Until about two years ago, it controlled only that type of betting, but in 1952—I have a most informative letter on the file from the Attorney General of Tasmania—it was considered that this betting commission was not giving satisfaction and a racing and betting commission was appointed. That commission controls not only betting activities so far as horse-racing and trotting are concerned, but, to a large extent, it also controls racing.

The commission appoints stewards and if the stewards disqualify an owner, driver or jockey the disqualified person does not appeal to the racing club committee against the decision of the stewards, but he appeals to the racing commission. While that provision was vigorously opposed when the Bill was introduced, I am informed by the Attorney General of Tasmania that it has been so successful that the racing clubs would not like the powers to be restored to them.

It is a peculiar thing that in South Australia, according to the evidence given to the royal commission held in Queensland, the P.M.G. Department assists the authorities in that State and if the police lodge a complaint, or suspect illegal betting transactions, the P.M.G. Department will cut off the telephone of the person concerned. Our laws are the same as those operating in South Australia and Queensland, so far as the non-legalisation of s.p. betting is concerned, but the P.M.G. Department makes no effort to cut off telephones if complaints are lodged.

Prior to deciding to introduce this Bill, Cabinet gave serious consideration, upon recommendations made to it by the racing and trotting clubs in this State, to introducing a system of off-course totalisators on the same basis as that operating in New Zealand. We had reports from that country as to the system which operates

there, but, in my opinion, the use of a chain of off-course totalisators, as operates in New Zealand, would be impracticable in Western Australia.

Those who understand that system would readily agree with me that it is necessary in operating it, to have agencies spread throughout the length and breadth of the country because all betting transactions have to be wired to the course where the particular race is being conducted three hours before the starting time of the race—I stand corrected, I think the time is 1½ hours before the start of the race. All the money that is wired in from the various agencies throughout New Zealand has to be put into the totalisator machine before it starts to operate for the betting on that particular race.

If such a system were installed it would be necessary to have a complete tie-up with the telegraphic system to make it a success. Once it failed to operate, it would bring the system into disrepute and it would lose public favour and confidence. The scheme can be worked in New Zealand because the Government, which sponsors the off-course system of totalisators, owns the telegraphic system and instructions have been given that precedence must be given to the telephonic communications from the various racing meetings in that country. I am informed that New Zealand has as many as 10 race meetings a day so that members can get some idea of the number of telegrams that would be required.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They do not use wireless at all?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No, it is worked on the telegraphic system. While it is true, as we all know, that the s.p. operators in this State have a fairly elaborate system for receiving and sending telegrams, the number concerned would be small when compared to what would be required if we had a system that necessitated telegrams coming from all parts of the State. By comparison with Western Australia, New Zealand is very small and densely populated, and no betting, except upon races held in New Zealand, is conducted through the chain of totalisators.

That is one of the great objections to the establishment of a system of off-course totalisators in this State. It is generally admitted that there is a greater volume of betting off the course on Eastern States events than there is on the local races. That being so, we would need to have two systems of totalisators working, one for the local races and one for the Eastern States events.

There is another point, too; but this would not happen very often if there were two systems of totalisators operating. Take the case of a champion Western Australian horse, such as Raconteur, competing in the Eastern States. In races in those States his average starting price would probably be 4 to 1 because the owners over there would not realise his potentialities and would be prepared to back their horses against him. Western Australians, because they knew him to be a champion and out of loyalty, would not back anything else. If a totalisator were operating on a race of that nature, the money for Raconteur would pour in, and, if he won, the people who backed him would not receive their money back after the percentages had been taken out.

We gave a lot of consideration to the problem and we concluded, as did the Queensland Royal Commission which inquired into the installation of that system, that it was impracticable in Western Australia for the same reasons as the commission decided that it was impracticable in Queensland. I have carefully read the evidence given in Queensland both for and against the legalisation of s.p. betting in that State. On the evidence that was tendered, both for and against legislation for off-course betting, I would say that their results would be identical with ours.

In the northern portion of Queensland 47 witnesses, including racing club officials—chairmen and secretaries—were examined and only one witness did not favour the legalising of off-course betting; that witness was a clergyman, who, because of his religious beliefs, objected to it in any shape or form. There are those who conscientiously object to gambling in all forms and I have the highest regard for their opinions and I respect them for it. I would say that anyone who indulges to any extent in any form of betting is ill-advised. Nevertheless, there is something in the trait or the make-up of the average Australian that seems to make him want to bet in some form or the other.

I believe there is an insistent public demand for it and because of that we have decided to bring this measure forward for the consideration of members in an attempt to clear up and put on a proper footing, the question of off-course betting. Not only are we tackling the problem of off-course betting, but we are also attempting to legalise the question of on-course betting, which successive Governments have failed to do.

Next I wish to explain briefly the provisions contained in this Bill and then I propose to move that the Bill be read a second time because I know that most members will want to discuss its provisions and the merits of whether s.p. betting should be legalised or not. As I stated earlier, the first purpose is to legalise betting by bookmakers both on and off courses. The Bill also provides for the repeal of the winning bets tax, which was introduced by the previous Government about two years ago. We also propose to establish a betting control board of five members including a representative of the

W.A. Turf Club, a representative of the Trotting Association and three others chosen by the Governor; one of those chosen by the Governor will be the chairman. The measure also makes provision for the appointment of deputies in the event of any members of the board not being available.

All bookmakers will be licensed by the board, but only those licensed by racing or trotting clubs will be permitted to bet on racecourses. This means that those bookmakers who bet both on and off the course will have to be registered by the betting control board, but it does not follow that a bookmaker who is licensed by the board to bet on registered premises off the course will have the right to bet on a course unless he has been given authority and permission by the racing club to so operate.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Off-course betting will take place in premises that are licensed.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: That is all. It only provides that s.p. betting off course will be conducted in registered premises.

Mr. Oldfield: In the event of the Bill not becoming law, what will be the position of those operating on racing and trotting tracks? Will they be stopped?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: We will take that hurdle when we come to it. We have been approaching it for the last 20 or 30 years, but have not negotiated it. We will try first to secure approval of legalisation of off-course or on-course betting. Since the member for Maylands is so concerned, I would suggest it would have been better for him to have moved in this direction when the Government which he supported was in power. He could have done so during the six years of its office.

Hon. D. Brand: He is only asking an innocent question, which he is entitled to do.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: He got quite a civil answer.

Hon. D. Brand: Only just!

The Minister for Housing: It is quite rude to interject!

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: Although a bookmaker who is licensed only to operate off-course in registered premises will not be permitted to bet on a race course, provision is made that if the racing or trotting clubs that register and give authority to certain bookmakers to operate on their courses are prepared to authorise them to have registered premises, they will be able to operate on-course and in registered premises. Provision is also made that there shall be one licensed premises to each individual bookmaker. The intention is to prevent one bookmaker establishing and operating a chain of betting shops throughout the length and breadth of the State.

Hon. D. Brand: How will you overcome the problem of dummying?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: There are ways and means; and there are also risks to be taken. It is not improbable that some people will endeavour to dummy, but if they are caught dummying, they will not only lose their licence, but if they run a registered shop, they will also lose that privilege.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Once obtained, are licences to be assignable or transferable?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: That is not provided for in the Bill, and is probably one of the matters that could be considered by the board itself. The board will naturally have to be given wide and extensive powers to make regulations, I should say most of the machinery will have to be drawn up by the board, and it will have a good opportunity of studying the regulations that have successfully operated in Tasmania since 1932. I have a copy of the Tasmanian Bill and regulations. The board will have the sole right to decide how many bookmakers will be licensed and how many premises registered shall be allowed in each particular district. It will consider the requirements of the district and will have the sole authority to say how many bookmakers will operate in each locality.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: There will be no appeal to the Minister?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No; the Minister is not brought into it. The board is the deciding factor, not only as to the number that will operate, the number to be licensed in a particular district and the number of betting premises that will be registered, but it will also be the sole judge in any dispute that may arise between the licensed bookmaker and the punter. There are two provisions made for those who are not permitted to hold licences; one refers to anybody holding a licence for the sale of liquor under the Licensing Act of 1911, and the other, to persons under the age of 21 years.

Hon. D. Brand: Is there any basis set out in the Bill as to how many betting shops there will be to a given proportion of population?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No, that will be left to the discretion of the board; it will decide the requirements of a district and act accordingly. There will be the imposition of a bookmaker's betting tax, which will be known as a turnover tax, and this will amount to 1¼ per cent. The amount of the tax is not provided for in this Bill. It will be a taxing measure, and as members know will have to be the subject of a special Bill in the event of this measure passing the second reading.

The racing clubs will receive 20 per cent. of the turnover tax of all bets made on the course; that is 20 per cent of the turnover tax of 1¼ per cent. will go to racing or trotting clubs. A further provision states that 10 per cent., or half of it, is to be devoted to the increasing of stakes, and the other 10 per cent. will be used by the racing clubs in any direction they desire. The stamp tax which now operates on betting tickets on the course will not be altered. As far as off-course betting is concerned, the 1¼ per cent. turnover tax will operate. The clubs will receive 10 per cent. of the turnover tax on betting off-course made at or in registered premises. The method of distribution will be that the board, after the 31st July in every year, will make a distribution of the 10 per cent. to all racing and trotting clubs in Western Australia pro rata to the amount of stake money which they have provided over the previous 12 months.

Because of the fact that, generally speaking, the W.A.T.A. provides higher stakes, and that there is a much less volume of off-course betting on trotting events than there is on racing events, their proportion is restricted to 10 per cent. of this amount. As I said previously, the board will adjudicate in all disputes between bookmakers and their clients, and the decision of the board will be final. Those are the main provisions of the Bill. I forgot to mention that the tax on betting tickets for off-course betting will be 1d.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It will not be the same.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: No, it is not intended to disturb or alter the amount of tax on each betting ticket on the course. Realising that some of those who want to invest modest amounts off-course —perhaps a 3d. ticket tax would be quite a considerable percentage of what their bets would be—it is intended therefore to have 1d. ticket tax on all bets made off-course. There is, of course, the necessary machinery to implement the legislation.

If the legislation of off-course betting is agreed to, there will be no objection to accepting amendments when the Bill is in Committee. I suggest the measure should be considered on non-party lines. In travelling around the country I have seen in many country areas most elaborate set-ups for the conduct of s.p. betting operations. It was well known to the previous Government that this goes on; and it is well known to the members for the districts in which these operate.

I suggest we make a realistic approach to this problem and see if we cannot legalise it and place it on a better footing than it is at the present time. I know there will be those who will say later on that it will undermine the morals and morale of the people in this State if we legalise s.p. betting. I would draw attention to the fact, however, that s.p. betting is going on in great volume in this State now, and it is being carried on under conditions that can only be described as unsavoury. It is being conducted in backyards and lanes and all kinds of other places. But if it is agreed to legalise and control it, we would do away with what might be described as some of the evils that operate at the present time. I believe it would be much better to have it legalised than to let it continue as it has been doing for the past 25 to 30 years.

As I have already said, as the years go by it increases in volume and we must be realistic and face up to the position. Realising that there is a very lively public demand for s.p. betting, I do not think we would do any harm by saying, "It is here; it has been here for 25 years; succeeding Governments have permitted it to go on, and in the interests of all it would be much better to legalise it and carry it on in a correct manner."

S.p. betting has been in operation in Tasmania since 1932 and there is no indication that the people there are less Christian or less religious than we are, nor is there any indication that their morals or morale are any lower. As a matter of fact, I think it is to the credit of Tasmania that they should have recognised years ago that there was a strong public demand for s.p. betting which warranted their doing the honourable thing by legislating to legalise and control it. This is a genuine attempt by the Government to put the question of s.p. betting on a much higher and better footing. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—HEALTH ACT AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendment No. 3.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1954-55.

In Committee of Supply.

Debate resumed from the 7th October, on the Treasurer's Financial Statement and on the Annual Estimates, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

Vote—Legislative Council, £6,362.

HON. C. F. J. NORTH (Claremont) [8.18]: I wish to make a few remarks concerning answers I have received to questions asked during the session. Often

questions are asked at successive sittings, and there appears to be very little relationship between them; but in the ultimate one obtains useful information from the Government on important matters, and the answers, when pieced together, provide interesting reading.

One matter of importance to my district is that of beach erosion. Several questions were asked on this subject; and eventually an interesting reply was received from the Minister for Works, to the effect that the Government is engaged on a two years investigation of what should be done on the coast in regard to beach erosion. It was said that information would be sought from overseas. That was important news to my district and to other districts affected.

Then I asked what future population our water supplies could support. The only information I obtained in reply to that question was that provision is being made to supply water for 1,000,000 people in the metropolitan area. I was unable to obtain information as to what population Western Australia could carry with its various sources of water supply. That question is still in the offing. Other questions have since been asked by members concerning our rivers, and preparations for conserving the water available from that source. But there has been nothing further on the general question of what population the present water supplies can support. So far as I know, the department is not able to say whether we could support 2,000,000 or 10,000,000 people. All that we know is that it is understood that 1,000,000 in the city could be supplied when our present dams are completed.

Another important subject that crops up from time to time concerns a standard gauge for our railways. Everybody knows that there has been much talk about buying rolling stock, and improving the standard of our railway lines and of our sleepers; but the question of an Australian standard gauge has not been decided upon as a matter of policy. Many questions have been asked in this place from time to time. One was asked recently by the member for Moore, but there has been no answer as to what is intended. For many years there have been those who have advocated a standard gauge. Many members of the Federal Parliament have done so; and, to my knowledge, all the main parties have, at different times, supported this proposition. Many years ago, when I first entered politics, it was a definite plank of the A.L.P. platform. Before the big depression, the then Federal Government—the Bruce-Page Government—made a pronouncement, in a hall in Murray-st., in favour of a standard gauge.

However, years have passed, and nothing has been done. We have had wars since then. The Americans have come here and laughed at us, and complained about our mixed gauges. All sorts of suggestions and counter-suggestions have been made, but somehow no decision has been reached. I am not saying whether such a project should be started tomorrow or next month, but I am saying that some decision on the matter should be reached by the Federal and State authorities. During the last two sessions, I have asked a few questions and have received some interesting answers. One concerned how far the existing Western Australian rollingstock, purchased at such tremendous cost in the last few years, largely by the McLarty-Watts Government, could be converted, if the necessity arose, to the new standard gauge. To my pleasant surprise, I was informed that all the plant would be available for use on a standard gauge.

Then I asked the important question as to what route would be decided upon if a line were constructed from Kalgoorlie to Perth or Fremantle with a standard gauge, and whether hope had been abandoned for the adoption of the ideal route which had been surveyed through Brookton and Armadale. The Minister replied that hope of a standard gauge had not altogether been abandoned, and neither had hope been abandoned of the ideal route being used. It was important knowledge to me that all our rollingstock—or the modern part of it—could be used on a standard gauge; and that the ideal route from Kalgoorlie to Fremantle is still envisaged. Members all know that the present route goes through various hills, the ruling grade of which would not satisfy an engineer accustomed to world standards if he had the choice of a better one which would give greater speeds, with proper weighted rails and new locomotives. I have no hesitation in saying that for long distances, the railway systems are very well established and have a very long life.

I have always kept my eyes on the United States, where the people understand railways, and where over 300,000 miles of line are in operation. There, lines are not being pulled up and got rid of, even though road transport is increasing. On those lines tremendous train speeds are accomplished. My daughter, who married an American, sent me a book in which there were pictures of the fast trains in America, many of which average 90 miles per hour. The railway systems have not been intimidated by airlines or road transport, and they have kept their services in excellent condition, and have provided every facility for passengers. I look with great interest to the future of our Western Australian railways. I think there will be a great difference in the service given in a few years' time, when we derive benefits from the new rollingstock which we have not yet obtained, and the new heavy rails and sleepers. This progress is in the balance, as it were; because how can any State Government, or the Government of Australia, proceed in a definite way when it is not too sure about whether there will be general standardisation or not?

When I first came to this Chamber, I approached the Railway Department to see what it thought about this question. That was after the A.L.P. advocated unification and after the Bruce-Page Government supported the same policy. I was told quite frankly by the department that it had no desire to live in times during the change over. I thought of asking the Minister a question on this matter, but realised that it was a matter of opinion, and the question was not one which it would be fair to ask him to answer. The query was whether, if he were given all the money required to complete his railway system on a modern gauge and along a better route, with the proper ruling grade, he would hesitate and prefer to carry on as is done today, because of the terrific extra worry that would be involved in adopting standardisation.

This question is not confined to Western Australia. Since I have been in politics, it has been spoken of as one of Australian importance. We have been the laughing stock of the world with our mixed gauges. Fleeting visitors have laughed at us. Those who look into the question will realise that many other countries have had to face the problem. If we look to England and the United States, we find that in the former country there were two gauges. There was the famous 7ft. gauge—the finest line the world has known, where the carriages were really comfortable—and the 4ft. 8½ in. gauge. There was a tremendous battle, and finally the best gauge was abandoned and the standard 4ft. 8½in. was adopted. Since then, England has had that gauge. However, the 7ft. gauge is still looked upon as being finer than any other gauge in use.

In the United States, there were five or six gauges in operation. They got together around a table, and in 18 months converted all the gauges to one standard gauge. In his "History of the World", H. G. Wells points out that the whole prosperity of the United States and its modern development commenced from the day on which its varying rail gauges were standardised. I have at home a map, which I have thought of asking the Speaker's permission to place on the wall in this Chamber, showing the railway systems of the U.S.A. implanted on a map of Australia. If we had here the mass of railway lines that exist in that country, we would by now have reached a complete impasse owing to the enormous number of crossings that would be necessary from gauge to gauge.

I feel almost inclined to ask the Minister for Railways whether, if he had available all the money required today to change over to the standard gauge, he would go ahead with the job or whether, owing to the huge amount of work and worry involved, he would prefer to let the position remain as it is. However, the changeover was done in both Great Britain and America, with most excellent results. I think the answer to my question as to why we have failed in this job, when other countries have succeeded, is to be found in politics, or at all events in our fear that a Government department might not be able to accomplish what a company can do.

The last thing I want to do is to make this a political discussion, but probably the true reason why the five States have had difficulty in getting together on this question is just that they are States, and not companies, because in both U.S.A. and Great Britain the companies concerned were willing to go to Parliament and have the matter straightened out. I advocated unification of gauges in 1926 and was successful in having a motion dealing with the subject passed by both Houses of this Parliament. At that stage the changeover to the standard gauge would have cost £60,000,000 and the present cost is said to be about £200,000,000.

When members of Parliament talk to the ordinary citizen with an average income he is flabbergasted at the mention of hundreds of millions of pounds, because he does not live in the political world in which we live. It is unfortunate that even members of Parliament allow themselves to be bamboozled by a sum such as £50,000,000 or even the present-day estimate of £200,000,000 because that amount of money, in relation to the total national income of Australia, in reality amounts to very little and a similar expenditure would not be allowed to stand in the way of completion of the work for five minutes in the U.S.A.

We know what is the national income of Australia today — something over £4,000,000,000—and as it would take at least ten years to unify our rail gauges, we can divide the sum of £200,000,000 by ten and compare the result with our national income. When we do that, we find that the resulting figure is only a very small percentage of our total resources, and yet those who wish to hold up this work can easily frighten the average citizen, and even some members of Parliament, by talking of an expenditure of £200,000,000. Of course, we spend that in an ordinary year on defence. I know that the Premier has been questioned recently on this issue but I am afraid that unless serious consideration is given to the project by both the State Premiers and the Federal Government, nothing will be done.

If we visualise this country with a still further increased population and many new industries in the future, surely we must realise that we cannot allow the present position of our railway systems to continue much longer! I therefore trust that those members of this Chamber who have

been biting at this question, will continue to do so. I have a clear conscience on the subject because my motion was carried in both Chambers in 1926 and again in 1936. I promised to have it carried again in 1946 but by that time the nation had agreed to do the job and an expert was going around Australia obtaining details.

Unfortunately Queensland, I think, raised some difficulty and the whole question was postponed; and that remains the position today. Nevertheless I believe that in the Federal Parliament members of all political parties are advocating unification of gauges and I trust that there will no longer be any big interests that feel such a project would be harmful to them. At one time our population was very small and there consequently did not exist the present demand for first-class railways, coastal shipping services and so on.

Today, however, with our growing population there is urgent need for the completion of this job, apart from an increase in coastal shipping and air services. With the increasing population and wealth of Australia, we could easily afford to have this job done. As was pointed out by some recent protagonists of the work—I believe the Federated Enginedrivers' Union—it was only in 1918 that a Royal Commission in its report pointed out that the cost of freight in this country would be reduced by at least 30 per cent. by unification of our gauges.

Anyone who grows tomatoes in Geraldton would support strongly the idea of being able to load a truck with tomatoes at that centre and run it straight through to the Melbourne market with no transhipment. The same advantage would be obvious in the case of other commodities also. The advantages of a uniform rail gauge in time of war are so plain as to hardly be worth mentioning and yet so far did the opponents of the scheme go at one stage that they argued that it was better to have changes of gauge so that the troops could stop at the breaks of gauge and exercise themselves!

Several questions have been asked in this Chamber during the present session and last session on the introduction of fluorine into our water supplies. I believe there is something in what the chemists say and that there may be a poisonous effect from fluorine. Those who oppose its introduction to our water supplies say it is a poison, although it is highly diluted before it gets into our drinking water. The opponents of the idea say that after a child reaches a certain age, fluorine does not benefit the teeth but merely fills the human system with cumulative poisons.

It is also said that in America many cities have been sold this substance, which is a by-product of the manufacture of aluminium, and some of the civic authorities there, having paid large sums for their installations, now want to scrap them. I understand that an installation for a centre such as the City of Melbourne would cost about £50,000. However, I believe that the ordinary person would rather give his children fluorine on a doctor's prescription, if necessary, than have it added to the drinking water, and so I hope the Minister will remain cautious on this question.

During the present session a number of questions have been asked about traffic lights and I was glad to see the Minister's recent announcement that the intention is to carry on with the installation of traffic lights in Stirling Highway. They are overdue and will be welcome and I hope the work is completed speedily. We have not yet been entirely successful in our efforts to combat river pollution, although the menace has been arrested. I am sure the Minister will watch the position closely in order to preserve the ground that has been gained.

I will now touch on a subject that is a little futuristic. In the first place, what about the five-year Parliaments referred to by the member for Vasse? We have the Mother of Parliaments as a precedent in this respect, and I ask members to think of their own election campaigns. I have survived ten elections and were I a member of the House of Commons that would represent 50 years of political life, which surely would be sufficient for anybody. I have been through the hoops ten times, and I know that the moment a member overcomes one difficulty, the public find another for him to tackle.

Any member is lucky to survive 10 elections and the fact that each is worth only a paltry three years in Parliament is something that should be remedied. I am sure all members and all political parties would benefit through such a change as whatever party became the Government would have five years in which to implement its policy. The first year would be spent talking about it, the second, third and fourth years in doing the job, and the fifth year in talking again prior to the elections.

The Minister for Housing: The average parliamentary life in this Assembly is eight years.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH: I take some credit for having done my best to stir up the present Administration on the question of Argentine ants and we now have on hand a comprehensive proposition which I hope will be successful. In Saturday evening's Press there appeared a heading stating "The Sun may Bow to the Bear." It dealt with Russia's boast that she is the greatest exponent of the use of the sun's rays, and everything that can be done with them. We know all about the sun's rays, so having carried a motion on it, why should we worry about what the sun can do for the bear? The Minister for Industrial Development

is running neck and neck in this matter with the Soviet Union, because in this Chamber we have mentioned most of those matters during our own little show— matters that are only propaganda statements from Russia.

If they are as advanced in the use of the sun's rays as they claim to be in their reports, when President Eisenhower, in his efforts to achieve world peace, offers to share the atomic power knowledge possessed by the United States of America, we could perhaps come to an arrangement whereby they would hand over all their knowledge regarding the use of the sun's rays in exchange. There is nothing further I wish to add on that subject for the future, but we have at present a territory in this State referred to as the "never-never."

It would be very convenient for members of this House, in view of the forecast for the future when the sun's rays are harnessed, if we had a map prepared showing all that part of the State within our 900,000 square miles, referred to as the "never-never." Perhaps the Minister for Lands could arrange to have that done. Then, if all these gadgets operated by the sun's rays, which are at present referred to in Press reports, are brought to bear on that particular area, I predict there will be a great future in store for those near million squares miles of the State.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [9.47]: A year such as this, which has been an extremely dry one, brings home to all of us the great need for water conservation and reticulation of water to all parts of the State. Before any project for water reticulation is undertaken in any district, full investigation should be made to ensure that that particular area is in greater need of water than any other. I think everyone agrees that water is essential for the development of our primary industries. Its provision will assist to increase the production of wool, sheep and other stock and would also be of great benefit to the housewife who resides in dry outlying areas.

Some centres are far more dependent on water than others, and I claim that Carnarvon is the one district which should receive first priority. To support that statement, I wish to give the House primary production figures from the Carnarvon district and compare them with those showing the production of bananas in the Eastern States and the production of beans in the near metropolitan districts. I do not think these figures have been quoted before and they will give members full information on the production potential of Carnarvon, if it were provided with sufficient good quality water.

The figures I am about to quote in regard to banana production are for the year 1951-52. The reason I am quoting them for this particular year is that I have been fortunate in obtaining comparable figures for the same year showing production in the Eastern States. In that year Carnarvon had under crop 370 acres of banana-bearing plants which produced 72,901 bushels of fruit, or an average of 197 bushels per acre. In the same year New South Wales produced 2,229,192 bushels from 16,447 acres, or an average of 135.5 bushels per acre, which production is considerably less per acre than that of Carnarvon.

In Queensland, which State one would think would be the home of the banana, having a far more tropical climate, 90,681 bushels were produced from 4,036 acres, or an average of 110.7 bushels per acre. From those figures it will be realised that the Carnarvon banana industry is capable of higher production and therefore is one centre that should be provided with an adequate water supply as soon as possible. It will also be interesting to members to learn that in the Eastern States a very high individual yield is 184 bushels per acre, whereas the average yield in the Carnarvon district for 1941-42 was 274 bushels per acre.

The highest aggregate production was obtained in Carnarvon in 1949-50, when the yield for the whole district was 103,680 bushels of bananas from 428 acres under crop, or an average of 214 bushels per acre. If the production figures were closely studied it would be realised that the average yield per acre is dependent upon the flow of the river. It would be noted that when the river had not run for 12 or 18 months, the production gradually dropped and when it did not flow for a period of 22 months the production was the lowest on record. In the past two or three years the river has run, on an average, once every 14 months and this has resulted in the gradual decline of banana production.

There are some very interesting figures on the production of beans. For the year 1953-54, there were 538 acres under crop in the whole of the State which yielded 40,429 cwt. of beans, or an average of 75.5 cwt. per acre. Those figures relate to the production of runner beans and do not include french beans. In the near metropolitan area 120 acres were under crop and they produced 11,908 cwt. or an average of 99.2 cwt. per acre. In the Fremantle area, 154 acres produced 12,984 cwt. of beans, or an average of 84.3 cwt. per acre. In the Wanneroo district 38 acres produced 1,694 cwt., or an average of 44.6 cwt. per acre. The Carnarvon district from 75 acres produced 6,631 cwt., or an average of 88 cwt. per acre.

Members will therefore note that Carnarvon, even with its dry climate, was able to produce more beans than some of the near metropolitan area districts. In fact, Carnarvon produced an average higher than the average production for the whole

of the State and slightly under the average for the near metropolitan area. Beans are one of those crops which greatly reflect the amount of rainfall. The better the season, the better the bean production. Therefore, the bean production does not reflect the extent of the river flow to the same degree as it does the rainfall. It is interesting to note that the production of beans at Carnarvon reached an average of 100 cwt. per acre in 1949-50. Thirty-four acres produced 3,412 cwt. The highest production was achieved in 1953-54 when 6,631 cwt. of beans were produced, or an average of 88 cwt. per acre.

No doubt members will have noted an item in this morning's Press relating to the production of cucumbers at Carnarvon this year and suggesting that it might be a record. I have been unable to check the figures shown in the Press statement, but they should be correct. This year, from less than half an acre, one man has produced 2,701 dozen cucumbers which I am certain could not be equalled in any other part of the State. Cucumbers are a crop which rely entirely on good water supply and therefore the extent of the river flow at Carnavon would have a great effect on production.

Mr. McCulloch: Have they sold well?

Mr. NORTON: Yes, and it will be interesting to members to learn that that crop returned £2,021 after air-freight had been paid. It will also be noted that during the years that primary production has been engaged in at Carnarvon, the rainfall has varied greatly. In 1938 Carnarvon had 272 points of rain. Over the years it has varied to a maximum of 15in. and 71 points in 1953. There are not many years in which the rainfall has exceeded 10in., but it is mostly between 6 to 8in. This is very low and the district therefore has to rely almost entirely on the flow of the river for its supply of water.

I would like to quote some figures relating to the estimated value of production for 1953-54. I say estimated because the average price had to be estimated for the produce marketed in Perth. I have only used beans and bananas as commodities, whereas, in fact, many other commodities were marketed. Taking beans as returning an average of 2s. per lb., they would have returned £74,267 to the industry. The 41,607 bushels of bananas, which equal 27,738 cases of 1½ bushels at £5 per case, would return £138,690; making a total of £231,957.

This is a substantial figure when one considers that these industries are developed over a small area of land, on which originally 50 to 60 sheep grazed. If one estimates the return from 50 to 60 sheep, one can readily see that the same area of land is today producing a very much greater amount. The industry today carries a population of 500, but if sheep were raised not one person would be employed in that area. On that score alone, this industry, which has been developed and supports itself, is truly worthy of assistance from the Government.

Over the past few years the whaling station has been established at Carnarvon, and this proved a financial success. The station draws the large quantities of water it uses from the Gascoyne River, the same source from which the banana industry draws its supply. I was very interested to read the annual report of the Whaling Commission for 1953-54 which appeared in "The West Australian" of the 16th October, in which the profit was shown at £81,214, and, after writing off £74,484 for depreciation, and providing £15,574 for insurance and £1,253 for superannuation, the capital advanced by the Commonwealth Treasury was reduced by £300,000.

The commission intends to reduce it further by another payment of £200,000 from moneys on hand. That would mean that the Whaling Commission would reduce its indebtedness to the Commonwealth Government by £500,000 off the £1,333,333 which was made available to start it. The whaling industry produces many products for use in this State and for export overseas. The latter is a source of foreign credits which are badly needed by the Commonwealth. Many tons of valuable stock food in the way of whale meal and solubles are supplied for State needs, and this has proved invaluable to the pig and poultry industries in the southern portion of the State. Here I would mention the report of the Public Works Department for 1952-1953. On page 24 there appears a report on the water supplies for Carnarvon.

I shall read this extract so that members will appreciate that that department is concerned with the implementation of greater water supplies for Carnarvon. It says—

> The rapid extension of the banana growing industry and consequently heavy demand from the river is viewed with concern. Draw-off from the river sands for bananas is now 60 million gallons per week. In dry seasons, this heavy demand jeopardises the town supply to the whaling station.

The 60,000,000 gallons per week was an estimate made some four years ago. Since that time, the industry has expanded and I would not be surprised if today the industry is drawing 80,000,000 gallons per week. I understand that the Public Works Department intends to carry out another survey this year to find out the exact amount of water used in the banana industry.

There are two methods by which water can be conserved in the Gascoyne river for primary production and the whaling industry at Carnarvon. I have mentioned one method before, that being the dam-

ming of Rocky Pool some 25 to 30 miles from Carnarvon. The other method is the recommendation put up by the Government geologist, Mr. Ellis, for putting clay ribbons across the river. I consider that the Rocky Pool project should take second preference to the clay ribbons project. The reason is that the dam would be able to conserve about 12,000,000,000 gallons of water, but the large area retaining the water would cause it to lose in 12 months 50 per cent. of its volume through evaporation.

Thus the amount of water conserved would be cut down to almost an uneconomic level. In my opinion, the construction of clay banks would be far more sensible, if tests being carried out at present prove that such a scheme is practicable. The idea is to remove the sands from the river beds and put clay banks across the river at various locations between the mouth of the river and the eastern end of the plantations. The banks so constructed would force the water to the north and south lateral of the river, and thus fill up the reservoirs which exist in the Gascoyne delta. Such a project would supply far more fresh water over a longer period, than is supplied by the river which allows the water to flow unimpeded through the sands out to sea. The present supplies appear to be adequate for a period of 12 months; that is to say, if the river flows every 12 months there would be sufficient water to carry the industry along without any decrease in production, but if the river does not flow once in 12 months, then a crisis in the industry develops.

Mr. Hill drew attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. NORTON: The Government is takin some action with a view to constructing clay banks. It is putting down bores to test the strata of the land to the north and the south of the river. When these have been sunk, Mr. Ellis, the Government geologist will be able to decide whether or not his suggestions are practicable. As the banana industry would collapse quickly through a shortage of water, I would ask the Government to earmark sufficient funds, in case the need arises, to put at least one such ribbon across the river this year.

A clay bank cannot be put across until the water in the river sands has dropped to a very low level. When the water has not flowed for over 12 months this stage will be reached, and it is getting near to the time for the river to run again. If the banks are put in then it must be done quickly so that the work can be completed in the shortest possible time. I know that the settlers on the Gascoyne River have great faith that these clay ribbons or banks will prove to be the salvation of the industry, and anything that can be done to help the industry to maintain its high rate of production should be done. This is one of the industries that is assisting decentralisation in the State, and that is something to be encouraged.

Mr. Ackland: How deep would they need to go to put in the clay banks?

Mr. NORTON: To the clay bottom of the river.

Mr. Ackland: How deep would that be?

Mr. NORTON: Probably 25 feet. The depth varies from nothing to 70 or 80 feet, but a contour survey of the river, which has been carried out, would permit of the selection of sites where the ribbons could be most advantageously placed.

Bound up with the prosperity of the North is transport, and as regards Carnarvon, roads represent one if not the main means of transport. I suggest that the North Coastal Highway, instead of being classed as an important secondary road, should be classed as a main road and treated with the priority given to main roads. This road carries all the perishable produce from Carnarvon, as well as perishables such as fish from Shark Bay.

As I have pointed out, this road is carrying perishable produce from Carnarvon and at the same time is saving a great amount of space on the State ships, which at present are over-loaded. It is saving ship space and making it available for towns further north that are desperately in need of food, including perishables, and other commodities required for the maintenance of the industries there. With the development of oil at Exmouth Gulf and the Kimberleys, the State Shipping Service is being taxed still further, and if the road to Carnarvon were improved, additional relief would be afforded to the State ships, thus assisting the North generally.

On looking through the estimates of revenue and expenditure, it is interesting to note the amount of subsidy paid to primary industries in other parts of the State, particularly the wheatgrowing industry. When one totals those amounts, one finds that they reach the vicinity of £100,000. In the list of subsidies to primary industries, I have included a rebate on the rail freight for flour. This I consider is a rebate to the wheatgrowing industry. It amounts to £57,000 and accounts for just over half of the total.

Mr. Ackland: That represents a subsidy to the consumers—those that use flour.

Mr. NORTON: Not necessarily. It should not be out of the way to suggest that the Carnarvon industry be subsidised in a small way for the cartage of its perishable produce to the rail-head. In the case of other primary industries where Government transport is not provided or where the transport is insufficient to cope

with the demands, the Government comes to light and assists by the payment of a subsidy. If Government transport were available—and this would be by ship—the cost of conveying Carnarvon bananas to market, including harbour and light dues at Fremantle and Carnarvon, would be £4 8s. 2d. per ton. Road and rail transport from Carnarvon to market costs £14 12s. 3d., so through the lack of sufficient Government transport, the Carnarvon industry is handicapped to the extent of £10 per ton, which represents 10s. on each case of bananas.

I was interested to read in the report of the Public Works Department that a recommendation had been made for the provision of houses for employees of that department. The report stated—

> Great difficulty is still being experienced in obtaining suitable types of men for supervisory jobs. Suitable housing for married men should be a great step to easing this position and making foremen-type employees more readily available.

This, too, would assist the housing problem in the North, inasmuch as it would relieve in quite a number of instances the necessity for houses being provided by the State Housing Commission for the people employed in industry or on other jobs in the various centres. When the Government is providing houses for departmental employees in the North, I suggest that the major portion of the essential furniture required, such as refrigerators, bedroom and dining-room furniture etc., should be supplied.

The reason I suggest it is that every time a schoolteacher is transferred from Perth to Carnarvon, one is transferred from Carnarvon to Perth. It is a conservative estimate to say that it would cost between £60 and £70 for each person or family to be transferred. As a teacher's sojourn in the North is two years, this means that if the three teachers who are at Carnarvon now are transferred every two years, something in the vicinity of £200 would be involved for the transfer of furniture each year. When we add these transfer costs to those in connection with the clerks of court, magistrates, engineers, police an so on—these people are not transferred as often as are the schoolteachers—the sum must be considerable. If the Government were to supply the essential furniture for the homes, I believe it would achieve a considerable saving. I hope that in the near future the Education Department will be able to say that a hostel at Carnarvon has been established for the out-back children. The negotiations for the hostel are now well advanced, and I believe that a suitable building has been agreed upon.

Mr. HILL: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. HILL (Albany) [10.25]: Parliament has two jobs to do—one is to make laws and the other to try to run the State on business lines. I am afraid that with respect to the second part, we are falling down on our job very badly. Prior to this year we were always supplied with the financial statement showing the returns in connection with the various activities of the Government. Perhaps the Premier will explain why we have not got his statement for this year. I am sorry the Premier is not listening.

It is rather an impossible job for a board of directors to consider the finances of a company when the balance sheet is not available. We have not got our balance sheet for this year. I have the 1952-53 figures, and anyone who studies the balance sheets over the years must get a first-class headache to see the serious deterioration in our financial undertakings. This financial statement gives the detailed classification of our loan assets for 1952-53. It shows a loan liability of £153,000,000, and a deficiency of £10,574,000.

Obviously, if we are to get out of the mud, we have to make more use of our assets and cut out our liabilities. I am sorry that these Estimates are always rushed forward and that we do not have the opportunity to deal with them as we should When I spoke on the Loan Bill I referred to the rapid deterioration in our port finances. I am sorry the member for Vasse is not in his seat. He was very proud when he interjected and said that they had a ship—it was a small one—loading timber at Busselton.

If you, Mr. Chairman, go upstairs to our library, you can see a book showing the visit of the American Fleet to Australia, but there is no mention of its visit to Western Australia—this Fleet came out in 1908—because, when it came to this State, it stayed at Albany. While the fleet was there, I saw seven battleships, two auxiliary ships, six coal boats and a British cruiser anchored in Princess Royal Harbour, and outside in King George's Sound there were a further nine battleships. I was on the United States flagship "Connecticut," talking to one of the Yankees, and he said, "Where is this place called 'Farmantle' "? I replied, "It is a dug-out about 300 miles away." He said, "If we had this harbour, we would darn soon use it."

I regret to say that since that date the Government of Western Australia, instead of using Albany as far as economically possible, has spent the people's money on building harbours in other parts of the State. I am glad the member for Gascoyne has taken his seat. When I was

speaking on the Loan Bill he interjected and said, "How much did your first berth cost at Albany?" Well, I cannot say any more than you, Mr. Chairman, can say how much the first seat in your motorcar costs. A port is like a motorcar because it consists of a lot of parts. At Albany a considerable sum of money has been spent on reclaiming 80 acres of land. The Tydeman scheme proposes the progressive reclamation of 500 acres to provide 22 berths. In the present stage we propose to construct only two berths, but we have reclaimed one-sixth of the total area of land that is to be reclaimed.

Our harbour is like a motorcar with a first-class chassis, engine, transmission, etc., but the Government is only constructing the first seat. It is completing the first berth to enable the port to handle bulk cargo and is ceasing work on the second berth. That is a serious matter for the southern part of the State, and the State as a whole, because both berths are essential. I would not complain if the money was being spent on the comprehensive water scheme, but I will not remain silent and see that work stopped while the Government absolutely wastes £80,000 this year on Bunbury. I have here the report of the Outports Royal Commission, the members of which were H. H. Styants, chairman; L. L. Hill, member; E. K. Hoar, member; L. J. Triat, member; and W. F. H. Willmott, member.

I will not say we were experts, or that we did not make mistakes, but we did the job to the best of our ability. Some years ago, I had the task of taking for a trip up the Kalgan River members of the biggest party of Federal members to visit Western Australia up to that time. They were members of the Commonwealth Navigation Commission, and they had lunch on my verandah. Two of the Labour members were not present on the trip up the Kalgan.

In its report on the decline of the port of Albany, the Labour members of the commission said that the Government of Western Australia spent large sums of money constructing a harbour at Bunbury and then constructed railways to connect with the Perth-Albany line, with the result that Bunbury progressed and Albany correspondingly declined. Over the years Bunbury had the political pull while Albany had the natural advantages. Nature does not talk; that is my job. The Outports Royal Commission said of Bunbury—

> Bunbury's greatest drawback is the continuous silting up of the harbour and until this is effectively controlled it will be a costly and unsatisfactory port to maintain. For many years before the last war it was costing about £10,000 per year for dredging and this is far too much, when considering the small amount of cargo handled.

To get an expert opinion as to whether the silting can be controlled and at what cost, Mr. R. J. Dumas, Director of Public Works, was furnished with a number of questions and called by the Commission as a witness. His answers to these and other queries are set out on page 712-717 of the typewritten evidence.

Mr. Dumas considers that the silting can be controlled at a cost of approximately £500,000, and if this is done the cost of maintenance should be very light. In view of the large sum involved, and as we now have an engineering expert here in the person of Col. Tydeman, we suggest that he and Mr. Dumas confer as to the best method of controlling the silt.

The greatest depth of water available at any berth has been 27ft. 6in., but owing to silting this depth is not now available. Mr. McKenna, Chairman of the Bunbury Harbour Board, stated that judging from pre-war experience, 90 per cent. of their troubles would be eliminated if they had 27ft. 6in. of water because 90 per cent. of the cargo ships do not need more than that depth. The bottom of the harbour is basalt rock and it will prove costly to deepen the harbour sufficiently to take refrigerated vessels. At present there would not be much cargo for this class of ship.

The estimated cost of providing two berths of 32 feet with a passage-way to the ocean and sufficient manoeuvring room is £500,000. As already over three-quarters of a million pounds has been spent there and the estimated cost of preventing constant silting and providing two berths with 32 feet of water is £1,000,000, it will require a great tonnage of cargoes to warrant this expenditure.

It is recommended that the first requirement is to put in hand the work to prevent silting. When it is established that silting is no longer taking place, no dredging will be needed to maintain a 27ft. 6in. depth of water. This depth should be generally sufficient for present needs and the further question of providing two berths of deeper water can be held in abeyance for further consideration as the development of the district warrants.

In spite of that recommendation, with two members of that commission now members of the present Government, Cabinet has decided to go on with that work. Last year the Minister told me that £566,000 had been spent to stop silting at

Bunbury. In 1950-51, dredging maintenance cost £20,000, and last year we voted £30,000 for it. This year the Minister asks us to vote another £40,000, and that is not all; he has told us that it will cost £180,000 to complete the groyne and breakwater to their limit, and that we will need a new suction dredge which will probably cost about £400,000. Annual charges run into about £40,000 and working expenses perhaps another £40,000.

I challenge the Minister, when speaking to the Works Estimates or in reply to this debate, to justify that expenditure in the light of the loss on that port last year of £81,000. The Premier did not reply to my remarks during the debate on the Loan Bill, but let the cat out of the bag by interjection when he asked, "Is the Country Party likely to endorse a candidate for the next election at Bunbury?" What an attitude! All he thought of was the next election. Perhaps that is why there is no work being done at Albany.

Two years ago the Premier visited Albany and started a campaign against me, bragging that he would win the Albany seat, but I got back again by my biggest majority and my intelligence service tells me that the Labour Party has given me up as a bad job. Is that why the Government has stopped spending money at Albany and has ceased providing a valuable asset and instead spends money on an ever-increasing liability? I challenge the Minister to justify the expenditure at Bunbury.

In the Loan Estimates, we were asked to vote £40,000 for the continuation of the jetty, in spite of the report signed by the present Minister for Railways and Minister for Lands. It is not only the £40,000 but the estimated expenditure of £600,000 that I protest about. Are we doing our job for the State when we waste that money there while work is stopped on what is admitted to be one of the finest harbours in the world? Nature not only made Albany but also provided easy grades right through to Merredin and Southern Cross. The easiest way to prevent congestion at Fremantle is to make greater use of the port of Albany.

Some years ago, I wrote a series of articles on the ports of Western Australia, and they were published in "The Primary Producer", now known as "The Farmer". I had just finished an article on Bunbury when I received a copy of "Hansard" in which it was announced that the Government was going to stop the silting up there at a cost of £161,000. I added a footnote to my article saying, "Since writing this article I have seen 'Hansard', and note that the Government is going to spend £161,000 to try to control silting. The only sure thing about that expenditure will be an increase on interest charges of £8,000 a year."

Among those who congratulated me on the article were the late Mr. G. W. Stead, one of the leading railway men in Australia at that time, and a member of Parliament, who has represented Geraldton in this House, Hon. E. H. H. Hall. He concluded his letter by saying, "It is as you say, all political wire pulling. If the Government does not spend money there, the people will vote out their member. It requires a lot of faith to hope for the time when such a rotten system will cease." It is to be regretted, but we cannot altogether blame the politicians; the people get the politicians that they deserve and I am sure members will agree that a large section of the community is out to sell its votes to the highest bidder. I have never met a better bidder than our present Premier. The experience of six years ago proves that.

The question is, "How can we stop this rotten system?" In South Australia there is a standing public works committee, and no works for which the expenditure is more than £30,000 are put before Parliament for approval until that committee makes a full investigation and report. I do not say that we should report on every work costing over £30,000. When I was in South Australia I travelled around the port of Adelaide with the general manager of the South Australian Harbour Board, Mr. H. C. Meyer. He was commenting on the good work that this committee has done, but he said, "A sum of £30,000 is altogether too low because we can hardly build a shed for that figure today." I say that before any work costing more than £100,000 or £150,000 is put before this Parliament for approval, it should be thoroughly investigated to make sure that it is necessary and in the interests of the State and is not an attempt to to buy a few votes.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.43 p.m.