

**Division 6: Western Australian Electoral Commission, \$30 886 000 —**

Ms S.E. Winton, Chair.

Mr R.R. Whitby, Parliamentary Secretary representing the Minister for Electoral Affairs.

Mr R.L. Kennedy, Electoral Commissioner.

Mr C.N. Avent, Deputy Electoral Commissioner.

Mr P.J. Shimmings, Director, Business Services.

Mrs L. Holding, Chief of Staff, Minister for Electoral Affairs.

[Witnesses introduced.]

**The CHAIR:** This estimates committee will be reported by Hansard. The daily proof *Hansard* will be available tomorrow. The Chair will ensure that as many questions as possible are asked and that both questions and answers are short and to the point. If an adviser needs to answer from the lectern, will they please state their name prior to their answer. The estimates committee's consideration of the estimates will be restricted to discussion of those items for which a vote of money is proposed in the consolidated account. Questions must be clearly related to a page number, item, program or amount in the current division. Members should give these details in preface to their question. If a division or service is the responsibility of more than one minister, a minister shall only be examined in relation to their portfolio responsibilities.

The minister may agree to provide supplementary information to the committee, and I ask the minister to clearly indicate what supplementary information will be provided. I will then allocate a reference number. Supplementary information should be provided to the principal clerk by Friday, 30 October 2020. I caution members that if a minister asks that a matter be put on notice, it is up to the member to lodge that through the online questions system.

Any questions, members?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I have one. Parliamentary secretary, I refer to page 100, significant issues impacting the agency and the second paragraph that refers to planning for the state election and the impact of COVID. It talks about the additional costs associated with personal hygiene and physical distancing requirements in the booths. I am wondering whether there has also been any planning or thought given to the social distancing requirements outside the polling booth in regard to political parties offering how-to-vote cards et cetera. Is that a consideration that is being undertaken by the commission at the moment and when will the commissioner be likely to be able to provide some advice about any changes around those types of arrangements?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I anticipated a bit of interest in the Western Australian Electoral Commission in this particular budget estimates for obvious reasons. The member has raised a very good point: COVID is an issue to be considered, given the nature of people gathering to cast their ballots. But given this is the Western Australian Electoral Commission I would prefer to hand over to the commissioner to answer that question, and, indeed, I think probably most of the questions that might come up today with the commission. Commissioner, if you will.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** Yes, it is a significant issue on our radar. It is something we are concerned about and we will probably get some feedback from electors about that as well. Unfortunately, my influence in the matter is somewhat limited under the legislation, other than up to 100 metres outside a polling place where I can prevent people undertaking exit surveys or those kinds of things. I do not have any powers once we go past the six metre mark at a polling place. People are not allowed to campaign within that six metres of the entrance to a polling place; beyond that, I do not have any authority or jurisdiction to control what happens. However, recognising that it is going to be an issue for electors and parties as well, in terms of the best approach to take, our plan is to sit down with the parties, and we are starting some meetings shortly with party secretaries that will run through November. Once we have a better idea in January of where we hope we are sitting in terms of the pandemic, we will have further sessions with the parties then about those sorts of things. It is not within my jurisdiction to be able to say, "No campaigning and there will be no how-to-vote cards", and that sort of thing. The way I would like to approach it is a joint discussion with the parties. Hopefully, we can come to a commonsense solution that serves everyone's needs.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I think the commissioner mentioned January, but would the parliamentary secretary be able to put some sort of a time line? Is there some sort of further advice he could provide to people about when these matters will be known? Obviously, people have to make arrangements and they will be well in train well before January, I would have thought.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** If the commissioner would like to respond.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** I cannot give any firm dates other than what I have already indicated, that we will be having that consultation period throughout November. That will give us the opportunity to get some feedback from the parties about the issues as they see it, and give us an opportunity to present the issues as we see them. Hopefully, we will

then work through those issues over the December period and start locking things in in January. I suspect that this election is going to be unlike any other Western Australia has had in the past, and my concern, the thing that keeps me up at night, is community transmission in that January–February period and then potentially all bets are off for campaigning and the established processes that everyone is used to. No, I cannot give the member a certain date, but we will do our best to keep the communication channels open with the parties.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** While we are talking about the provisions of the polling booths, has any consultation or advice taken place between the commission and the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation concerning the use of plastics at polling stations?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I am not aware of any. The member is talking about in terms of the government's initiatives to reduce plastic waste?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Yes.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Okay. Is there a particular item in the budget the member is referring to in relation to that?

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I am referring to the item that refers to the state election, which is the expenditures under the first "Service Summary" on page 100 and the budget estimates this year of \$32 million to carry out the state election. I am asking that question as a matter pertaining to the state election.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I will refer it to the commissioner. I am not aware of any engagement about the use of plastics, but maybe the commissioner has had a discussion and he might like to let us know.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** I do not have a specific date, but we were contacted a couple of months ago, I think, by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation. I believe it was doing a general ring around to find out who was responsible for the placement and who regulated that kind of thing. We made it clear that it was beyond our jurisdiction, so that is the extent of our conversation with it.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Further, is the commission going to alter the number of voting places or encourage pre-polls? During this period, some other countries have encouraged pre-polls or postal votes, really, to avoid the contact. Does the parliamentary secretary have the powers to change any of this?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I will refer to the commissioner in a minute, but I think the member is right. It is an increasing trend, is it not, to have early voting and pre-polling. The commissioner can enlighten us, but we are anticipating a large proportion of voters to have already cast their vote before election day.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** What percentage does the parliamentary secretary think it will be?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** The commissioner can give us more of a precise idea, but it is certainly heading up to 50 per cent or more. Indeed, there are issues this year. There would probably be more of an inclination for voters to want to get out early and to seek out that quiet time so they know they are not going to be in queues on election day.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** To throw out a terrible government.

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** Point of order. This does not even relate to a budget item.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Yes, it does.

**Ms C.M. ROWE:** Which one?

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, members. Members, I will hear the point of order, not you. Thank you, member for Belmont.  
[2.10 pm]

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Chair, I am happy with the gratuitous comment because I can respond, but maybe —

**The CHAIR:** No, sorry. Member for Belmont, at the moment if the parliamentary secretary would like to continue with the questions and answering them. I will allow that.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Apart from the very last comment by the outgoing member for Riverton, it was a good question. People will be keen to vote, to vote early and to avoid election day rushes. I think the commission is very aware of this, and, in fact, apart from there being extra opportunities and extra locations, I think we are going to see some extra time in the final weeks. The commissioner can elaborate on that, but certainly, we are aware of that issue.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** We are a little bit lucky in Western Australia in that we are coming at the tail-end of some other electoral events throughout Australia and New Zealand; so, I have had the benefit of being able to observe and talk to my colleagues in other jurisdictions. The key strategy that they have employed and the key strategy that we will employ next year will be, to use a rather well-worn phrase, to smooth the curve and move people away from the 70 per cent who voted on polling day in 2017 and spread that out over the pre-poll period, the early voting period, which will commence on 24 February. From 24 February through to the night before—six o'clock on 12 March—will be early voting. On polling day, we plan on having the usual number of polling places open. We are just hoping

that they do not see the usual number of voters coming through. In terms of the early voting period, we expect to be open for longer hours, particularly in that last week before polling. We will be looking at going until seven or eight at night to allow people who are not able to get there during the day. We will also have more early voting centres than we have previously had in past elections. At the moment we are working roughly; we are still out in the field looking at potential centres. We are looking at probably more than 60 at this stage in terms of early voting centres.

**The CHAIR:** Further questions?

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Further question on pre-poll, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, we are still on the same question.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** That is great. It is fantastic how the estimates process works. Will the commission add in more pre-poll venues in that case, or is it likely that it will just continue with the work that was done in the 2017 election and consolidate those venues where they were?

**Mr R. Kennedy:** No, we are planning on expending. We are keeping, where we can, and where the feedback was positive about retaining the existing early voting centres, but we are also looking at adding more, particularly in the metropolitan area.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** Will the parliamentary secretary disclose those additional ones? It is a resourcing issue for parties. We have to get volunteers to man the pre-polls. Would he commit to letting us and all parties know well in advance?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** We will certainly commit to informing most parties. Of course I am sure there will be a bipartisan approach by the commissioners; there always is.

**The CHAIR:** Further question, member for Dawesville. You are getting a bit excited there. It is election time, I can tell.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Always, when it comes to campaigns and when you are the Chair, member for Wanneroo.

Parliamentary secretary, is there a goal about how many additional pre-polling locations the commission will seek to open in advance of the 2021 election? Do we have an understanding about where there is a short fall or a gap that was identified of some number, and that is the number he is trying to now fulfil as we head to 2021?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I think the case is just making it easier for the electorate every year and trying to expand on what was available at the last election. Of course, the commissioner can correct me, but I think there is also an issue of finding appropriate locations. It cannot always be sure of securing venues that might have been used last time or getting extra venues, but the commissioner can elaborate.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** Yes. In terms of early voting, there is not a specific number that we are working towards. It is a bit of an evolving process at this point in time as we work through areas that we would like to have. We look at the distribution of electors across various districts where our centres were last time, where the pressure points were last time and where the growth has been since then. But, as the parliamentary secretary said, early voting centres prove quite difficult for us to find and, more importantly, to secure, simply because we are only interested in them principally for that 12-day period and most landlords are not that interested in giving us a lease for that short period. As the member will be well aware, we do not have access to schools because they are being used during the week. I should have said earlier that one of the other changes that we are doing this time around with early voting is that the Saturday prior to polling day, on 6 March, we will be open on that Saturday all day as well.

**Dr M.D. NAHAN:** What will be open?

**Mr R. Kennedy:** Early voting only.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** When there is a polling booth in an area that may be a service area for another electorate, so to speak, and as happens in my case certainly, what measures are taken to ensure that there are adequate materials for those other electorates? I had a circumstance during one of the elections, it might have been the last one, when the crew at Northam took to writing out ballot papers for the electorate I represent, and erroneously reported me as a Liberal, therefore robbing me of votes.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Or perhaps gaining, member for Moore.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I am sure that was very damaging to the member.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** It was very damaging.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** I might, if I can, ask the deputy to elaborate on that. He has a better understanding of the technicalities of the early voting ballot distribution process.

**Mr C. Avent:** Certainly, we will be significantly increasing our ballot paper production this time in order to ensure there are significant quantities of buddy districts or neighbouring districts in all early voting centres and polling places.

It is likely that because of a significant level of pre-poll voting, we will have to increase our volume of ballot paper production because we will still distribute to polling places at the same level or above what we did last time.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** Does the commission give consideration at all to the behaviour of electors in terms of where it places any pre-poll locations? I realise and appreciate it is very difficult to find short-term leases and a secure location and the like. I will use my district as an example, because it is the one I am probably more familiar with. We had a pre-poll location in Eastlake Church, I think it was, in the district of Mandurah. Three districts fed into that: Mandurah, Murray–Wellington and Dawesville. Behaviourally, it makes a lot of sense for people from Pinjarra, for example, in addition to Murray–Wellington and, for argument's sake, Falcon, in my district, to go towards Mandurah as their location. It has been there for a number of years, so it is an established routine, particularly for the older members in my district. My electorate has some of the oldest community in Western Australia. I am just keen to understand whether the commission looks at that behavioural impact or where people have traditionally gone to vote. Is that a consideration? Certainly, I would welcome any comments the commissioner has with respect to any pre-poll locations in my district.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** It is interesting that the member raised this. I cannot say with any certainty that we are able to predict voter behaviour. We were having an interesting discussion in-house the other day when we were looking at early voting centres in terms of trying to predict groups of habitation and where they might end up going. It is not an exact science, shall we say, so there were debates amongst some staff who, when we were looking at north of the river early voting centres, the question was raised, "Why wouldn't someone go and vote over there", until it was explained to them by someone who lives north of the river that, they just do not go over that particular street or, I think at one point it was, "Well, you don't go over the Canning River if you are going there". As I say, there is no exact science about it. We try to predict based on our ordinary polling places where the large numbers are and where we can accommodate extra early voting centres around those areas. But, yes, we try our best to predict elector behaviour, but it is very difficult to do. As members will know, when it comes to polling day, we get a rush of electors at 8.00 am when the poll opens, and then by 10.30 am it is potentially quite quiet and it might get busy again later in the day. Those are the sorts of issues that, as an organisation, we are trying to work our way through, particularly with early voting. What we do not want to do is shift entirely the curve from 13 March through to the first day of early voting, which will just create the same issues we are trying to avoid. Communications is key.

[2.20 pm]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer, again, to the total cost of service for the budget year on page 102, about the provision of independent, impartial and efficient electoral services. The line item for total cost of service is \$32 724 000, but in the explanation of significant movements it describes the total cost of service as being \$7.6 million, not \$32 million. I am wondering whether that is the underlying cost of service, the rest being the cost of delivery of the election this year, in which case we have a figure for the election of around about \$25 million. How does that compare to the cost for the last general election, and is it significantly affected by the current COVID situation?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I believe there are extra costs this time because of COVID, and I think part of it also relates to the provision of single-use pencils, so that they are not being re-used, but I will let the commissioner elaborate on that cost breakdown.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** In essence, the answer to the member's question is: yes, that is essentially the difference between our normal appropriation that we get. The appropriation that we have had for the last three elections is approximately \$18.5 million. I think I am right in saying it includes the public funding money that we pay out after the election on top of the \$18.5 million. In terms of the extra costs that we are anticipating for the election, we have not quantified those yet, and they would not be represented in that figure of \$32 million at this point.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Just to get an understanding, the real budget cost that the commission probably expects is actually higher than the figure that the budget has. Is that what the commissioner is saying?

**Mr R. Kennedy:** Yes, potentially. We have not given government an estimate yet of what we expect the election will cost in 2021.

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** I refer to "Outcome and Key Effectiveness Indicators" on page 101. Can the parliamentary secretary please explain to the committee how the Electoral Commission intends to reach its goal of 86.6 per cent of enrolled electors to vote in the state general election?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I think it is appropriate that the commissioner respond to WA Electoral Commission issues by and large, because it is obviously a unique situation with administering an election, so I will defer to the commissioner.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** We are currently enjoying an almost all-time high in terms of enrolment figures for Western Australia, which has largely arisen from our joint role agreement with the commonwealth and Australian Electoral Commission. However, in terms of translating high enrolment into what we effectively refer to as turnout at the election is quite a challenge for the commission. It will be a challenge in the coming election, when we add the COVID element into it at the same time. It is a conservative figure based on previous elections. I think the last figure was slightly higher, but not very much higher. We were being conservative in setting that target. That was basically based on our concerns

around not knowing the full impact of COVID in terms of voter turnout and what sort of impact that would have on elector behaviour. But as I have said in answer to some of the earlier questions, our strategy is to follow what has happened in the other jurisdictions where turnout has been marginally lower than in previous elections for them. I think the worst affected one was the Queensland local government elections, but they copped their COVID hit right in the middle of the election, so they had a considerably lower turnout than they were hoping for. As I said, our strategy will aim to encourage people to vote, because it is very important that people get out there and have their say in the democratic process, but assuring them that they can do that in a safe and convenient way, and that is, as I explained earlier, through early voting and postal voting options for individuals. We will be making sure that people are aware that they can apply. We are a little hamstrung by the legislation in terms of postal voting, because it is a two-stage process. We cannot simply respond to people who say, "I want a postal vote". They have to apply to us using a form. We have simplified that process this time around to allow it to happen online, but that still is a process that takes quite an amount of time. We will be advising people that they can apply for a postal vote from the day the writs are issued, so they do not have to wait until close of nominations, for example, and once we have ballot papers ready to go, we can start getting the postal votes out to those people. Finding the different ways for people to feel comfortable voting at the next election will be the primary aim of the commission.

If I can, just while I am talking about providing reassurance to electors when they are casting their votes, they will obviously face the same sorts of situation that they will now when they go into any shop or any particular environment. There will be social distancing, sanitising of hands and that sort of thing. We are also employing an extra staff member in most of the larger polling places throughout the state. That officer, in conjunction with other officers, will take turns simply moving around the polling place and wiping down key contact surfaces, door handles and those sorts of things. We have had to adjust our design of our voting compartment, which as most members would be aware is a recyclable cardboard material that does not respond well to being sprayed with liquid substances. We have come up with a plastic insert that is going to sit inside that voting compartment so that that can be wiped down as well on a regular basis. As I say, the aim we are going for is to allow people to be comfortable and hopefully that will allow us to meet the target that is represented in the budget.

**Mrs L.M. O'MALLEY:** What additional measures are being taken for vulnerable cohorts, in particular, aged-care residents?

**Mr R. Kennedy:** It is quite a concern to us. I think we have to be sensible that a lot of vulnerable members of our community may not want to turn up in person to vote. At the moment, particularly with the aged-care sector, we are writing to every aged-care provider and facility that we can identify and we are using some health department data to help us out with that—working quite closely with the health department on that—writing to those facilities and encouraging anyone who is a resident and who qualifies to become what we call a general early voter. That is a process whereby they can register once and it is locked in forever that they will receive a postal vote so they do not have to worry about turning up in person. There are certain qualifications, but essentially anyone aged over 70 years can apply to become a general early voter. We are hoping that that will help deal with the aged-care situation. As I said, we are working quite closely with the health department. I have had some meetings with it recently, and communications are continuing in terms of monitoring the pandemic situation and whether we will be able to conduct our normal, what we call mobile polling of institutions. Some jurisdictions simply stopped doing that on advice from the public health authorities and we will take a similar approach come January in terms of whether we are proceeding with that sort of thing.

[2.30 pm]

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** With respect to the additional support that is been given as part of the preparation for the upcoming election that we have spoken about here, I note that the government gave circa \$300 000, I think it was, to help with Aboriginal enfranchisement and ensuring that there could be greater accessibility for Aboriginal communities to vote. I think it was about \$300 000. I am just keen to understand whether there was a breakdown of what that relates to in terms of boots on the ground, where they might be stationed, noting that obviously remote and regional Aboriginal communities are also vulnerable communities similar to the aged-care sector, and what their role will be in guiding those people in the Aboriginal communities to vote.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Certainly, it is always a consideration and a focus to ensure people in remote communities and Aboriginal communities get to vote, and there will be a focus again this year, but the commissioner can elaborate.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** Yes, \$310 000 was made available in the budget for this year for us to work on increasing not only enrolment, but also turnout of Aboriginal people, particularly in remote communities. We do not have a breakdown at this point of how we are spending that money. We are working through that at the moment, but I can advise the member that the focus will be on extra staff and the costs that go with that: accommodation, travel allowance and those sorts of things. Whether we might be able to also eke out a few more remote community visits than we have done in the past is something that we are giving some consideration to. One of the messages we have heard in the past loud and clear is that it is very important for us to have a good relationship with key people in those remote communities. Often, certainly

my colleagues in other jurisdictions have advised me, particularly those with significant Aboriginal populations, we could turn up for remote polling one day and through a lack of communication be there on the entirely wrong day when the community is closed for traditional business or everyone has gone to another community for traditional business—that sort of thing. We are working very hard at the moment to get the right names of who we need to contact and who we need to deal with, and we are hoping that we can have someone potentially in the north west area who can help us coordinate those remote polling arrangements so that we can increase Aboriginal voting at the time.

**Mr Z.R.F. KIRKUP:** The idea of whether we might not be able to enter into aged-care facilities because there is an outbreak is entirely understandable. In the same way, what are the contingency plans for those remote Aboriginal communities if we have a similar zone that was set up together with the commonwealth during the peak of the pandemic? What does that look like in terms of making sure we continue to get those communities able to vote, in terms of the process, I suppose? Is that what this person would also be helping with?

**Mr R. Kennedy:** Yes, that is one of the things, and we are doing a bit of scenario planning at the moment. If we do go back into a community transmission environment and those communities are locked down, what are our options? At this point it essentially revolves around postal voting as effectively the most sensible solution. It is not entirely sensible, given Australia Post's delivery standards for some of those remote communities, but those are the kinds of things that we are working through now, about how we might be able to find some alternatives, maybe even working with Australia Post to get those votes into those communities without us having to get in there, and get the votes back out again in a safe and secure way, to give those people the opportunity. There is currently an unresolved issue around the technology-assisted voting options that are available under the act. For those who are aware, the act provides for technology-assisted voting for those people who cannot vote without assistance, who have visual impairment, literacy impairment or are otherwise incapacitated. The legal issues around "otherwise incapacitated" are being investigated at the moment to see whether that is an option that may be open to us if we end up in that situation in which we just cannot get into those places.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to page 108, under "Net Appropriation Determination" and last year's actual figures for line item "Local Government Recoup" of \$5.75 million. What does that reflect in terms of cost? Is it simply a full cost recovery, or does the commission recoup in excess on the actual cost of provision of those local government services?

**Mr R. Kennedy:** When we conduct local government elections, and we do not conduct them for all local governments, but for those that we do, we operate on a full cost recovery basis.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Just to be clear, there is no excess to the actual cost that is part of that charge? It is simply reflective of the cost?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** Yes.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** I refer to budget paper No 3 on page 91. There are some comments about issues affecting the commission with a figure of \$444 000 to implement the disclosure system that comes about under the legislation currently in front of Parliament, which is also referred to in these budget documents as part of one of the significant issues impacting the agency. I am wondering whether that money has already hit the ground. Has the government already started to put in place those measures, given that the legislation went to committee and still has not gone through the four stages of Parliament yet? What happens to the arrangements of the commission if that bill is delayed or does not come to fruition with the ability to put in place those provisions and enact the necessary procedures to enable the parties to make the disclosure? In fact, I think the disclosure periods have already commenced under that bill, even though it has not been passed. It gets a bit tricky, I think.

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** As the member is aware, the bill passed the Assembly, but it has been referred to a committee in the upper house. There is no passage of the bill, and as a result it is not law and no allocation has been made.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** So volume 3 of the document is incorrect when it says that an allocation has been made?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I can let the commissioner elaborate, but there has been no movement of money. There is a provision in the budget for that allocation to be made, if the law is passed.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** As the parliamentary secretary said, this allocation is in the budget for some money, but we have not actually seen the physical money hit the commission yet. The agreement we have with Treasury is that once the bill passes, those funds will be available.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** The first part of my question is whether the commission has commenced any work that would have been funded by this allocation using other resources to begin to implement that disclosure system?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** The commissioner is happy to respond to that.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** Yes, we have produced some materials that we know we will need to get out the door pretty quickly when the legislation passes, so we have been working on that using existing resources. The additional resources

will be used to do the liaison. They will join our funding and disclosure branch and will have a major role in helping parties negotiate the new requirements.

[2.40 pm]

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** Is there a cut-off time in the mind of the parliamentary secretary or the commissioner as to when it would be too late to implement that full disclosure system for this election?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** It depends on the passage and the fate of the bill.

**Mr R.S. LOVE:** That is exactly what I am asking. Is there a cut-off time beyond which it would not be practical to introduce this measure?

**Mr R.R. WHITBY:** I am happy to refer that to the commissioner.

**Mr R. Kennedy:** We do not have a particular drop-dead date after which it will not be done. We are in the hands of Parliament. We will do whatever the Parliament asks us to do in terms of the final bill. It will obviously get more difficult for us the closer we get to the election, simply because we will be busy with other matters related to the election.

**The appropriation was recommended.**