

sider it here. The clause is to protect the postal and absentee voters, and to induce those electors who mark anything anywhere, to take an interest in elections. This is just as fair to one candidate as to another. One amendment in the Bill deals with Section 99A. As the Act stands, nobody can vote absentee at a by-election. It is necessary that this clause be considered before any regrettable action is taken by the House on the Bill as a whole.

All the amendments suggested in the measure will contribute to the better working of the Act; and certainly the clause dealing with nomads will assist the registrar in stabilising the roll. He would not be sending cards backwards and forwards. That goes on consistently in the North. The amendment dealing with nomination day for Assembly seats in the North-West districts is also very necessary and warrants the full consideration of the House. I hope the Chamber will seriously consider some of the amendments and deal with them in Committee so as to put the Act in better working condition than it is in today. I hope the House will vote for the second reading.

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

Ayes	8
Noes	11

Majority against	3
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Ayes.

Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. A. R. Jones
Hon. G. Fraser	Hon. L. A. Logan
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. H. C. Strickland (Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. N. E. Baxter	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. L. Craig	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. H. Hearn	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. W. J. Mann	Hon. J. A. Dimmitt (Teller.)
Hon. H. S. W. Parker	

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 10.17 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 25th October, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

SUPERANNUATION.

(a) As to Review of Payments.

Mr. READ asked the Premier:

In view of the fact that Victoria has passed legislation to increase by 25 per cent. the amount payable to those in receipt of Government superannuation, and the Commonwealth Government has also announced a 20 per cent. increase, is it the intention of the Government to review pensions in this State?

The PREMIER replied:

The matter is receiving consideration.

MIDLAND RAILWAY CO.*As to Road Bus Service, Perth-Geraldton.*

Hon. F. J. S. WISE asked the Minister representing the Minister for Transport:

(1) Does the Midland Railway Co. pay any fee or is it licensed in any way whatever, under the State Transport Co-ordination Act, in respect of its railway operations?

(2) What fees are payable by the Midland Railway Co. to the Transport Board for its license to operate a road and passenger service from Perth to Geraldton—

- (a) in respect of each vehicle; and
- (b) for any other purposes required under the Act?

(3) Are the rates charged the full rates prescribed by the Act or do concession rates apply?

(4) Are such rates the same as are paid by other transport operators authorised and licensed to transport general goods?

(5) Is it known by the Transport Board whether the Midland Railway Co. pays full license fees to the local government authority in respect of all motor vehicles used by it in its road service?

(6) If such information is available, what are the license fees paid?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) No.

(2) Three per centum (3%) of gross earnings is payable in respect of omnibus operations. Commercial goods vehicles are licensed at the rate of fourpence (4d.) per power-load-weight of each vehicle per annum.

(3) No. The Act authorises the board to charge up to six per centum (6%) of gross earnings in respect of omnibuses and seven shillings and sixpence (7s. 6d.) per power-load-weight for commercial goods vehicles. Not in any instance is the latter rate levied and each fee is based according to the circumstances. In the case in question, due regard was given to the loss of rail traffic likely to be suffered by the licensees as a result of their road operations.

(4) In the majority of cases, yes, but there are a few exceptions.

(5) The Midland Railway Co. pays full license fees under the Traffic Act.

(6) This information is not readily available as certain vehicles are licensed in Geraldton and others in Perth.

HOSPITALS.*As to Nurses' Quarters, K.E.M.H.*

Hon. A. H. PANTON asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Has she yet any definite information to impart regarding the completion of the nurses' quarters at the King Edward Memorial Hospital?

(2) In the event of further delay being unavoidable, will she give serious consideration to the advisability of lodging-out the nurses attached to this hospital?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Completion is expected in nine to 12 months, depending upon many uncertain factors.

(2) Living out is favoured and is already in practice in a few cases. There is, however, very little accommodation available near the hospital or near to transport for early duty. Recent unsuccessful efforts have been made to secure adjacent premises for living purposes.

CAUSEWAY, NEW.*As to Payment for Resumed Properties.*

Mr. READ asked the Minister for Works: When is it the intention of the Government to pay the parties concerned the price of their properties resumed at the eastern approach to the Causeway?

The MINISTER replied:

Several claims for resumption have already been settled and paid.

Departmental assessments of compensation for business properties immediately affected have been made and are now under consideration by the claimants.

RAILWAYS.*(a) As to Passenger Service, Kalgoorlie-Boulder.*

Mr. OLIVER asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Is it the Government's intention to discontinue the passenger train service between the towns of Boulder and Kalgoorlie?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

Passenger services between Boulder and Kalgoorlie are run in conjunction with goods train services. It is proposed, in the near future, to utilise a road truck for transport of parcels and goods in less than rail truck lots, thus reducing the rail service. It is not considered the demand will justify the continuance of the passenger service after this road service is established.

(b) As to Comparative Results of Working.

Mr. STYANTS (without notice) asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Is it the intention of the Railways Commission to issue the usual statement of comparative results of working for the last five years for the information of members; and, if so, when will it be available?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied: I shall have to reply to the hon. member, as before, that I have no doubt the usual practice will be followed but in order to be sure I will make inquiries.

METROPOLITAN SAWMILLS.

As to Road Haulage Subsidy.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY asked the Premier:

Will he name what metropolitan sawmills are receiving £1 per load road haulage subsidy as per Cabinet agreement reported in "The West Australian" of the 24th October?

The PREMIER replied:

There are no metropolitan sawmills receiving a subsidy for road haulage. The subsidy applies to sawn timber carted to the metropolitan area from centres 50 to 150 miles distant from Perth.

WOOL PROCEEDS.

(a) As to Withholding by Commonwealth, etc.

Mr. KELLY asked the Premier:

(1) Is he aware that it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to withhold from woolgrowers 20 per cent. of their gross sale returns on all wool sold as from the 1st August, 1950?

(2) Does he agree with this principle or would he say that it is unjust and inequitable to ex-servicemen and others recently engaged in the industry?

(3) Does he consider that the move would curb inflation?

(4) Is he aware that this principle would represent a pre-payment of many years' taxation in the case of small producers and that, as a result, development work would suffer?

(5) Has the State Government voiced any objection on behalf of woolgrowers of W.A., especially ex-servicemen and other small producers within the industry, to the enactment by the Commonwealth Government of a measure known as the Wool Sales Deduction Administration Bill in which provision is made to deprive woolgrowers of £103,000,000 in the form of an advance tax?

(6) Is he aware that as a protest, producers in various parts of the State are giving consideration to withholding all primary produce if the measure is passed?

(7) Does he agree that there is any justification for the imposition of a sectional tax on any one industry?

(8) Can he confirm the rumour that a 20 per cent. advance tax additional to normal taxation is contemplated by the Commonwealth Government on increased profits made by agents handling wool and woolbrokers, also on excess profits made by bookmakers, S.P. bookies and hotel-keepers?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) to (7) I have no further information on this subject beyond that available to the hon. member. Without a full study of the details of the proposal, I am not in a position to express an opinion at this stage on some of the aspects raised in the questions.

(8) I have no knowledge of any such rumour or of any intentions of the Commonwealth Government in this regard.

Mr. Kelly: In other words, you know nothing and evade everything.

(b) As to Justice of Commonwealth Decision.

Mr. KELLY (without notice) asked the Premier:

As it is the intention of the Commonwealth Government to withhold from woolgrowers 20 per cent. of their gross sale returns on all wool sold as from the 1st August, 1950, does he agree with this principle or would he say that it is unjust and inequitable to ex-servicemen and others recently engaged in the industry?

The PREMIER replied:

This is a matter that concerns the Commonwealth Government—

Mr. Kelly: It concerns this State more particularly.

The PREMIER:—and not the State. I have no hesitation in saying that this question has been asked for purely political purposes in the hope of embarrassing the Commonwealth Government.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Not at all!

The PREMIER: I am not going to kick any party political football.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Premier has no views at all.

(c) As to Premier's Views.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is he or is he not prepared to state his views for or against the Commonwealth Government's wool tax proposals?

The PREMIER replied:

At this stage I do not propose to state my views.

HOUSING.

As to Commonwealth-State Rental Homes Allocation.

Mr. W. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is it a fact that when an applicant for a Commonwealth-State rental home is advised that he or she will be in the next allocation there is no guarantee that such applicant will be granted a tenancy of such a home?

(2) Is it a fact that some applicants who lodged applications for tenancy homes between 1944 and 1947 have been advised that later applications have received priority on account of hardship, and that some applicants from 1948 onwards, whose cases are very urgent, are informed that earlier applications must receive precedence?

(3) How many applicants are still waiting for a rental home?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) Allocation of houses is continuous, the applications being taken in their turn from the priority list, excepting in emergency cases and accommodation for building tradesmen, and tenancy is given if, on check inspection, living conditions as claimed by the applicant, have not materially improved. Many cases have been found, on check inspection, to have acquired houses, left the State, or have satisfactory housing arrangements.

(2) As 25 per cent. of allocations are made to special cases of emergency and a further 25 per cent. to building tradesmen, applicants on the general priority list may have been informed of allocation of homes in respect to the two sections mentioned. Applications other than the two sections mentioned are dealt with on a date priority basis as outlined in the preceding paragraph.

(3) Applications pending as at the 30th September, 1950:—

Four or more unit families	6,137
Under four	4,996
Total	11,133

Applications admitted to priority on establishment of hardship after inspection:—

Four or more unit families	1,906
Under four	1,290
Total	3,196

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Acts Amendment (Increase in Number of Ministers of the Crown) Bill.

BILLS (5)—FIRST READING.

1, Loan, £14,366,000.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, The Kauri Timber Company Limited Agreement.

Introduced by the Minister for Housing.

3, State Transport Co-Ordination Act Amendment (No. 2).

4, Hire-Purchase Agreements Act Amendment.

Introduced by Hon. F. J. S. Wise.

5, Workers' Compensation Act Amendment.

Introduced by Mr. W. Hegney.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Licensing Act Amendment.

2, Stamp Act Amendment.

Transmitted to the Council.

BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (ALLOWANCES AND SALARIES ADJUSTMENT).

Report of Committee adopted.

MOTION—WATER SUPPLIES.

As to Extension of Comprehensive Scheme to Mt. Barker.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [4.47]: I move—

That this House views with serious concern the action and policy of the Government in agreeing to give preference in the supply of water to Mt. Barker and adjacent towns in the Great Southern District, as against towns and farms in drier areas; and regards as most unfair, unjustifiable and contrary to the best interests of the State as a whole, the Government's decision authorising the making of an agreement between the Treasurer and the Plantagenet, Tambellup and Cranbrook Road Boards, under which the Government has bound succeeding Governments, as well as itself, to supply water to the towns of Broomehill, Tambellup, Cranbrook and Mt. Barker within six years from the 26th May, 1949, irrespective of the greater and more urgent needs of townspeople and farmers in the drier parts of the State.

The member for Moore did members of this House and the State as a whole a very great service on the 12th September of this year when he asked the Minister for Works the following question without notice:—

Will he lay on the Table of the House the file dealing with the proposed extension of the Agricultural Areas, Great Southern Towns and Goldfields Water Supply Scheme to Mt. Barker?

The Minister's reply to that question was "yes." As a result, the relevant papers were placed upon the Table of the House, and consequently every member who desired to study them was given opportunity of doing so. When the member for Moore asked the question that I have read from "Hansard," I was naturally interested as to just what was prompting him to require the tabling of the papers. I took the opportunity to study them carefully when they were tabled, and was very surprised to find what the Government had done. I was especially surprised to discover how it had

kept its decisions and actions secret for one year after the agreement in relation to this matter was signed by the Treasurer, representing the Government, and the representatives of the road boards concerned. I feel it is necessary to provide some background to the signing of the agreement, in order that members and the public generally may have some appreciation of how the position was reached which brought about the signing of the agreement as between the Government and those road boards.

On the 1st June, 1948, the principal assistant of the Hydraulics Branch of the Public Works Department, Mr. V. Munt, sent a minute to the Director of Works, Mr. Dumas, in connection with a report on an investigation carried out with regard to the suggested water supply for Mt. Barker. Among other things contained in that minute from Mr. Munt is the following:—

You will note that the cost, £74,000, is very high for such a small population.

On the 25th June, 1948, the Under Secretary for Water Supply sent a letter to the secretary of the Plantagenet Road Board, which is the road board that covers the Mt. Barker town and district. Among other things set out in that letter is the following:—

It is desired to point out, however, that owing to shortage of manpower, piping, and other materials, it would be impossible to commence operations for some time to come, even if the scheme were approved. Endeavours are being made to finalise the preliminary work at an early date.

The scheme referred to by Mr. Munt in his minute, and the Under Secretary for Works in his letter was, at that time, a local scheme to provide the townspeople of Mt. Barker with water. It had no relationship, and was not intended to have any kind of relationship, with the comprehensive water supply scheme. On the 29th September, 1948, the Deputy Premier made his first political appearance and took his first official action in this matter. I am embarrassed at the moment by the fact that he has a barricade in front of him, which prevents me even from seeing him. On that date, the Deputy Premier almost became Minister for Works, because he sent a memorandum direct to the Director of Works marked "To the Director of Works (himself)." Among other things contained in that memorandum is the following:—

I am particularly interested in and would press for the suggestion of the board—

that is, the Plantagenet Road Board—

—regarding some definite agreement if its proposal is to be acceded to. The delay which will be involved renders

it, I think, very necessary that the board should have some assurance greater than that which would appear from a mere memorandum on a file, that after the pipe-line reaches Katanning, the work will be put in hand on the lines suggested.

That paragraph from the memorandum of the Deputy Premier deals, of course, with a suggestion that had been developed in the meantime, to provide a water supply for the townspeople of Mt. Barker by an extension of the comprehensive water supply scheme from Katanning to that centre, a distance of about 80 miles. Ex-Ministers, and probably even present Ministers and members generally, will be intrigued, I feel sure, to learn of the value that the Deputy Premier placed upon what he was pleased to call a mere memorandum on the file. On the 2nd November, 1948, the Premier came into the picture. On that date, he sent a memorandum or minute to the Minister for Works and Water Supply, who seems not to have been in this matter at all to any extent, from the beginning to the end. In effect, if not legally, the Deputy Premier seemed to have supplanted the Minister for Works and Water Supply in relation to the whole matter. The Premier's memorandum of the 2nd November, 1948, reads—

I agree that an undertaking should be given to the Plantagenet Road Board that the Government will extend the comprehensive scheme to Mt. Barker along the lines suggested by the Director of Works in paragraphs 25 and 26 of his minute of the 4th October. If it is necessary, a similar undertaking can be given to the Tambeulup and Cranbrook Road Boards.

Some time prior to the 17th November, instructions must have been issued to the Chief Hydraulic Engineer, Mr. Crimp, to visit Mt. Barker for the purpose of trying to ascertain what all the stir-up down there was about, and, presumably, for the purpose of trying to create some reasonable measure of peace between the warring factions. Doubtless, the member for the district had made some attempt in that direction, but had failed. In his minute to the Director of Works on the day following his visit to Mt. Barker, Mr. Crimp, among other things, said this—

The road board's one and only concern is that during the summer the rain tank supplies have in recent years proved insufficient for both drinking and washing purposes, and they are looking for some temporary supply to tide them over the next few years until the Wellington Dam pipeline reaches them. The past few summers have seen the townsfolk getting water carted to them from farmers' dams situated within a few miles of the town.

I might interpolate by suggesting that if rain tank supplies had failed in recent years, the Government might have con-

sidered providing those people with additional rainwater tanks, or even underground tanks. Resuming Mr. Crimp's minute—

Naturally, with the shelving of the Bolganup scheme in favour of the wheatbelt scheme, the townsfolk are expressing their dissatisfaction with the road board and it is to stifle this criticism which is the main object of the road board's present activities to try and find some temporary supply of water.

On the 17th January, 1949, the Deputy Premier went properly into action. This, I should say, was the busiest and most dashing day of all his public career so far, because on that day he sent another memo to the Director of Works marked "Director of Works (himself)." In that memo the following, among other things, appears:—

Before I proceed—

That is the Deputy Premier.

—any further in this matter, however, I feel that I should have the latest information as to the possibility of the work being completed no later than originally suggested. I take it the position as regards steel plate has eased as anticipated by you, and I shall be glad if you will advise me of the future prospects so that I may be kept in touch with the position as there is no doubt about it that the water situation in two of these towns is serious, and any greater delay than that originally contemplated, except it were caused by act of God or the King's enemies, would be viewed most unfavourably

(Sgd.) A. F. W.,

Minister for Local Government and
Member for Katanning.

There again, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Local Government, as he was at that time, made a final direct approach to the Director of Works, and the Minister for Works and Water Supply, at that time, was apparently ignored.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: He knew nothing about it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Deputy Premier in that memorandum alone did a magnificent piece of work I should have thought, but he was not satisfied. I do not know whether the day in question was a Monday but, if it was, the Deputy Premier was in no way suffering from Mondayitis. He was on the ball and he was determined to keep kicking the ball in the right direction; the direction in which he wanted it kicked. So he had another memorandum prepared which he sent to the Attorney General, in which, in addition to other things, are the following:—

The local authorities desire some definite arrangement which can be produced notwithstanding any change in the directorship—

Breaking in there, I can only suggest that he was referring to the directorship of the Works Department.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: No wonder he stood to attention!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Continuing—

—or the Government, as they feel that the considerable delay involved as against the lesser delay occasioned by the local water supplies warrants them receiving some definite guarantee.

I think that such an undertaking or guarantee should be drawn up by one of the Crown Law officers, and if submitted to me its execution could be arranged.

I should be obliged if you would, therefore, issue the necessary instructions for this to be done.

(Sgd.) A. F. W.,

Minister for Local Government and
Member for Katanning.

Evidently the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Local Government at that time had everything sewn up with all those Ministers and officers that mattered and who could have any say in the matter, because he told the Attorney General on the 7th January, 1949, that if a legal form of undertaking or guarantee were drawn up by the Crown Law officers and submitted to him he would arrange for its execution. On the 20th January, 1949, a minute or memorandum was placed on the file in the form of a note signed with the initials "S.H.G." which were presumably those of the Solicitor General, Mr. Good. His note reads:—

Rang Hon. Minister for Local Government and advised that any such agreement would not be legally binding, as Crown cannot by contract fetter its future executive action (VI Halsbury, 488) and sought instructions as to whether or not agreements should be prepared. Instructed to hold matter pending further instructions.

A month and two days later, on the 22nd February, 1949, the Solicitor General Mr. Good, signed a memorandum to the clerk-in-charge of conveyancing in the Crown Law Department, which reads as follows:—

In the very recent case of Robertson and Minister of Pensions (1948) All Eng. L.R. 767, Summing, J., held that the defence of executive necessity only avails the Crown where there is an implied term to that effect, or that is the true meaning of the contract.

Please therefore draft the contract required by the Hon. Minister hereunder.

Apparently the Deputy Premier or the Solicitor General or some officer of the Crown Law Department had searched high and low, and had gone to no end of trouble, for the purpose of trying to find

some precedent somewhere in the world which would justify the Deputy Premier in prevailing upon the Premier to sign an agreement which would bind the Government of this State to the local authorities in the Great Southern to carry out an extension of the Great Southern comprehensive water scheme by putting in an additional 80 miles of pipe-line from Katanning to Mt. Barker, and the other towns concerned, to provide them all with water within the next few years. On the 2nd March, 1949, the Solicitor General sent a minute to the Attorney General. Portion of it reads:—

On 22nd February, however, I received a report of a case decided in England in November in which it was held that the defence of executive necessity only avails the Crown where there is an implied term to that effect or that is the true meaning of the contract. The Hon. Minister for Local Government—

He was then the Deputy Premier.

—therefore instructed that the agreement should be prepared expressly binding the Government and its successors.

Note the words "binding the Government and its successors"! I will have much more to say about that aspect of the matter at a later stage. It might be noted here with interest, Mr. Speaker, that there is no evidence of a Cabinet decision having been given that this agreement should be prepared or that the Government would approve of the Premier and the Deputy Premier preparing it and the Premier signing it, although there is, within the agreement itself, which I will read later on, a statement to the effect that the Premier had been authorised by the Government to make the agreement.

Mr. Marshall: By the Government!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There is no reference anywhere on the papers, as far as I can find, to any Cabinet decision on the matter whatsoever.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I searched for one and could not find it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There is no mention of Cabinet authorising the comprehensive scheme from Katanning to Mt. Barker, a distance of 80 miles, at an estimated cost, at that time, of £224,000, but there is evidence all through the file of extreme activity on the part of the Deputy Premier to rush everybody who could have anything to do with the matter into doing what he wanted done. So it seems to me, as far as I am able to judge on that point, that officers concerned and other Ministers who happened to be brought into the matter were pushed along very fast and hard by the Deputy Premier in order that the agreement, which was finally made, should be made. On the 31st of August, 1949, the

Deputy Premier sent another memorandum direct to the Director of Works. Evidently the Minister for Works and Water Supply was not even extended the courtesy of seeing it; certainly not before it went to the Director of Works himself.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: He was like the boy in the balloon when it burst; he was not in it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Among other things, in the memorandum from the Deputy Premier to the Director of Works, was the following:—

I think it would be desirable that the matter of obtaining formal Treasury approval should be considered.

This is on the 31st August, 1949, and the agreement itself between the road board and the Government was signed on the 24th May, 1949, which seems to indicate that the Premier was most certainly rushed into signing it. However, on the 31st August, 1949, the Deputy Premier suggests to the Director of Works that it would be advisable to obtain formal Treasury approval for a proposition which at that time, as I mentioned a few moments ago, was estimated to cost £224,000 and which, when it is carried out during the next five or six years, if it is carried out, will probably cost the Government £350,000 because of the substantial increases in costs which have occurred in the meantime. On the 3rd October, 1949, the Director of Works sent a minute to the Under Secretary for Works. Among other things contained in the minute is the following:—

It is proposed at a later date, when conditions are opportune, to approach the Commonwealth Government with a view to incorporating this pipeline in an extension of the comprehensive scheme, and so sharing the cost between the two Governments.

The point made there by the Director of Works really arose out of the Deputy Premier's memorandum to him dated the 31st August, 1949, because in that memorandum the Deputy Premier suggested that applications should be made to the Commonwealth Government to share the expenditure. It would be interesting to note when the Deputy Premier and the Director of Works considered that conditions were opportune to justify an approach being made by the State Government to the Commonwealth Government to try to prevail upon it to subsidise this expenditure of £224,000 or £350,000 on a £ for £ basis. The Commonwealth Government would not be happy about any approach which might be made now—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The State Government has contracted itself out.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —when the proposal has been developed and the Government has legally committed itself to the local authorities to carry out the extension.

I should think that Mr. Fadden, the Commonwealth Treasurer, would feel that his Government should have been consulted by the State Government when these proposals were being developed and before the State Government irrevocably committed itself, in legal form, to carry out the extension. What sort of method of doing business is it when a Government commits itself legally in every way to carry out a proposal, and subsequently goes running to the Commonwealth Government with a story that it is going to carry out a proposal which will cost it £300,000 and "please will the Commonwealth provide half the cost." Naturally the Commonwealth Government would say, as I think it will, that the State Government should have approached it much earlier; that it should have given the Commonwealth Government an opportunity of saying whether this proposed work was justified, and whether it should be given the great priority it has been given against many more deserving portions of the State.

I would be very interested to know from the Deputy Premier, and from the Premier, who with the Deputy Premier is equally guilty in connection with this matter, just when they consider conditions will be opportune for an approach to the Commonwealth Government for the purpose of trying to get that Government to meet the total cost of the scheme on a £ for £ basis. On the 19th October, 1949, the secretary of the Lower Great Southern Regional Council of W.A., the headquarters of which are situated at Albany, sent a very nice letter to the Premier. I think the whole of this letter should be incorporated in "Hansard."

The Premier: A nice letter, is it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am surprised the Premier does not remember it. I should say he would get very few letters of this description. The letter reads—

Hon. the Premier,
Premier's Office,
Perth.

Dear Sir,—I have the honour by direction of the Lower Great Southern Regional Council, to express to you and your Government, and the departmental officers concerned, appreciation for the early start which has been made on the comprehensive water scheme.

This water scheme is another of the undertakings which have been put forward by your Government and is one which will give greater security to the people who live along the Great Southern Railway and its environs.

I am particularly requested to urge that the necessary work be continued from Narrogin to Mount Barker via Wagin and Katanning as early as possible.

Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) J. D. M. DANIEL,
Secretary.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Has a letter from the dry portions of the State been sent?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier was evidently very delighted to receive a letter of this kind, perhaps the first since he has been head of the Government. So much so, that on the 10th November, 1949, he sent the following reply to Mr. Daniel:—

Dear Sir,

I desire to thank your council for the sentiments expressed in your letter of the 19th October, on the subject of the comprehensive water scheme. Every possible step, including the importation of a large quantity of steel plate for the manufacture of pipes, is now being taken to accelerate completion of the first section of the main from Wellington Dam, the understanding being that upon arrival at Katanning the further extension to Mt. Barker will take place. The project has been given a high priority by the Government.

Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) R. McLarty,
Premier.

It astonishes me that the Lower Great Southern Regional Council, or any other council or organisation, or that any individual, could move the Premier so completely into the net, as he was moved into it in connection with this matter, by a letter such as he received from that regional council.

Mr. Styants: He sits there with his head down.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: He had of course previously committed himself lock, stock and barrel, as he had committed his Government and all future Governments, to the local authorities concerned in connection with this proposed extension of the pipe line from Katanning to Mt. Barker.

Mr. Kelly: Would that be because of pressure brought to bear by local authorities?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would give all the credit of these happenings to the Deputy Premier.

Mr. W. Hegney: Take a bow.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Anyone to whom the Deputy Premier's methods, techniques and styles, and he has many of each, are not well known, would marvel at the fact that no publicity was given to these happenings—

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: I wonder why.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —despite the fact that the agreement between the Government and the local authorities was signed away back on the 26th May, 1949.

The Premier: I thought some public meetings were held where the whole scheme was outlined.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Public meetings might have been held at Mt. Barker, Broome Hill, or Tambellup, but I have not heard of the Deputy Premier going to Wyalcatchem, Mukinbudin, Dalwallinu, Lake Grace, Newdegate or in the district of the Minister for Works, to tell the people in those dry areas of all the marvellous work he had done as Deputy Premier in extending water supplies in Western Australia for people living in those country districts.

The Premier: Where is the secrecy? I have said public meetings were held at which a large number of people were told what was going to happen. There was no objection to the Press being present at those meetings.

Mr. Graham: Then the publicity officer was not doing his job.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The simulated innocence of the Premier intrigues me. It shows him in a completely new role. Does the Premier want me, or any other member in this House to believe that he, shrewd political campaigner that he is, does not know which is easily the best publicity medium in Western Australia?

The Premier: I know that most public meetings are reported in the Press.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Does the Premier want me to believe that he considers a public meeting of 40 people at Mt. Barker a better medium of publicity than "The West Australian" newspaper? If the Premier wants the people of Western Australia to know of some action or decision taken by the Government which is of some importance, does he call a meeting down at Mt. Barker or Broome Hill?

The Premier: The Government did not prevent reporters being present at a meeting.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Would he call a meeting at Pinjarra for this purpose?

The Premier: Sometimes.

Mr. Kelly: When they get a new hospital.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Of course he would not. What he would do would be to call his publicity officer in after preparing a statement himself and say, "Do you think this would be safe for publication in 'The West Australian'?" The publicity officer would then read through the statement, ask the Premier to explain different paragraphs to him, and, finally, as a result of their pow-wow and confab, they would both declare the statements to be safe and in every way to the Government's benefit, and it would be promptly handed to the reporter from "The West Australian."

Mr. Bovell: You must have had experience of that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Even if I had not had experience of the matter, I should hope that the member for Vasse would know

that publicity through "The West Australian" newspaper would be far more widespread and of greater value than a meeting of a few people held at Mt. Barker.

The Premier: Do not leave out the A.B.C.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: However, I shall have something more to tell about the Government's secrecy in this matter at a later stage, and I hazard a guess that the Deputy Premier, who is listening to me with one ear and talking to the present Minister for Local Government—not with the other—will not enjoy what I have to say about that phase. Now I come to the agreement itself. This agreement was signed on the 26th May, 1949. I do not propose to read the whole of the agreement, but to read from it relevant and important extracts. At the beginning of it there are two "whereas-es," and so on. The first clause in the agreement reads—

The Premier acting with the approval of the Executive Government of the State and in intending to bind himself the Executive Government of the State the Minister for Water Supply Sewerage and Drainage and their respective successors agrees with the parties of the second part as follows:

Then the agreement goes on to set out that the Government shall construct a water main from Katanning through the towns of Broomehill, Tambellup and Cranbrook to Mt. Barker, the said extension to be completed within six years from the date on which the agreement is made. The agreement goes on—

Strikes and lockouts whether within or without the State of Western Australia, War Civil Commotion Acts of God and any other matters and occurrences beyond the control of the Premier the said Ministers and the Executive Government permitting.

In the event of the foregoing, the Government would be excused from carrying out the extension of the water pipe-line in the period stated.

The Premier: It was a wise provision, was it not?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It might have been a wise provision, or it might have been due to a feeling that as Premier there was an obligation on him to put something in the agreement so that it would not be completely lopsided in favour of local authorities who were parties to it. To understand this agreement properly, it is necessary to know that the Government had, by medium of departmental files, committed itself to install local water supply schemes at Mt. Barker and, I think, at Cranbrook, and possibly Broomehill and one or two other places. From what I have already told members of the contents of this agreement, it is clear that the Government did not only commit itself irrevocably to the local authority in regard to carrying out this proposed scheme, but it also committed any succeeding Government. I am sure that members will be interested

to know whether the local authorities undertook to do anything, or whether this was a completely lopsided agreement altogether unfavourable to the Government and completely favourable to the local authorities. As a matter of fact those bodies did bind themselves to do something, and this is it—

The parties of the second part for themselves and their respective successors undertake and agree with the Premier to release the Premier, the Executive Government of the State and the Minister for Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage and their respective successors from all obligations which they or any one or more of them shall or have agreed to undertake in respect of the supply or construction of any alternative waterworks or improvements of existing waterworks within the respective districts of the second part or any one or more of them.

So, in return for the action of the State Government in tying itself up body and soul legally to put this proposed extension into operation within six years, the local authorities, out of the fullness of their hearts, bound themselves not to call upon the present Government or the present Minister for Water Supply or any future Government or Minister for Water Supply to put in a local scheme at any of the respective towns. For all that their portion of the agreement is worth, it might as well not be there, because any Government or Minister has the absolute right at any time in the ordinary administration of a department to decide whether a thing shall be done and also, which is very important, when it shall be done.

I doubt very much whether, in the ordinary course of events, the Government could have put into operation in any of those towns a local water supply scheme within six years. From my own experience, I feel sure that it could not have done so. Therefore there was not the slightest shadow of necessity for the Government to commit itself to this agreement. I have no objection to water supplies being taken per medium of a Government scheme to Mt. Barker, Tambellup, Broomehill, Cranbrook or any other place, provided it is taken in its turn and when fair and reasonable and practicable consideration has been given to people in other towns and districts urgently in need of supplies.

The Government was under no obligation or necessity at all to sign this agreement. There was no justification for the agreement, even if there had been some necessity for it. I can only conclude that the Deputy Premier was extremely anxious to look after some of his own electors—for which I do not blame him—and consequently used all his powers of persuasion to prevail upon the Premier, and possibly upon his other colleagues in the Cabinet, to sign a completely binding legal agreement which

binds the Government to undertake this extension of the comprehensive scheme from Katanning for a distance of 80 miles to Mt. Barker and complete the work within a period of six years from the 26th May, 1949. One of the most interesting papers on the file is a letter sent on the 2nd July, 1948, by the then Minister for Works, Hon. V. Doney, to the member for Moore, Mr. Ackland. The letter reads—

As following upon exchanged correspondence and our two or three discussions regarding the supply of water to certain towns on the Wongan line, may I advise that there have been very many requests of a nature similar to yours, but that the Government is unable at the moment to offer any hope that the several centres involved can be supplied from the comprehensive water supply scheme.

I think you understand fully that the boundaries of the scheme as approved by Parliament and by the Commonwealth Government are fixed and that the subsidy on a £ for £ basis can apply only within those boundaries. You will appreciate that that has to be regarded as a fixed decision so far as towns are concerned, although it is possible that in odd spots there may be a few short extensions into wheat areas just outside the actual perimeter. Our conversations will, I think, have indicated to you at the same time that this does not close down upon the idea of separate water supplies, as it would be quite proper to pursue the matter of supplies from local sources in the ordinary way, but quite independent of the major scheme.

That was on the 2nd July, 1948. It was on the 26th May, 1949, when the Premier committed himself to the local authorities in the Great Southern districts by signing an agreement on behalf of the Government to extend the Great Southern section of the comprehensive scheme for a distance of 80 miles beyond the south boundary set down by Parliament in the legislation. I should like to know from the member for Moore whether at any time between the 2nd July, 1948, when he received his letter from the then Minister for Works and the date on which the Premier signed the agreement with the road boards, he was taken into the confidence of the Minister or the Government regarding the somersault it had made between those dates in connection with extensions beyond the perimeter of the boundaries of the comprehensive scheme as approved by Parliament.

I think that, if the member for Moore were to take us into his confidence, he would tell us that he was not in any way taken into the confidence of the Minister for Water Supply, and certainly was not taken into the confidence of the Deputy

Premier or of the Premier. If the hon. member speaks to this motion, I should like to hear from him whether he was taken into their confidence with respect to the agreement as between the 26th May, 1949, and the election of 1950. I am inclined to think that, had he been taken into the confidence of the Ministers concerned or of the Government, he would not have asked for the file to be tabled in the House as he did after Parliament met this year.

We have been told by the Premier that there was no secrecy about the matter. I should say there must have been a great deal of secrecy at party meetings; otherwise the member for Moore and the rank-and-file members of the Government parties who represent dry districts—much drier than the Mt. Barker area—would not have been prepared to allow the Government to go on with an agreement of this sort when high priority was to be given in the proposed agreement and in the agreement since signed to districts having a very good annual rainfall indeed compared with many districts to which I could refer.

I should like to know from the Premier why he approved of this agreement and subsequently signed it; in other words, why he gave not only preference but also a very high degree of priority in the provision of water supplies to areas in good rainfall districts and has done nothing at all for the people in many of the very dry areas of the State in the matter of water supplies for towns and for farmers. If the Premier speaks to the motion, I hope he will not evade that question in the manner in which he has evaded any awkward questions put to him from this side of the House from time to time, especially such questions as those asked by the member for Merredin-Yilgarn today.

The Premier: Those questions were carefully thought out—a big stick to beat the Commonwealth Government. You are not getting me in on that.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I should like to know whether Cabinet as a whole approved of the agreement before it was signed. If it did, I should be glad to hear whether the whole of the facts were fully and accurately explained to members of the Cabinet; in other words whether they were given an opportunity to understand fully what was involved. Did they know that they were approving of something which would give absolute preference and even high priority in the matter of water supplies to areas that were not desperately in need of them, compared with townspeople and farmers in many other parts of the State?

I imagine that one of the points which will be put up in reply is that, when the pipe-line is extended to Katanning, there will be plenty of water available in the Wellington Dam, and therefore it would be good business on the part of the Govern-

ment to extend the pipe-line 80 miles in order that it might sell water from the Wellington Dam.

The Chief Secretary: More than ample water.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The ex-Minister for Works and Water Supply says there will be more than ample water in the Wellington Dam for the needs of those in the Great Southern who will be drawing on it when the extension to Mt. Barker, and other towns adjacent thereto, is made. Does the Minister for Works and Water Supply agree with that?

The Minister for Works: Yes.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Minister agrees.

The Minister for Works: Provision will be made by the time the pipe-line does reach Mt. Barker.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The present Minister becomes a little more cautious. Will the Minister and the ex-Minister say that no other extensions are to be made that will cause a greater draw upon the Wellington Dam?

The Chief Secretary: You might have that assurance, too.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: There will be no more extensions in connection with water to be drawn from the Wellington Dam.

The Chief Secretary: No, the scheduled extensions. I go that far, and I could probably go farther, but I say, the scheduled extensions.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The ex-Minister for Water Supply had better be careful, otherwise he will be committing the present Minister and the Government to a state of affairs which will bring down upon them ever so much more wrath from electors than will compensate for the small amount of credit which is likely to come to them from the people of Mt. Barker and the surrounding towns.

The Minister for Works: I assume the technicians and advisers who recommend further extensions will take into consideration the supply at the source.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would have thought there would be some extensions of the irrigation areas within reasonable distance of the Wellington Dam. I would be disappointed to learn from the present Minister that no extensions of irrigation areas, to be served by the Wellington Dam, are contemplated. I would be disappointed to learn from the Minister, and especially from the ex-Minister, that no extensions from the main running to Katanning are to be made to serve farmers on either side of the pipe-line who might wish to be connected to it.

The Minister for Works: They will.

The Chief Secretary: I do not think you need have any worries there at all.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I was hoping that one or other of the Ministers would say that.

The Chief Secretary: Well, I have said it.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Because, if there is an extension of the irrigation areas, and if there are extensions on each side of the pipe-line from Wellington Dam to Katanning to serve the farmers, then a situation might easily develop whereby a pipe-line running to Mt. Barker could, in the years to come, not carry much water at all because, in the very hot weather, everybody connected to Wellington Dam would be drawing water from it.

The Chief Secretary: You are not overlooking the fact that the Wellington weir is to be raised?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No, not at all, because if the ex-Minister will stir up his recollections sufficiently, he will realise that I had something to do with it.

The Chief Secretary: You should have known then without putting the question.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: What I know is that when the original comprehensive scheme was drawn up, and when the half-comprehensive scheme of the present Government was introduced, Katanning was the southern-most boundary in each instance. Why was it the southern-most boundary of each proposed scheme? If what the ex-Minister now says is correct, why did he state over a year ago that there should be no extensions to the boundaries as approved by Parliament?

The Chief Secretary: You knew that the limitations were on account of the financial aspect.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I did not know they were on account of the financial aspect. Why should they have been because of finance?

The Chief Secretary: Did you not read a letter, a little while ago, from me which indicated that?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No.

The Chief Secretary: But you did.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I did not. There is nothing in the letter to that effect at all—not one word. My recollection is that when the boundaries were decided upon in connection with the original comprehensive scheme and the later half-comprehensive scheme, it was considered that they were the limits to which water could reasonably be sent if everyone within those boundaries was to be assured of a full supply at all times, and especially in the middle of summer when the draw would be extremely heavy. If, as the ex-Minister surprisingly advises me, the financial aspect is the consideration, I presume that in the second portion of the comprehensive water supply scheme in the north-eastern

agricultural areas, there will be no difficulty at all after the wall at the Mundaring reservoir has been raised, in the Government's extending the water mains to Wongan Hills, Ballidu, Dalwallinu and other places, for the purpose of supplying the townspeople in those dry areas, and the farmers en route.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: No answer!

The Chief Secretary: That is because, and the hon. member knows it well, the water in this case is to come from Mundaring, and in the other from a more fruitful supply, Wellington.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: A moment ago I referred to the Mundaring Weir.

The Chief Secretary: That is so.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Obviously I know about it because I referred to it before the Minister for Works interjected.

The Chief Secretary: You are hard.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: No, I am not. I think the Minister was trying to indicate in a weird fashion that I was making my point about the north-eastern agricultural areas extension without referring to the fact that the water would have to come from the Mundaring reservoir whereas, in fact, I did indicate to members that the water would have to be drawn from Mundaring after the retaining wall had been raised. I am convinced myself that when the main pipe-line from the Wellington reservoir to Katanning is completed and the farmers have practical experience of the great value of being connected to an assured supply of good water, they will, one by one, ten by ten and fifty by fifty, as time goes by, apply to be connected to the scheme.

If the extension to Mt. Barker and the other places is carried out—a distance of 80 miles from the present boundary at Katanning—we will probably see, in the hot summer days when everyone connected to the Wellington Dam, and especially to the pipe-line running to Mt. Barker, is drawing water from the scheme, the same situation—a more or less disastrous one—developing there as we have seen in connection with the Goldfields supply for many years because of the extensions that have been made to serve the farmers. I have taken out some figures regarding the populations of the road boards concerned with the agreement. In the whole of the Tambellup Road Board, which has its headquarters at Mt. Barker—

The Premier: Where are its headquarters?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am sorry; at Tambellup. I was under the impression that Mt. Barker was in the Tambellup Road Board, but that is not so.

The Minister for Education: Mt. Barker is in the Plantagenet Road Board.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Yes. I will have to get the figure concerning Plantagenet. The population of the Tambellup Road Board is 595, and goodness knows how many people live in Tambellup if there are only 595 in the whole of the road board. In the Broomehill Road Board there are only 651 people—or there were at the 30th June, 1947—so goodness knows how many people live in the town of Broomehill. On the same date there were only 774 people in the whole of the Cranbrook Road Board, so heaven knows how many live in the town of Cranbrook. It can be seen from these figures that the number of people in the towns concerned who will draw water from this extension over a distance of 80 miles, at an estimated cost today, I would think, of £350,000, will be a mere handful.

The Premier: I suppose Mt. Barker is one of the fastest growing towns in the State.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would very much doubt that. As a matter of fact, I would deny it.

The Premier: What, with the tremendous development taking place in that district?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is by no means the fastest growing town.

The Premier: I said, one of the fastest.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As I said earlier in my speech, I have no objection to the people of Mt. Barker, or of any other town in the State, getting a Government water scheme. I would like to see the people in every town have one.

The Premier: So would we.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would like the farmers, especially those in the drier areas, to have the opportunity to be connected to a Government water supply scheme. I have said here many times, and I say again now, that in my opinion water is Western Australia's greatest and most urgent need. I think there has been a substantial change of opinion amongst the farmers in many of the Great Southern areas as to the advisability of having their farms connected to a Government water scheme which would supply them at all times with an abundance of water. When we put up the Bill for the original comprehensive scheme, about 99 per cent. of the farmers in the Great Southern were opposed to it. They were hostile to the proposal and said that they had, at great expense, put down dams on their individual properties, which dams caught and held all the water they needed each year. As I explained then, a dam on a property is completely at the mercy of Providence.

If Providence is kind and generous a dam serves its purpose, but if it becomes unkind and ungenerous, the dam is useless and valueless, and becomes a mockery to the farmer concerned. Therefore, those farmers in the Great Southern who have

changed their opinions now realise that it would have been of tremendous value to them, especially during the last three or four years, if they had had their properties connected to a water supply such as the Wellington Dam, where the rainfall, even in the driest season, is fairly heavy, and during the wetter season, exceptionally heavy; thus conserving great quantities of water to be reticulated over large areas and supplying both townspeople and farmers.

Mr. Kelly: I wonder what people in those areas think of the South Province member now.

The Minister for Works: There are still many other areas of supply to be dammed in those districts, which will ensure for them supplies equal to the comprehensive extensions.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would be glad if the Minister, when introducing his Estimates, would give us some details on that matter. I want to give some figures in connection with rainfall so that the House may be able to compare the ability of townspeople in various parts of the State to conserve water, as against those in other parts of the State. It will also enable members to compare the urgency of the claim of townspeople in some places as against the urgency of the claims of those in others. The average rainfall which I propose to quote is based on figures up to and including the year 1942. They are as follows:—

	Average Annual Rainfall Inches.
Wongan Hills	15.01
Three Springs	15.81
Dalwallinu	14.22
Morawa	14.00
Mullewa	13.10
Bencubbin	12.08
Koorda	11.22
Lake Grace	14.83
Newdegate	14.14
Dumbleyung	16.49
Broomehill	18.21
Cranbrook	20.12
Tambellup	18.64
Mt. Barker	29.29

The fast-growing town of Mt. Barker, as mentioned by the Premier, has an average annual rainfall of 29.29 inches. I think it fair and proper to add that except for the existence of the town of Mt. Barker, the proposed extension would never have been considered. In other words, if Mt. Barker had not been where it is, and had not been of the size it is, the Government would never have considered taking a pipe line 80 miles from Katanning to Broomehill, Tambellup and Cranbrook for the purpose of supplying the very small populations in those places. Yet, as I have just mentioned, the average annual rainfall of Mt. Barker for the period up to and including the year 1942, was 29.29 inches.

I condemn the Deputy Premier especially, although I praise him very much as the member for the district concerned. I also condemn the Premier almost as severely, and I condemn the other Ministers if they were fully consulted about the agreement which the Government signed with the local authorities in connection with this matter. There was absolutely no necessity for the Government to sign the agreement, or to sign any legal agreement, with local authorities in regard to the extension of the comprehensive water scheme pipe-line from Katanning to the various places concerned. The Government could have made such an extension in the ordinary course of events if at some later stage it decided that that was desirable and necessary. I said earlier that I am sure the Government could not, in the normal way, have put in a local water supply scheme at any of those places during the next five or six years. Therefore no point of any consequence can be raised on the basis of the Government having, in effect, been forced to make this agreement with the local authorities in question, so that the Government should not have to carry out the promises contained in a mere memorandum on a departmental file, to put in local water supplies at the various centres.

I want to know from the Deputy Premier, and the Premier, why they did not allow the ordinary procedure to be followed in this matter. If, when the pipe-line from the Wellington Dam reached Katanning, the Government considered it desirable, necessary and justifiable in an emergency, compared with other parts of the State, to extend the water supply pipe-line from there to Mt. Barker and the other places, that would have been perfectly in order. The Government would have been justified in making a favourable decision about the matter then. I also want to know from the Deputy Premier especially why he prevailed upon the Premier to include succeeding Governments in this agreement between the present Government and road boards in the Mt. Barker area. There was not the slightest justification for that.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Was not an election due about then?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It amounts to political bushranging of the very worst type. I am not surprised that the Deputy Premier did it! I am not one scrap surprised that he would come at that, but I am extremely surprised that the Premier would allow himself to be a victim of that phase of the agreement. I would be extremely surprised to learn that other Ministers in the Government agreed to that provision being inserted. What right, legal, moral or any other kind, has this Government to bind succeeding Governments in a matter of this description?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Ask the Attorney General.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: I would think the Attorney General would say that there is some grave doubt about its validity.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I too would say that there is extremely grave doubt about the validity of including such a provision in an agreement. It is all very well for the Solicitor General, or someone else, to ruin his eyesight and rack his brains for the purpose of digging out some precedents upon which, by some amazing stretch of imagination, it may be thought that the Government would be justified, and was justified, in binding not only itself but also any Government which might succeed it in future. Members must have heard with great surprise the extract I read from a memorandum written by the Deputy Premier, in which he referred to the desirability of binding future Governments within the agreement. His reference to the fact that the directorships might change—that the person who is now Director of Works might not be the same person next year, or after the next election—was also surprising.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I think the Premier should look at Sections 17 and 18 of the country water supplies Act.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: So, however much the Government might try to justify making an agreement between itself and local authorities on this matter, it can in no sense—not to the smallest degree—justify its appalling action in binding, or attempting to bind, in the same agreement any Government which might succeed the present one. Why should the Deputy Premier want that put in the agreement?

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He thought the Ministers might change.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I would emphasise that the agreement was signed on the 26th May, 1949. Was the Deputy Premier at that time so pessimistic about the chances of re-election for this Government that he felt sure, or almost sure, that there would be a new Government in Western Australia following the general State election for the Legislative Assembly which was to be held early in 1950? The Deputy Premier had no justification at all for trying to prevail, or in successfully prevailing, upon the Premier to include that provision in the agreement. He had no political conscience at all when he developed the idea and when he continued to do his utmost to have it put into the agreement and made a legal, binding part of it.

If another Government does come into office in this State before this extension from Katanning is commenced, it would feel justified in holding up that extension on the ground alone that the Deputy Premier had most wrongfully, and in a highly dishonest sense politically, used his power and persuasion, not only to bind his own Government but also for the unjustifiable purpose of trying to bind any Government which might be elected in Western Australia before the extension to Mt. Barker was carried out and completed. The first public statement, apart from the small meetings with which the Premier is so

much in love as a medium of publicity, to be made on behalf of the Government, through the columns of "The West Australian" or of any other newspaper in this State, was made on the 11th May, 1950. That statement was made by the present Minister for Works and Water Supply, Hon. D. Brand.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I want now to give the total population within the boundaries of the Plantagenet Road Board, the figure being 2,379. I did not have those particulars in my possession earlier when I was quoting the population of other road districts concerned. Those who are well acquainted with the Mt. Barker district will know that it is fairly closely settled with regard to the farms that exist there. Consequently, a considerable proportion of that total population would be outside the town boundaries and in the circumstances would not be supplied with water from the proposed extension of the Comprehensive Water Supply Scheme from Katanning to Mt. Barker. Probably the Deputy Premier will give us the total of the town population of Mt. Barker when he speaks to this motion either tonight or at some date in the future.

Before the tea suspension I mentioned that the first State-wide publicity to be given to the Government's actions in connection with this matter was on the 11th May of this year by the present Minister for Works and Water Supply. That was almost 12 months after the Premier had signed the agreement with the local government authorities in the Mt. Barker district. It is certainly astonishing that the Government should delay for a year the making of a public statement, through "The West Australian," of its decisions and actions with regard to the extension of the Great Southern water supply pipe-line from Katanning, when it reaches there, for a distance of 80 miles further on to Mt. Barker. The decision in that respect was very important. It was one which could not but be of great interest to the public in all parts of the State. Therefore we are certainly entitled to ask why the actions and the decisions of the Government were not publicised through "The West Australian," the "Daily News" or the "Sunday Times" as soon as the agreement was made, or soon afterwards.

Mr. Kelly: It was not even publicised in "The Liberal News."

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It was not until there was a new Minister for Works and Water Supply that the announcement was made to the public. I wonder what would have been the reaction of the electors in the district which was represented at that time by the present member for Moore if the terms of the agreement and the decision of the Government had been

published in May, 1949, or at any time after that date and up to the beginning of March, 1950. I wonder what would have been the reaction of the electors in the district then represented by the present member for Avon Valley or of those in the district then represented by the present member for Mt. Marshall or in the district then represented by the gentleman who is now member for Roe. I wonder what would have been the reaction of the electors in his present constituency. The reaction of those people, or at any rate of a majority of them, would have been so sudden and fierce, in my opinion, that it would have made it impossible for those members to have secured re-election at the general elections held in March of this year—unless they had been prepared to repudiate their leader in this House—the Deputy Premier—and, in addition, to repudiate the Government as a whole and the agreement it had made with the road boards in the Great Southern districts.

I can only suggest, therefore, on the basis of commonsense and fair reasoning that this matter was not publicised throughout the State because those responsible for making the agreement, especially the Deputy Premier, were anxious that, as far as possible, it should be kept an absolute secret outside the districts that would benefit by the making of that agreement. Thus no public announcement worthy of the name was made with regard to the agreement until twelve months after it had been signed. It would appear, therefore, that the Deputy Premier took the risk of embarrassing and endangering the political existence of several of his colleagues in his own Country and Democratic League, in order that he might sew up completely beyond any possibility of its being unsewn, the question of supplying water to his own electors in four or five towns in his own electorate.

If there were not some ulterior purpose to be served by maintaining this censorship and secrecy insofar as no wide publicity was availed of in connection with the matter, then why was it not publicised through the usual mediums used by any Government when it makes an important decision, namely, "The West Australian," the "Daily News" and the "Sunday Times"? I can quite understand that if the Deputy Premier or some other Minister representing the Government had published the contents of the agreement sometime between the 26th May, 1949, and the beginning of March, 1950, there would have been a revolt within the parliamentary ranks of the Country and Democratic League. I should hope that the rank and file members of no party would be prepared to suffer an imposition of that kind, which could not, if it were published, have any other effect at the general election than to bring about the defeat of the members of the Deputy Premier's own party represent-

ing districts within the State which are urgently and desperately in need of water and where many of the people have been urging the necessity for and crying out for water over long periods.

We can imagine very easily the reaction of the people of Wyalkatchem, of those along the Wongan Hills-Dalwallinu and Geraldton-Mullewa lines and at places such as Bruce Rock, Brookton, Pingelly, Lake Grace, Newdegate and at least 100 other towns, which could be mentioned if necessary and if time permitted. So this is another point upon which an ample and acceptable explanation requires to be made. Unless it is made, then members can come to no other conclusion than that this agreement was kept as secret as possible, except in districts that were to benefit from it, in order that people in other parts of the State, especially the people in the drier areas, should be kept in ignorance of what the Government had done, and of what it had committed itself to, until at least such time as the general election had been held in 1950.

The Premier: How could it be kept secret if the districts to benefit from it knew all about it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I dealt with that question when the Premier raised the same point before.

The Premier: Not very effectively.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The people in my district had no knowledge of it. I am sure the people in the Moore electorate knew nothing about it nor did the people in the district represented by the member for Avon Valley or in those represented by the members for Roe and Mt. Marshall. I am positive they knew nothing about it and I am sure that people in many other electoral districts knew nothing about it when the State elections were held in March of this year. That is the answer to the question by the Premier as to how this could be kept secret.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It was kept out of the Mt. Barker paper.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It may have been that some special precautions were taken in the Mt. Barker area to see that the matter was not publicised to any great extent.

Mr. Marshall: You are on a good point there.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It was not allowed to be published outside that district.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: To sum up, there are very vital questions which the Government has to answer. In the first place, why did it agree to make the proposed extension and give it priority against extensions much more urgently required in other centres? In the second place, why did the Government then make a legal

agreement with the local authorities, not only binding itself to put this proposed extension into operation, but also binding itself to carry the work into effect and to complete it within a period of six years from the 26th May, 1949? In the third place, why did the Government in the agreement bind, or seek to bind, any succeeding Government to carry out the proposed work as agreed upon by the present Government? Fourthly, there is an obligation upon the Government to justify its action in giving high priority to the proposed work.

I do not know whether the Premier really understands to what he has committed himself and his Government in giving this proposed work a high priority. I know the Deputy Premier, in a memorandum which he sent direct to the Director of Works at the time, ignoring the Minister for Works, suggested that steel supplies would probably be increasing, thus justifying the anticipation which the Director of Works himself had expressed some time before. However, are steel supplies increasing? The present Minister for Works shakes his head to indicate they are not increasing. The probability is that supplies are decreasing, and no-one can forecast what will happen during the next 12 months.

Therefore, steel supplies will remain short, and probably acutely short, even for Government water supply requirements. In addition, I suggest that skilled labour for the putting down of water supply mains is not plentiful. I hope no member in this House, least of all the Premier, entertains the idea that we can put steel water pipes down, when we get them, with unskilled labour. Highly skilled and well-trained labour is required for some of the vital work which has to be performed in laying down steel water pipe-lines.

The Premier: There is provision in the agreement, as the hon. member knows, for eventualities over which the Government has no control. If the Government cannot get steel, it cannot go on with any of these works.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I know of the provision in the agreement which allows the Government some escape in connection with strikes, lock-outs, war, acts of God, and so on.

The Premier: Shortage of steel would be covered there, too.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It seems to me that the Premier and the Government are going to have an easy way out in connection with this matter if it suits them. Maybe, after all, the local authorities down in the Mt. Barker areas have not the absolutely sure and certain grip upon the Government which they have been deluded into believing they possess, and the local authorities and the people concerned down there might very easily find that upon the

slightest pretext and provocation the Government will be able to wriggle out of or escape from the agreement it has signed with those local authorities. Judging by the way the Deputy Premier is looking at me, it seems that he might agree with me.

However, when I was proceeding to make the point I desired to make, the Premier took me up the wrong way. I was not proceeding to make the point that if steel supplies were insufficient to enable the Government completely to carry out this work within a period of six years from the 26th May, 1949, the Government could legally argue, if any of the local authorities took action against it in the courts, that a boat had been held up at Newcastle, which boat was loaded with steel supplies for Western Australia; or that a boat with steel supplies for this State was held up at Melbourne or Fremantle; or that employees of the steel-making section of the B.H.P. works at Newcastle had been on strike for a month in 1952 or had been locked out for a couple of months in 1953.

The point I was proceeding to make was that the Government, in this legal agreement with the local authorities in the Mt. Barker area, and in a letter sent by the Premier to the secretary of the Great Southern Regional Council, has bound the Government to give this proposed extension from Katanning to Mt. Barker a very high priority.

The Premier and the Deputy Premier, in undertaking to do that, immediately prejudiced and during the six years from the 26th May, 1949, to the 26th May, 1955, will prejudice and impose penalties upon people in the dry areas of the State who have been promised water supplies from the Government. It is obvious that from now on most of the Government's attention in connection with water supply matters will have to be concentrated upon getting the main pipe-line from the Wellington dam to Katanning and thereafter the same attention will have to be concentrated upon extending the pipe-line a further 80 miles to Mt. Barker and other adjacent towns.

Mr. Kelly And everybody else will suffer in the meantime.

Mr. Marshall: They can do no similar work elsewhere while that is going on.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I know that when the present Minister for Works and Water Supply made his published statement in "The West Australian" on the 11th May telling the public to what the Government had committed itself in connection with this proposed extension from Katanning to Mt. Barker, amazement and consternation were created in the minds of the present members for Avon Valley, Mt. Marshall, Moore and Roe; and I would not be surprised, either, to learn that the present Minister for Works and Water

Supply threw a fit when he first read the official file in connection with the matter, because the Minister for Works represents a dry area. I suppose every part of his electorate could be fairly described as being from dry to very dry.

I would not be very surprised if the members to whom I have just referred kicked up no end of a noise at the next meeting of the parliamentary members of the Country and Democratic League following publication of the statement given by the Minister to "The West Australian" on the 10th May and published on the following day. I could have no doubt at all that the Deputy Premier would have been made to toe the line at the next succeeding meeting of his parliamentary party. I arrive at that conclusion because of what was subsequently published in "The West Australian" when the public was told that the Government had set up a special committee to investigate water supplies for certain towns.

If I remember rightly, the members for Avon Valley, Moore, Mt. Marshall and Roe were made members of that committee. The Director of Works also was made a member of the committee and probably its chairman. Anyone with any knowledge at all of these things would know that that committee was set up for one purpose and one purpose only, that purpose being for the Director of Works to be used to try to placate the members I have mentioned; to pacify them; and as far as possible to give them undertakings on behalf of the Government in connection with water supplies which are urgently needed for townspeople in several of the towns in their respective electorates. I have a tremendous admiration for the technical skill, the organising ability and the peace-making qualities of the present Director of Works.

I understand that as a result of some meetings of the committee, most of the parliamentary members were satisfied. Presumably they were satisfied because the Director of Works, speaking for the Government, said that the townspeople of Brookton, Pingelly, Wyalkatchem, Bruce Rock and several other places will be supplied with water as soon as it is physically possible for the Government to give it to them. If those are the assurances and undertakings that have been given to the parliamentary members concerned I hope they are not satisfied with them, unless the Government has made the same sort of binding legal agreements with the other local authorities as it made with the Mt. Barker and adjacent local authorities on the 26th of May, 1949. I would like to know, from any one of the members concerned, whether their local authorities hold binding legal agreements with the Government to the effect that it will within a set period of time complete the installation of water schemes to the towns concerned.

I do not know whether such agreements have been drawn up and executed, but I hazard a guess that they have not, nor will they be. I would not like to be the representative of a local authority who approached the Government suggesting that it give an agreement similar to that entered into with the local authorities in the Mt. Barker area. I can imagine that the Premier would say, "Away with it. I will have nothing to do with any more of these so and so agreements. The last one has got me into no end of trouble."

Mr. Marshall: Poor old Premier.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have already emphasised that the Government has legally committed itself to the extension of the pipeline from Katanning to Mt. Barker when the pipe line reaches Katanning, and has given that work the highest priority. How do the members for Roe, Moore, Mt. Marshall and Avon Valley think their people will get on while the policy of the Government is to give high priority to the extension of the pipeline from Katanning to Mt. Barker? There will be no steel, skilled labour, plant or equipment available—

The Premier: If that happens there will be no extension to Mt. Barker or anywhere else.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: At least not sufficient to enable the Government to carry out its legal obligation to the Mt. Barker people and at the same time give anything like a fair deal to the residents of the other towns that I have mentioned.

The Premier: Steel for the comprehensive scheme is on hand and on order, so the work will continue and this agreement will not prevent its continuing.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not suggesting that steel for the comprehensive scheme is not on hand or on order, but is the Premier trying to suggest that the Government at this moment has on hand sufficient steel?

The Premier: No, I am not.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: That is the only interpretation that could be placed on the Premier's remarks.

The Premier: Steel is on hand or on order for the comprehensive scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Surely the Premier does not expect members to swallow, as being worth while, his statement that some steel is on hand for the comprehensive scheme—for both the No. 1 and No. 2 sections—and that the balance of the steel is on order. The Minister for Works could tell the Premier that steel ordered even three years ago is not yet on hand. Of what value is it to say that the steel is on order?

The Premier: Only this, that the comprehensive scheme will be finished when we get the steel.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: When will that be?

The Premier: We are making every possible effort. I do not know when it will be and the hon. member has mentioned a number of reasons why it may not come to hand.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I do not suggest that the Government is not making every effort to get the steel it needs and I give it every credit for efforts made in that direction, but of what value is it to the townspeople of Brookton, Bruce Rock, Wyalkatchem and other dry centres in the State, that are to be served by a Government water supply scheme in the future, to say that all the steel required is on order?

The Premier: It should give them some satisfaction to know that every possible effort is being made.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is of no satisfaction to them, especially in view of the fact that the Government has committed itself in a legal agreement not only to extending the pipe line from Katanning, when it reaches there—a further 80 miles to Mt. Barker, but also, by law and in the agreement, has undertaken to give the proposed work a very high priority.

The Premier: A number of public works in this State have a very high priority.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: A number of public works in this State have high priority and I make no complaint about such priority where it is deservedly given, but I do complain bitterly when a Government, under pressure from one of its members, allows itself to be manoeuvred into signing a binding legal agreement to carry out a proposed work for which there is no immediate or early justification and also to give it high priority.

The Premier: In a number of the places you mentioned the work should be completed long before 1956, if we have any luck.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Premier says that a number of the towns I have mentioned in the drier areas should have Government water supplies available to them before 1956 if the Government has any luck.

The Premier: Yes, and if the difficulties you have mentioned can be overcome.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: My complaint—I hope the Premier can comprehend it—is that all the steel that actually comes to this State within the next five years and all the skilled labour available to construct water supply mains, together with all the plant and equipment available to the Government for the laying of water supply pipe lines, will be urgently required for the comprehensive scheme and yet the Government has given high priority to one proposed work and to one only.

The Premier: And not to the detriment of the comprehensive scheme.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The Government has bound itself, in a legal agreement with the local authorities concerned, to complete this work within a period of five years from the present and has thereby to give the work very high priority. It is no use the Premier saying that other towns will get a fair deal consistent with quantities of material and skilled labour available. Of course the towns in drier areas cannot possibly get a fair deal now. Suppose there is only sufficient steel available and only sufficient surplus skilled labour, plant and equipment on hand, over and above what is required for the projects to which the Government was committed prior to the 26th May, 1949, to carry out the extension from Katanning to Mt. Barker by the 26th May, 1955—and that could easily be the position, as the Premier knows at heart. What then is to be the position of the people of Brookton?

The Premier: Surely you do not think we are holding up steel that we are getting now for the comprehensive scheme? We are not building up reserves for five or six years ahead, but are using the steel as it comes to hand.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I can only express amazement that the Premier should ask such a foolish question.

The Premier: You are trying to give the impression that the dry areas of the State have no chance of getting their water supplies, but I say they have.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not making that suggestion at all. I stated clearly that if the Government has only sufficient steel, skilled labour, plant and equipment, over and above what is required to carry out the water supply work to which it was committed prior to the 26th May, 1949, to enable it during the next five years to complete the extension from Katanning to Mt. Barker, other towns either inside or outside of the comprehensive scheme—towns to which promises about water supplies have been made—will have to wait until the Government honours its legal commitments to the Mt. Barker people.

Surely the Premier realises what he has done. It seems that he does not fully understand that he has bound his Government, in a legal agreement made with a number of local authorities, to put in this extension from Katanning to Mt. Barker and to complete it on or before the 26th May, 1955. That is what he has done and has committed his Government to do. Unfortunately the Premier, under strong pressure, went even further than that when he signed that agreement on the 26th May, 1949, and committed every succeeding Government to carry out the terms of the agreement that he made with these local authorities.

Mr. W. Hegney: They will not be coalition governments.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Let the Premier not try to deceive himself or members or the public by suggesting that the Government is not under a completely binding legal obligation to give the proposed extension from Katanning to Mt. Barker the highest possible priority.

The Premier: After the comprehensive scheme mains have been completed.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: Only after the comprehensive scheme main from Wellington Dam to Katanning has been completed—make no mistake about that. Let the Premier not mislead the House by suggesting that the extension from Katanning to Mt. Barker will not be put in hand and completed until every other section of the comprehensive scheme in the Great Southern districts and the North-Eastern agricultural districts has been completed. Surely the Premier does not think that is a fact.

Mr. Marshall: If it were so they would not have needed an agreement.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is not so. The Premier has bound himself and his Government, in a legal agreement, to extend the comprehensive scheme pipe-line—when it reaches Katanning—a distance of 80 miles to Mt. Barker, irrespective of the progress made in connection with No. 2 section of the comprehensive scheme. I hope that the members who represent districts in the No. 2 section of the comprehensive scheme will not be misled into believing that what the Premier said a few moments ago is true and correct.

The Premier: I will give you all the dates when I reply to this.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am not concerned with dates; I am concerned with the legal agreement which the Government unnecessarily, without any justification, signed, binding itself to the local authorities in the Mt. Barker area to proceed with an extension of the comprehensive water supply main from Wellington Dam to Katanning, and thence to Mt. Barker after the pipe-line reaches Katanning.

Mr. Kelly: What prompted the Deputy Premier to do that?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: We can only guess what prompted the Deputy Premier to move in this direction and then to have this proposed extension of the pipe-line from Katanning to Mt. Barker made the subject of a binding agreement.

Mr. Kelly: That is not the usual procedure, is it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is not the usual procedure.

The Premier: You have covered all that ground.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I know the Premier is not enjoying it, especially since the tea suspension.

The Premier: I do not want you to repeat it again.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I know that. The Premier is extremely regretful that I mentioned it the first time. So I would ask him to give very serious consideration to all the implications associated with the agreement which he allowed himself to be persuaded to sign. I make a prophecy that this agreement and its execution will cause him, particularly, and particularly, too, Liberal Party members and Country and Democratic League members representing drier areas, endless worries and headaches between now and the 26th May, 1955.

Irrespective of the Premier's wishes or desires he will find that this legal agreement committing his Government to carry out this proposed extension from Katanning to Mt. Barker by the 26th May, 1955, will impose direct penalties, impositions and punishments upon people in districts in drier areas to whom it will not be possible to supply water by the 26th May, 1955, because there will not be enough steel coming to Western Australia to do it, despite the fact that the Government has had steel on order one year, two years or however many years it has been on order.

Mr. Marshall: How about the Minister for Supply and Shipping? Cannot she help the Premier out?

The Premier: She is doing a very good job.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It is very interesting to notice how quickly the Premier fastens on to something which is not before the Chair.

The Premier: I am only replying to an interjection; giving information which I am always anxious to do.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: As I have said, in speaking to this motion, I feel thoroughly justified in moving it.

The Premier: You are going to move it?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I have already moved it. I moved it a couple of hours ago. I am sorry the Premier's memory is failing very badly, otherwise he would remember that.

Mr. Marshall: There are a lot of things he would like to forget.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The motion condemns the Government very severely, and it is up to it to decide whether the wording of the motion is severe enough to warrant describing the motion in certain terms. That is entirely in the hands of the Government. It is up to the members of the Government to please themselves. This is still a free country, although there are signs that it may not be so in the future, goodness knows.

The Premier: Do not get too pessimistic.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: In the circumstances I feel thoroughly justified in moving the motion and in view of the doubt raised by the Premier as to whether I did move it, I now move it again.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

BILL — WOOD DISTILLATION AND CHARCOAL IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Resumed from the 20th September. Mr. Perkins in the Chair; Hon. A. R. G. Hawke in charge of the Bill.

Clause 2—New section inserted in principal Act.

The CHAIRMAN: Progress was reported on Clause 2 to which the Minister for Industrial Development had moved an amendment as follows:—

That in line 4 of proposed new Section 31A, after the word "Act," the words "except machinery, tools, apparatus, equipment, appliances, fittings and material which in the opinion of the Governor are not required for the efficient production of charcoal and other products by means of a process of wood distillation and of charcoal iron and steel," be inserted.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: It will be remembered that when this Bill was last before the Committee the member for Northam and myself agreed that we would discuss the wording of this amendment to ascertain whether it could be altered to suit our joint purposes. We had that discussion and I now ask leave to withdraw the amendment before the Committee.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I move an amendment—

That in line 4 of proposed new Section 31A, after the word "Act," the words "except machinery, tools, apparatus, equipment, appliances, fittings and materials which, in the opinion of the Governor, are not required for the efficient production of sawn timber and charcoal iron and steel, and other products by means of a process of wood distillation," be inserted.

It was designed to cover to a greater degree the right of the Governor in Council to dispose of unwanted goods at the Wundowie works without endangering the carrying on of the industries which are substantially the ones carried on there. After a consultation between myself, the member for Northam and the Parliamentary Draftsman, this amendment was considered to be satisfactory.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: This clause aims at preventing any Government from selling or leasing any part of the charcoal industry at Wundowie unless the permission of Parliament be first obtained. The amendment moved by the Minister is calculated to give any Government the right to sell machinery, tools, apparatus and so on which are no longer required for the efficient manufacture of any commodity now being produced at Wundowie or to be produced at some future time. I support the amendment because it is easy to understand that from year to year plant, equipment, and apparatus will become obsolete and will have to be replaced by new plant and equipment. Unless this amendment is included in the Bill, the board of management will not be able, without the authority of Parliament, to dispose of the obsolete plant. That would be an undesirable process to follow and it might necessarily mean some loss as a result, because six months might elapse before Parliament meets and the board of management's intentions are approved.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—CONSTITUTION ACTS AMENDMENT (No. 1).

Second Reading.

HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Northam) [8.30] in moving the second reading said: This Bill aims at liberalising the franchise for the Legislative Council in this State. Every member is fully aware of the restricted nature of the present franchise. The Bill contains only three amendments. The first aims at giving the right of enrolment for the Legislative Council to the wife of any husband entitled to be enrolled where such wife or husband does not already hold the right to claim enrolment and thereby have the right to vote at Legislative Council elections. The second amendment aims at abolishing the system of plural voting for the Legislative Council which exists under the present law. The third amendment aims to give the right of enrolment to any returned Serviceman or returned Servicewoman.

The Bill sets out clearly the definition of "returned serviceman" and "returned servicewoman," and follows closely a definition which is contained in a Commonwealth Act which has worked very satisfactorily during the time that Act has been in operation. The proposals in the Bill speak for themselves, which makes it unnecessary for me to argue in their favour. I do not think that even one member in this House will vote against the Bill, or any part of it. When Bills similar to this have been passed through this House in previous years, they have, on every such occasion, been defeated by a majority of the members in the Legislative Council.

Even when the present Government, in 1947, introduced a Bill similar to this, and it was unanimously approved in this House, it was defeated in the Legislative Council by a majority consisting entirely of supporters of the Government in that House.

Mr. W. Hegney: By arrangement.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: It might be possible that a majority of the members of the Legislative Council will defeat this Bill. They may feel, with some justification, that they have defeated similar Bills previously and have suffered no punishment from the electors for what they had done, and they may therefore feel perfectly safe in going through the same process again. We all know that public opinion in latter years is not a very active and vital thing. We know that only a small minority of the total electors, even for the Legislative Assembly, take a keen interest in such a matter as franchise for the Legislative Council. However, the day might easily come when public opinion generally will be sharpened up considerably in connection with this matter of franchise. We all remember vividly how public opinion sharpened during the depression years from 1930 to about 1936.

Almost every man and woman in the State was intensely interested in public affairs, and was anxious that everything possible should be done by Parliament to ease the burdens which were then upon them. Such a time might come again. I hope it does not. I should hope that any general revival of public interest in the public mind would come by virtue of a pure desire on the part of men and women to take a keen interest in public affairs and to make that keen interest operate through the influence which they could exercise, not only at Legislative Assembly elections but at Legislative Council elections as well. The other night we were debating a Bill to postpone a poll on the question of prohibiting the manufacture and sale of liquor in Western Australia. I mention this only by way of illustration.

We were told that there was no demand for such a referendum by any but a small minority of the people within the State. When we remember that a referendum on that question taken under the existing law would have to be carried by a three-fifths majority, we can quite understand that those who might earnestly believe in the prohibition of the manufacture and sale of liquor would lose heart almost completely at the prospect of the tremendous job they would have to face to get the requisite legal majority at such a referendum. I think it could equally be argued that the majority of people in Western Australia have no interest at all, or very little interest, in Legislative Council elections because of the fact that they feel the franchise is loaded against people as

a whole. Probably only about one-third of the total electors for the Assembly are enrolled, or have the right to be enrolled for the Legislative Council.

It is quite easy to understand why the other two-thirds of Assembly electors are not interested in Council elections. If we extend the franchise and increase the number of those entitled to be enrolled from one-third to two-thirds of the total Legislative Assembly electors, we shall at least have two-thirds of the total adult population of the State with a right to vote and be enrolled for the Legislative Council. As a result of that, I should say there would be greater interest in Legislative Council affairs generally. Such a development could not but be in the very best interests of the State. I want to quote now some extracts from bound volume No. 2 of "Hansard," 1947. These quotations will be found in a speech on page 1530, and are as follows:—

It is considered reasonable that this extension—

and that refers to an extension of the franchise to the husband or wife of the householder—

—should be made so as to qualify both members of the family unit. The family unit of husband and wife having established a home and one party being the householder as defined in the Bill, it is thought to be a proper and reasonable extension of the franchise that the husband or wife, as the case may be, of the householder should be normally entitled to exercise the vote where the amount of the rent being paid or the annual value of the house qualifies the householder to exercise a vote for the Legislative Council. The dwelling or home is the mutual home of the two parties, and the family responsibility was from the outset envisaged as part of the qualifying factors for the Legislative Council, due to the insertion in the franchise section of the original Act of a provision for the householder to exercise a vote. We provide that both the husband and the wife, in order to take advantage of this extension, shall be resident in the dwelling. I consider that this provision should be made because it relates to the fact that the dwelling is the home of the two parties.

Further on the speech continues—

The next provision has been inserted in deference to a resolution of the House and deals with the matter of plural voting. By the terms of the Bill, plural voting is to be abolished. If a man has the right to vote in two or more provinces, he will be entitled to elect in which province he will record his vote. If, as not infrequently happens, he may

have spent the greater part of his life in the North, or on the Goldfields or in country areas and his interests are mainly there, although he may be residing in retirement in Perth, he will be able, under the Bill as drawn, to file with the Electoral Department a notice electing to be registered for some other province for which he is qualified and which is not the province in which he may be living at the time. In any measure providing for the abolition of plural voting, it seems reasonable that the voter in certain circumstances should be entitled to exercise an option as to the province for which he is qualified at present and as to which his interests make him most concerned to exercise his vote.

The Attorney General: You agree with those views, do you?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: I am inclined to give a reasonable amount of favourable consideration to them. I would be disappointed if the Attorney General were to say that he does not agree with them. Does the Attorney General agree with the views I have quoted?

The Attorney General: I have already stated my views on the matter in this House.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: When the Attorney General asked me, by way of interjection, whether I agreed with the views I quoted from "Hansard," I thought he was indicating indirectly that he did not agree with them. I am very glad to know that the Attorney General does agree with these views—

The Attorney General: I will tell you about that later.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: —which I have quoted from "Hansard." I should also hope that the Attorney General would make sure on this occasion that the Bill I now have before the House will be voted for not only by himself but also by all the members of his party who adorn the Legislative Council. I do not know whether it is of interest to the Attorney General to learn that I have been quoting from a speech made in this House on the 28th October, 1947, by the then Attorney General, now Sir Ross McDonald. He made those statements in his speech explaining the provisions of the Bill which his Government then introduced into this House. I think the Attorney General at that time was a Minister in the Government. In the circumstances, it should not be necessary for the Attorney General to make a speech on this Bill beyond saying that, as it follows largely the measure which his Government introduced in 1947, he wishes to give it his blessing. I cannot imagine that he would speak or vote against the proposal to extend the franchise for the Legislative Council to returned Servicemen and

women, although I admit that that provision was not in the Bill that his Government introduced in 1947.

The Attorney General: The definition is rather wide, is it not?

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE: The only other thing the Attorney General would need to do in speaking to this Bill would be to make a very strong and impassioned appeal, if he thought it necessary, to members of his party who are members of the Legislative Council, calling upon them to stand up to their obligations under the Liberal Party's platform and election policy speech by supporting the measure. I hope the Attorney General will fully carry out his duty along those lines. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Attorney General, debate adjourned.

MOTION—WHOLEMILK INDUSTRY.

To Inquire by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from the 11th October on the following motion by Mr. Hoar:—

That in the opinion of this House, the Government should immediately set up a Royal Commission to make a complete inquiry into all phases of the wholemilk industry.

MR. MANNING (Harvey) [8.47]: I have been trying to fathom the reason why the member for Warren moved for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the wholemilk industry, and can only conclude that it was from some desire on his part to learn something about the industry, because he certainly did not display any knowledge of it while speaking to his motion. He is asking for a Royal Commission to tell us something that anyone with a knowledge of the industry is aware of. I am opposing the motion because it could achieve nothing. A Royal Commission is unnecessary, would be costly, is unwarranted and would certainly be ill-timed. On top of that, I remind the hon. member that we had a Royal Commission in 1948, and surely the hon. member would not expect a Royal Commission to inquire into this industry every year or two!

A Royal Commission is unnecessary because at the present time the Milk Board is carrying out a survey into the costs of production and making a review of the price of milk. This, of course, meets with the wishes of the wholemilk producers. The margins of retailers are in a position to be constantly reviewed. A Royal Commission is unwarranted because it has not been asked for by any section of the industry. I have taken the trouble to discuss with many producers the desirability of having an inquiry by a Royal Commission and they have all expressed the

opinion that it would be unwarranted. Further, I have heard no outcry from the retail trade or treatment plants for an inquiry into the industry and the same applies to the consumers.

With the approach of summer, the board is devoting much of its time to teeing up milk to increase the supply during that period, and particularly is considering the question where it should get the milk during the summer months. Producers would have to devote two or three months of precious time at this period of the year to preparing, collating and securing evidence to submit to a Royal Commission, which would put the industry in a chaotic condition.

Mr. Hoar: Are you speaking for the producers?

Mr. MANNING: Yes. The hon. member said that the wholemilk industry was in a chaotic condition. I tell him that it is not in a chaotic condition, but it would be if a Royal Commission were appointed. The Milk Board would be thrown completely out of gear as regards teeing up milk supplies for the coming summer. There are many complex problems affecting the industry, but the Milk Board, in spite of what the hon. member said, is well aware of them, and is doing something despite what he himself said to the contrary. It is considering the question how far south we should go for wholemilk. As the Minister stated, the board is concerned about the distance from which it is necessary to draw supplies. I feel concerned also.

During my speech on the Address-in-reply I made several suggestions whereby the Government could assist to increase the production of milk and also production in other phases of the industry. The suggestions I made were that more research should be undertaken, that the work of the research station should be speeded up and that there should be more irrigation and drainage, more superphosphate and the opening up of new lands such as the area along the old Coast Road. All those things would assist, and the Government is well aware of them and is doing something to that end. At present a survey is being carried out in the area south of Armadale through to Busseton with the object of ascertaining what land is suitable for irrigation, the type of country and the pasture it would grow, as well as any other facts that should be known about that land. The old Coast Road area is to be opened up and this, I believe, will materially assist to increase the production of milk.

As regards irrigation and drainage, the Harvey River main drain is to be deepened and improved. This drain runs north from Harvey through to Mandurah. This will be a big help in the way of opening up new land for wholemilk production. The irrigation scheme in the Cookernup-Yarloop-Wagerup area is beginning to bear fruit, and I forecast that,

in the next year or two, the output of milk from these areas will be greatly stepped up.

The hon. member stressed the fact that the population of the State was increasing rapidly and quoted figures to show that the increase had exceeded 43,000 during the past three years. He further commented upon the fact, which I have already mentioned, that it was necessary to go so far south for milk. I make this observation that the Milk Board will go only as far south for supplies as is absolutely necessary. With the population increasing as it is, we would never be able to produce sufficient milk in the area north of Dardanup, from which it was previously drawn. Notwithstanding the production in the irrigation areas, it will still be necessary to draw supplies from well down south in order to get sufficient wholemilk.

The hon. member wants a Royal Commission to tell us why scores of producers are leaving the wholemilk industry. A Royal Commission would tell him that scores are not leaving the industry. Some producers are leaving it, but each one has a particular reason and most of the reasons differ. One reason could be sickness. Another reason is that, if a farmer had sufficient acreage to enable him to change over to beef production, he would produce that and, because of the shortage of meat, I would not be one to say that he must continue to produce milk if he was prepared to produce beef, seeing that meat is equally urgently needed.

Another very important point is the introduction of the 40-hour week. Champions of the shorter working week would find on inquiry that this has had a very adverse effect on the dairying industry and upon the production of wholemilk particularly. The wholemilk industry is one in which a man works seven days a week the whole year round. A producer of butterfat can dry off his cows for two or three months during the worst period of the year, but the wholemilk producer keeps going the whole year round seven days a week. How can a man who is working under those conditions compete for labour when other industries are offering a 5-day week of 40 hours? That is a reason why some of the producers are leaving the industry. If the producers were in a position to employ the labour they required, they could not get it because the conditions in other industries make it impossible for them to compete for labour.

The member for Warren stated that the industry was controlled by a dictator and made the accusation that the chairman of the Milk Board was a dictator. Admittedly the chairman of the board is a strong man, but I certainly would not describe him as a dictator. He is quite ready at any time to discuss the problems of the industry with anyone who is engaged in it. The Milk Board has set up dairy standards which insist upon better and cleaner work-

ing conditions and the adoption of labour and time-savers by a proper set-up of the cowsheds and dairy. The producers who complain that the chairman of the board is a dictator are those who are not prepared to produce milk under clean conditions, and I would say to them and to the hon. member that those who are prepared to produce clean milk have no complaints to make at all about the Milk Board.

Mr. Hoar: Are you sure of that?

Mr. MANNING: Absolutely sure. The hon. member also stated that the production of whole milk was declining. The biggest contributing factor to the decline has been the introduction of the testing of cattle for T.B. I propose to quote a few figures to show the number of cows that have been slaughtered on this account and the loss of production caused by their slaughter. Since the T.B. testing of cattle under the Milk Act commenced in July, 1947, 6,263 head of cattle have been slaughtered under the scheme. Almost all of these were milking cows or potential milkers. The loss of these cattle has been a very severe drain on the industry and must inevitably have tended to reduce the available number of cows supplying milk. In the majority of cases, these cows have been replaced, but the necessity for such replacement obviously reduced the supply of potential milkers.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: What about the large slaughter of heifer calves?

Mr. MANNING: A low estimate of production would be 1½ gallons of milk per cow per day so this means that the dairying industry has suffered a loss through T.B. reactors of approximately 10,000 gallons of milk per day in the relatively brief period of three years. Many of the replacements came from butterfat areas, but nevertheless if these cows had not been used for replacements, they would have been available for increased milk production had the T.B. reactors not been slaughtered. This lag, however, will be overcome in time, but it is a loss which has had to be faced during recent times.

It is not always possible to replace reactors by milking cows or cows likely to come into production when milk is most needed during the summer months. T.B. testing has proceeded through the summer months, and some dairymen have asserted that it upsets milking cows and impairs production. Taking into consideration the figures and the loss caused by the slaughter of the cattle, I do not think anyone would be prepared to say that we should call a halt to T.B. testing. I shall answer the interjection of the member for Melville who asked whether the slaughtering of heifer calves would affect the wholemilk industry.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: I want to know, because it is important, whether there has been much slaughtering of heifer calves.

Mr. MANNING: In the wholemilk areas of Harvey there has been considerable slaughtering of them. In fact, we can safely say that very few are being reared.

Mr. Hoar: Is this the only State with T.B. testing?

Mr. MANNING: It is the only State where T.B. testing is, to my knowledge, being carried out to any extent. The capacity of the producers to expand has been considerably impaired by various shortages. Some of these shortages are small, and perhaps insignificant, so that they do not receive much attention, but they are a large factor in restricting production. If a man has the land to extend his activities, but cannot get super., he cannot expand. Cement is another item—or the lack of it—which prevents many potential wholemilk producers from coming into the industry, because the dairy standards required by the Milk Board are such that cement floors and yards are necessary, and they cannot be built if cement is unobtainable. Shortages of water pipes and fencing materials also restrict production in a minor way. The member for Warren made some accusations against Browne's Ltd., and said that that company was the idol of Mr. Stannard's eye. If that is so, I say it is quite rightly so, because Browne's Ltd. is the show place in the field of treatment plants.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It is a firm that used not to be.

Mr. MANNING: It has achieved a standard of cleanliness that it would be nice to see in all treatment plants.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Pascomi has always been a worry.

Mr. MANNING: There are some cow sheds in my electorate which Mr. Stannard has used as examples of what cow sheds should be, because they are designed for cleanliness and built to save time and labour. The hon. member also said that the South-West Co-operative Dairy Farmers' Ltd. was robbing the producers. The chairman of directors of that company, Mr. Noakes, has written to me in reply to the accusation, and I propose to quote his remarks—

Further to our conversations, I refer to Mr. Hoar's motion for the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the wholemilk industry and with particular reference to that part of Mr. Hoar's speech where he accused the South-West Co-operative Dairy Farmers Ltd. with robbing its suppliers of milk—as it appears that this alleged robbing of producers constitutes one of the reasons being advanced by Mr. Hoar to prove the necessity for an inquiry—the information that I now give to you may be of value in combating the irresponsible and misleading statements made by this member in connection with this matter.

To give you a complete picture of the Co-operative Company's operations at Harvey and its interest in the milk industry, it is necessary to refer to the occasion about nine years ago when the company acquired the premises of the W.A. Condensed Milk Coy. Ltd. at Harvey. Prior to that event my company had not engaged in the wholemilk trade. The W.A. Condensed Milk Coy. was taken over as a going concern, with contracts established as between it and producer suppliers on the one hand and between it and metropolitan milk distributors on the other. On examination of these contracts it was found that the W.A. Condensed Milk Coy. had been paying producers one halfpenny less than the price fixed by the Milk Board and any surplus milk was being paid for at butterfat rates delivered to the factory.

Six months after taking possession of the premises the co-operative increased the price for wholemilk to the full price fixed by the Milk Board, although a much longer period elapsed before the company was able to stop all the concessions that had been made by the original owners with buyers in Perth. In fact it was not until the co-operative developed the transport of milk by road that it was in a fuller measure able to do this.

From the date of returning to the producer that halfpenny of which he was previously being deprived the Co-op. has always paid its licensed milk suppliers the full price for all milk received from them and sold at Milk Board rates. In fact, on many occasions as a perusal of our files will show, we have been notified by the Milk Board that we have over-bought and over-sold our proper quota of the milk trade available and in some years the company has had to equalise with other producers through their depots to the extent of many hundreds of pounds.

The system of paying for surplus milk and milk received from farmers who are not licensed by the Milk Board is an entirely different matter. As stated earlier in this letter, farmers delivering this class of milk to the Harvey factory were originally being paid butterfat rates only. With the advent of the Co-op. into the milk business a meeting was called of all suppliers to the Harvey factory and a proposal was placed before, and accepted by them, relating to the disposal of all surplus and manufacturing milk. It was proposed to form a pool into which all such milk would be received. The company would then dispose of this to the best possible ad-

vantage and pay to the suppliers a flat rate at per pound of butterfat for the full year. If at the end of the year any funds were left in the pool, this could and in fact was on a number of occasions, paid out as a deferred pay.

The milk received into this pool has been disposed of in a number of ways. The manufacture of cheese has always consumed a very large proportion of it, portions have gone into condensed and concentrated milk, cream and milk for ice cream manufacture and limited quantities have been disposed of as liquid milk for consumption as such. Each of these avenues of milk disposal has produced a different price return to the factory and you will, I am sure, readily see what a complication there would be in a producer's milk statement if we attempted to pass on the payment to him with the same diversity of prices. Cheese production which has absorbed nearly half of the milk received, would justify a payment to the farmer on present day cheese prices of no more than 3s. 2d. per lb. of butterfat at the factory door, yet the company's average price to the farmer today is 3s. 5½d. at the factory door. For confirmation of this, I suggest that you ask Mr. Hoar what price producers in his own electorate are receiving for cheese milk. On the other hand that proportion of the milk used in condensing for the export market, and the very small quantity sold as liquid milk, enable us to build up the overall price to our farmers.

For further confirmation you could check up with Nestles, who are disposing of the whole of their output on a high price market with no low return cheese manufacture and yet only equalling our price to the farmer. Far from being robbed by the Co-operative, our entry into the milk business has caused a clean up of the abuses that existed in the milk industry that all tended to deprive the producer of his just reward.

When we took over the business the buyers in Perth (one of whom is now a big farmer at Harvey) used to regularly dock our invoices of large sums of money, running into thousands of pounds per year, for alleged spillages of milk which we proved did not occur. It was this that led to our introduction of the road tankers in order that the milk could be under our control during transit to Perth.

Road transport saved one halfpenny in costs, which the Co-operative passed on immediately to the farmers. Later the Milk Board reduced the margin for transport and this increase in price to the farmer could not be continued.

The margin allowed by the Milk

Board for treatment of milk at country depots remained unchanged at 2d. per gallon from the time of the Board's inception until early this year, when it was increased to 2½d. per gallon. This is absolutely the only revenue that the company receives for the service of receiving, checking and testing brine cooling, storing and delivering the milk in Perth. All losses in spillage, etc., have to come from this margin. The actual transport to Perth is allowed at 1½d. per gallon. Eighty-five per cent. of the farmers supplying milk to the Harvey factory are shareholders and members of the Co-operative company. The whole concern belongs to the farmers themselves. The reserves that are being built up are there for the benefit of members of the company and their successors. In all, there are 3,593 members of the South-West Co-operative Dairy Farmers Ltd.

We are the only dairy concern that retains a fully qualified veterinary officer full time upon its staff, and many of Mr. Hoar's constituents speak in the highest terms of the service thus provided.

The producers of wholemilk are fully alive to their responsibilities, and are working hard and doing everything possible to meet the present and the ever-increasing demand for milk. As I have said, they have to face many restrictions, but these they are overcoming. The Milk Board, for its part, is doing a good job in the circumstances. It has complex problems to meet, but it is facing up to them. Its policy to continue T.B. testing, and its insistence upon the most hygienic treatment of milk have done much to restore the public's confidence in milk. What it has done has now benefited and will in the future greatly benefit the producers of wholemilk. The answers to the problems facing the wholemilk industry will not be found by a Royal Commission. An inquiry would show that what is needed is more people milking cows. More production, is the catch-cry today. Well it is a fact, too, as far as wholemilk goes, and that is the answer to the problem—more producers.

MR. NIMMO (Wembley Beaches) [9.14]: I have been wondering whether a Royal Commission will answer the purpose. I am afraid a Select Committee will not. I hope that a few figures that I shall quote will prove what I want to convey, which is that I am of the opinion that we should get one or two of the best milk producers in Australia to come to this State to report on the matter and, when we receive their report, we could hold a convention. I think we would get more advantage out of such a course of procedure than from a Royal Commission. In 1949-50, the loss in production in Western Australia was 1,500,000 gallons. In July of this year we

dropped by 250,000 gallons. On that basis it looks as though this year we will drop more than the 1,500,000 gallons that we dropped in 1949-50.

For the whole of Australia, production rose by 41,000,000 gallons last year and the total production was 1,253,333,000 gallons. If we were producing more butter in Western Australia it would not be so bad but I think if members study the figures for the production of butter this year, and for the past year, they will find that we have just about been holding our own. Also, I do not think there was any appreciable increase in the production of cheese.

Throughout Australia butter production rose from 7,400 tons to 118,000 tons and cheese rose from 1,700 tons to 44,823 tons. I am not a farmer and I represent a suburban constituency, but I am concerned about whether, if we appoint a Royal Commission, we will obtain the best results. Or, if we appoint a Select Committee will we get the best results? As all the other States in Australia are producing more wholemilk I think it is time we looked for a lead from one of those States. I am sure we could get one or two men over here to advise us and put us on the right lines.

Mr. BOVELL (Vasse) [9.19]: I must say that I am rather surprised that the member for Warren has confined his proposal for a Royal Commission to the wholemilk section of the industry.

Mr. Hoar: That is enough for one time.

Mr. BOVELL: If a Royal Commission is necessary then it should inquire into all the ramifications of the dairying industry. That industry includes the production of wholemilk, processed milk, cheese, butterfat and various by-products. Under present conditions in the dairying industry it is impossible to attract sufficient men or women into it and keep them there. More and better amenities are necessary in the country areas and especially in the dairying districts. Many people who have been established in the industry for some time are remaining there, but some of them are ceasing production of dairy products and are turning to the production of meat.

The younger generation, knowing the drudgery and long hours of work in the dairying industry, are unfortunately drifting from the rural areas to the city. The member for Harvey mentioned the 40-hour week. The price of butterfat is based on a 56-hour week which is totally unfair to the producer in the dairying industry. As the member for Warren represents a constituency which, apart from timber, produces mainly butterfat, he could and should have referred to the industry as a whole and not singled out wholemilk and its production.

Mr. Hoar: You can move for an inquiry into the rest of it if you like. I have enough on my hands now.

Mr. BOVELL: The fact that young people are not remaining in those areas is causing great concern. Here, I would like to pay a tribute to the Junior Farmers' Organisation, under the direction of Mr. Young. It is doing great work and doing its best to influence the younger generation to stay in the rural areas of this State. Unless amenities comparable with those provided in other industries are available to those in the dairying industry then I am afraid the production of dairy products will fall further behind. I hope that the question of irrigation and drainage will be kept in mind and that these schemes will operate further south than they do at present.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: I thought you were going to mention Mt. Barker.

Mr. BOVELL: I am referring to the South-Western portion of the State and I suggest that there is sufficient water in the Preston River for a dam to be established there for an irrigation scheme which would incorporate the areas of Boyanup, Elgin, and perhaps across to Donnybrook and around those districts. Another great factor in the decrease in production of dairy products—I mention dairy products and not specifically wholemilk—is labour. It is impossible to obtain labour to assist the dairy farmer in his activities owing to the drudgery which this work involves. These things are vital to the progress of the industry and I do not believe that a Royal Commission confined to the question of wholemilk will have any good results. For that reason I oppose the motion.

Mr. Hoar: A very weak reason.

MR. READ (Victoria Park) [9.25]: I consider that an inquiry into milk supply and distribution is warranted.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Hear, hear!

Mr. READ: The supply of milk is vital and important to the well-being of the people. I suppose that milk is the most important and vital food on earth. When I say "vital," I would remind members that it means life to the small child, the infant, the sick and the aged. Any inquiry which will see that we get a complete and wholesome supply of milk—one that is fresh and free from harmful bacteria—is warranted. We should also consider the price payable by consumers.

When the amendment to the Milk Act was before Parliament three or four years ago, there were many small treatment plants in my area. There were three in Victoria Park and four in South Perth. They were chilling plants and were erected in accordance with the design, and the permission of, the local health boards—that is the local governing bodies. When the Milk Board came into operation it considered that the smaller plants should be discontinued. The board forced these people either to have their milk treated

at one of the central chilling depots or go out of existence. That, of course, put up the price to consumers.

One of these plants cost £1,400 and had to be dismantled and sold piecemeal because it did not have a license from the Milk Board. One of the other plants was scrapped and another was shifted to the country. These people complained to me and I saw the Milk Board on their behalf. I showed Mr. Stannard, and the board, a certificate from the Chief Health Inspector of the Perth City Council—then Mr. Higgs. This certificate stated that the plants were operating in accordance with all the requirements of the health authorities. The milk from those chilling plants was tested and found to be wholesome in every way. These people, and others all over the metropolitan area, are now compelled to have their milk treated at the large reception depots. Naturally they have to pay for that treatment and I contend that that has increased the price of milk to consumers.

Mr. W. Hegney: And it tends to create a monopoly.

Mr. READ: Yes, it is a monopoly and perhaps there could be an inquiry into that aspect. I am not saying that an inquiry would prove to us that it is harmful or detrimental to send milk to the bigger treatment plants, but it would tell us whether we have achieved anything by putting up the price of milk and allowing this different method of processing and distribution to be instituted. An inquiry would also tell us whether we are receiving a safer supply of milk than we had three or four years ago.

The incidence of milk-produced diseases was no worse a few years ago than it is today. In fact the incidence is about the same, so in that sense we have not advanced. Had those inspectors, and the people interested in the production of germ-free milk, taken the trouble to see that the supply was absolutely pure, then I do not think we would need to have these larger depots for treatment and supply. Herds were in process of being treated as a precautionary measure against tuberculosis, which was one method adopted to eliminate that dread disease. Each local governing body is also a health board and has its inspectors. The necessity was imposed upon them to carry out inspections and test the milk supplied, not only at the source but at points of delivery. If that had been done more consistently, I do not think we would have been troubled with the development of these larger treatment plants.

Then again, there has been set up a local bodies' analytical committee which is supported by 41 road boards and 21 municipalities. The most northern of those bodies is at Carnarvon and others are as far afield as Wiluna and Norseman. The set-up is that those local governing bodies club

together in the appointment of a very competent analyst who carries out his duties in the city. As the result, very large numbers of samples are tested. Samples are sent down by those local governing bodies and the price for the milk test is about 3s. 6½d. Almost all the boards contribute samples annually for testing.

The Perth City Council is the largest contributor and up to the end of the last financial year had forwarded 901 samples of milk for testing. The smallest number of samples came from Harvey, which forwarded seven. In fact, Harvey has been the only centre where the local governing body forwarded no samples for a long time, despite all efforts that were made to encourage it to do so. Whether the people there considered their milk supply was superior to all others and did not need testing, or whether the members of the local health board were milk producers, we had no means of finding out.

Last year those 62 local governing bodies contributed samples to the analytical committee for testing, except that for the first time none was sent from Bassendean. Under this set-up one analyst working full-time is quite able to carry out the analysis of samples sent from all these local authorities.

Mr. Manning: What test is applied to the milk for purity?

Mr. READ: Every test required is carried out in the laboratory in Perth, and that has been done for all the local authorities except Harvey.

Mr. Styants: That sounds sinister.

Mr. READ: If the local governing authorities, through their health boards, had done their job thoroughly and sent their health inspectors around to take samples regularly, there would be no trouble about the milk being distributed in anything but the best condition.

Mr. Manning: Would not the milk inspectors do that at Harvey?

Mr. READ: If an inquiry were set up regarding the production and distribution of milk, it might be found that the best method of control is that which obtains now, or that it could be improved upon. Suggestions could be made for the improvement of the purity of the milk supply. It might also be ascertained how we could obtain a greater milk supply. As a matter of fact, I believe that last year less milk was produced in Western Australia than at any time during the previous seven years.

Mr. Manning: I tried to tell you why.

Mr. Hoar: But you did not have the complete answer.

Mr. READ: When we discussed a Bill to amend the Milk Act some years ago, I suggested an amendment to the effect that the tenure of office of the chairman of the

board which was proposed to be five years, should be reduced to three years, but I was not successful. I had in mind that at the end of the three-year term, we would be able to review the situation in the light of what had transpired during the previous period.

I consider it my duty to support the motion for an inquiry into the ramifications of the milk supply. Some members do not appear to favour such a move, yet when they were asked to agree to an inquiry into the meat supply, members appeared almost unanimously in favour. We brought a man here from the Eastern States to report on the situation. We know the price of meat overseas and the price of beef on the open market. We know what a sheep costs in the markets and at auction. Yet we have agreed to an inquiry to ascertain how we can get more and cheaper meat supplies. The Premier knows that the only way we can do that is to spend money in purchasing meat to store it away ready for the people in times of scarcity. An inquiry into the milk position would be well worth while.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [9.37]: The member for Warren is desirous of having a complete investigation into all phases of the milk industry. Although there has been a number of inquiries previously, it cannot be said that our information on the subject is up to date. I believe that much good would be derived from a sensible inquiry into various aspects of the milk industry which have been worrying the State for a long time. It is to be deplored that we are not in the position to put into operation the Commonwealth Government's scheme for the distribution of free milk to school children. There seems to be little prospect of our being able to do that for a long time to come. An inquiry might tell us how we could expedite that project and how we could effect improvements in that direction.

I interjected when the member for Harvey was speaking, asking him if he was aware whether many heifer calves were being slaughtered in this State. I had good reason for asking that question. I believed he was a man with a first-class knowledge of the industry and therefore any information he could give would be useful. He replied that slaughtering was taking place. That is a line for inquiry, to find out to what extent such slaughtering is taking place and if it could be prevented.

Mr. Manning: I could give you information about that.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: In 1946 a very informative article appeared in a newspaper called "The Leader," part of which was as follows:—

Every Sound Heifer Calf Must Be Reared.

Dairying in Victoria Is in Serious Danger.

A grand scale united campaign by the Victorian Department of Agriculture, the Soldier Settlement Commission, the Victorian Dairymen's Association and the Victorian Division of the Australian Society of Dairy Technology, to ensure that every sound heifer calf which is born is reared, is under way in Victoria. It is imperative that the campaign succeeds, for the dairying industry is in jeopardy.

I have yet to learn of any concerted effort being made in this State to deal with that problem which is threatening our dairying industry, just as much as it threatened the dairying industry in Victoria. An inquiry might liven someone up in this direction and suggest what steps ought to be taken to ensure that as far as possible adequate supplies of young stock are available for the dairying industry. Unless we ensure that, we might as well give away completely any idea of being able to implement the scheme for a wide-spread system of free milk distribution to school children, to say nothing of making provision for the extensive needs of the general population. The Minister has nothing to be afraid of. He is not under fire in this matter, nor is Mr. Stannard. I feel that Mr. Stannard would not claim that he is the alpha and omega of everything in connection with the milk industry. He is a very conscientious and efficient officer, but he has not stored up in his brain all the knowledge to be obtained in connection with this matter.

An inquiry by a carefully selected person having a good knowledge of the industry would, in my view, be well worth the money involved. If carried into effect—I feel sure it would effect improvements—this action of the House would be wholly justified. I trust that the motion moved by the member for Warren will be carried and that in due course some competent person, who will carry the confidence of the industry with him, will be appointed to carry out the necessary inquiry.

MR. HEARMAN (Blackwood) [9.45]: The point raised by the member for Melville is one that has been flogged quite a bit. I think the idea that the slaughtering of calves is seriously affecting the present production of milk is one that stems from the impression that the actual number of cows milked is the deciding factor in the quantity of milk produced. I know that is a common trap into which a lot of people fall. Actually, the real point is the number of gallons of milk or pounds of butterfat produced per acre. It is the efficiency of the industry that we are really

concerned about; and merely increasing the actual stocking on farms could result in a reduction of output. If we overstock, we will not get results as good as if we understock. The people who are actually making a living out of the industry are those who can be relied upon to stock adequately. Any suggestion that by forcing them to overstock we are going to improve production is, in my opinion, false. It will not lead to that improved output which a lot of us hope to see.

The slaughter of heifer calves has been taking place ever since I can remember. The industry does not rear all the calves that are born. It is apparent that much depends on the breeds. In respect of some breeds, there is a much greater amount of slaughtering than in respect of others. The idea behind herd selection and improvement is that one breeds and rears progeny from the better cows, and it is the progeny of those that are not so profitable that are not kept. In answer to a question in the House recently, the Minister said that, according to figures supplied by the Government Statistician, the number of calves in the State had not decreased appreciably. The slaughtering of calves has always taken place. The matter was first raised in connection with the supply of meat, and it is now being attached to wholemilk.

I suggest that the thing to be aimed at is efficiency within the industry. There has been quite a lot of talk about bringing new areas into production, and things of that sort. All that is very good, and I must agree with all the suggestions that have been made; but I also suggest that throughout the agricultural areas, and not only so far as dairying is concerned, it is desirable that we should increase the efficiency of the industry and that we should endeavour to increase the yield per acre. I think that work along that line is more likely to produce, shall we say, reasonably rapid results than waiting for new areas to be cleared and new roads and railways to be established, together with all the services that go with such development. It takes a long time to build up new farms; it takes years. I think we might do something towards achieving a lift in the production per acre of existing farms to cope with the situation envisaged by the member for Warren when he moved his motion.

I also subscribe to the idea of the member for Vasse that the dairying industry must be regarded as a whole. In the past, there has been an idea that the wholemilk industry is something separate and on its own. That probably stems from the good old days when all the wholemilk for the metropolitan area was produced from dairies in and around Perth, and there was no connection between wholemilk and butterfat production. But there is a connection. There is, for instance, the question of the price for the product. If the

price for butterfat is more attractive than that for wholemilk, there will be a tendency for producers to swing from wholemilk production to the production of butterfat; and, of course, the opposite can occur. So there is a relationship between the two sides of the industry so far as price is concerned. Furthermore, we have the natural conditions in the West whereby we have a flush period in September, October, November and December, when the production of milk is tremendously in excess of production during the lean period of March, April and May.

The Minister for Lands: Do you think that the advice of our dairy adviser is sought sufficiently in regard to the production of wholemilk?

Mr. HEARMAN: That interjection brings me to a point I was going to deal with. We have this seasonal fluctuation in production, and obviously the way that is to be coped with is on the manufacturing side. We must be able to process the products of the industry through flush periods so that we can store and dispose of them and, if necessary, market them overseas; and at the same time, during the lean period, it will probably take the best endeavours of the industry to provide necessary wholemilk, not only for the metropolitan area but also for a lot of other areas considerably removed from Perth.

That is where the idea of segregating the wholemilk industry comes in. That error has been perpetuated by previous Governments of all political colours, inasmuch as they have introduced wholemilk measures and have constituted a Milk Board. That board is responsible for production, transport, processing and distribution of wholemilk. We also have a Superintendent of Dairying, whose job it is to deal with the dairy industry generally, and particularly on the production side. But he is in no way responsible for the production of wholemilk, which is the responsibility of the Milk Board. It seems to me that there is a certain redundancy, and that we are not making the most use of the advice and assistance that we could get from the Superintendent of Dairying, who is the civil servant appointed to assist the industry. He is a man who has concentrated on the butterfat and manufacturing side of the industry. He is held in high regard by both producers and manufacturers. Yet he has nothing to do with, nor any responsibility for, the production of wholemilk.

I am satisfied that if the Milk Board availed itself of the knowledge, services and ability of the Superintendent of Dairying, it might be able to do considerably more in achieving increased production. I read the report of the Milk Board, both the financial section and the other one, and there is no mention anywhere in it

of any attention being given to or any expenditure made on the production side of the industry. It appears to me that the board's idea is simply to go further south and increase the area from which whole-milk is drawn. That, in time, must have a deleterious effect on other aspects of the industry.

Already one factory at Waroona is having difficulty with supplies, and it will probably have to go further afield. The cost of cartage of butterfat in Western Australia is double that which prevails in any other State and what is allowed in the Commonwealth survey of costs, and it is likely to be still further increased by this encroachment of the Milk Board into what might be termed the butterfat areas. The production side, and also the manufacturing side, could very well come under one control; and I think that the Superintendent of Dairying, or the Dairying Branch of the Department of Agriculture, should be responsible. That is one of the reasons for my opposing this motion for a Royal Commission, because there still continues the idea of regarding the wholemilk industry as a completely separate industry. It is not. It is part of the dairying industry. Wholemilk is one of the products of the dairy producer and the whole industry should be regarded as one for the purpose of production, manufacturing or processing.

There are many disabilities under which the industry has to work, shortage of labour being one. It is only natural that, in a period of full employment, an industry which is expected to work a 56-hour week, and whose costs are based on a 56-hour week, will not attract adequate labour. That basis was set by a former Federal Minister for Agriculture, Mr. Scully, who disregarded the advice tendered to him by members of the Australian Dairy Council. He decided that the price the council recommended, and the other conditions it suggested, were not satisfactory, and he imposed his own. The 56-hour week was one of them. It must be obvious to members on both sides of the House that when we have a period of full employment, an industry which is expected to work 56 hours a week and whose costs are based on a 56-hour week, must go short of labour. I do not see how that can be helped. It is one of the factors that people who advocate full employment should realise: That those industries that have certain peculiarities in respect of the number of hours worked and continuity of work need to be given special consideration; and if they are to attract sufficient labour to them, it is clear that they must be able to pay enhanced wages and provide other conditions which will enable them to be fully manned.

Mr. Oliver: It is not a popular industry.

Mr. HEARMAN: It is not a popular industry, and we might as well recognise that. It is being carried on largely by

members of families, the women and children assisting. I am prepared to suggest that most of such industries are being manned chiefly by those who are lovers of the soil; and there are not enough of them.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: There are still people anxious to get dairy farms and unable to procure them.

Mr. HEARMAN: There are not enough of them if what the member for Fremantle suggests is correct, and what we want is a lot more. The reason behind the move for a Royal Commission is that we are going to be short of milk. One of the points made by the member for Warren was that so many people are going out of this industry. That is what concerned him, and not the number that are coming in. The real reason, as the member for Boulder has suggested, is that, from a labour point of view, this industry is unattractive; and unless we are prepared to give a price to the producer that will enable him to pay the necessary wages to make the industry attractive from a labour point of view, it will always be undermanned and we are always going to be up against this question of shortage.

There are other means we can use to cope with this labour shortage. Additional mechanisation would be a big help. The agricultural implement industry in Australia has done a very good job in developing implements especially suited to our dairying industry. Unfortunately, the position in the factories is such that they just cannot produce the machinery. They have designs and prototypes. Some of the machines are available, but in some instances they are not working because it is not possible to obtain necessary parts, such as renovators and things of that kind. The bigger and more modern machinery which will lead to an increase in the conservation of hay is not available, and there is a tremendous backlog of orders. Further, industrial stoppages and hold-ups are having deleterious effects on the industry.

Mr. Needham: Is the machinery made in Australia?

Mr. HEARMAN: Yes; practically all the machinery now used is made in Australia specially to suit Australian conditions. I deal with H. V. Mackay, Massey Harris, and I know how they stand with regard to machinery because, when they have anything to sell, they ask me to buy it. I was inquiring recently about side delivery rakes, power mowers and pick-up balers. The pick-up baler is the answer to the dairyman's prayer in the conservation of fodder, but there is a tremendous lag in supplying orders. The shipping situation is so bad that they are bringing machinery by rail at a cost of an extra £20 for each machine. The cost is pretty huge. Just recently, a ship came into Fremantle Harbour, and got alongside the North Wharf on the 2nd October. There were two pick-up balers, and 20 side delivery

rakes in the hold. They got the pick-up balers off early because they were deck cargo, but they could not get the necessary parts out of the hold. Finally, the side delivery rakes were obtained on the 19th October. That means that it took 17 days to unload them. Then the machinery had to be assembled and got into the field.

One contractor who had ordered a pick-up baler and side-delivery rake and had booked up considerable orders was in the position that he had some pad-docks actually cut with his mower, and yet his rake and pick-up baler were still not off the ship. That sort of thing will not increase the conservation of fodder and, if we are to increase production per acre, we must extend the conservation of fodder. A pick-up baler, if properly worked, will bale between 1,500 and 2,000 tons of hay a year. Taking the figure at 1,600 tons, and the recommendations of the Dairy Branch for the conservation of fodder at 4 tons per cow, the baler would bale enough in one season for 400 cows, and so industrial hold-ups have an effect on the industry, particularly if they occur at a time when the machines are required for use. If a machine arrives a month late it might just as well be 10 months late, because it cannot be used.

Those are some of the problems with which the dairy farmer is confronted. If I felt that a Royal Commission could do anything to overcome them and ensure that a price that would attract labour to the industry would be paid, I would support the motion, but I do not think the member for Warren or any other member of this House really believes that a Royal Commission could solve those problems. I do not know the distribution side as well as other members might, but yesterday, in company with the member for Warren, I inspected Browne's factory. I was agreeably impressed by what I saw and I think that when replying to the debate the member for Warren may have something to say along those lines. He was sufficiently interested in making the inspection with me to forgo attendance at a party meeting. Had he inspected Browne's plant before moving his motion he might not have said some of the things that he did say.

I notice that the member for Victoria Park is listening. I would point out that experience on the processing side has shown that it is always more economical and efficient when big quantities are being handled. That is so in all classes of manufacture; the greater the volume the cheaper the cost per unit, and that brings to mind the danger of small treatment plants. The bigger plants are able to freeze their milk if necessary and rail it to centres such as Kalgoorlie, whereas the smaller operators with brine cooling plants cannot do that. The bigger plants can go in for pasteurising and bottling, and in

other parts of the world it has been proved that if one is to hold milk any length of time it must be pasteurised. One answer to the distribution problem and the labour bottleneck may be found in fewer deliveries per week, which in turn means pasteurisation and sealed bottles.

The old billycan on the doorstep is out of date. If we are to pasteurise and seal the milk in bottles it will cost more, but it is a more suitable product and one that is likely to be able to be produced in quantity, because if we can get over the labour bottleneck in regard to distribution it will be a great thing for the retailers.

Mr. Needham: Of course, it would cost more.

Mr. HEARMAN: Yes, if we are to have pasteurised milk we must pay for it and the cheapest way to produce it is by means of big plants run efficiently. I cannot give figures for the cost of bottling wholemilk and so on, but I think the member for Warren got them yesterday from Browne's. Before the war, in Western Australia we were turning out 4,500 tons of butter in 19 factories and the cost was 6d. per lb., whereas in New Zealand it was 2d. per lb. The same argument applies on the manufacturing side here as in other industries. I have yet to be convinced that a Royal Commission could supply the answers to the problems I have enumerated.

THE PREMIER (Hon. D. R. McLarty—Murray) [10.51]: As the member for Melbourne said, milk has been the subject of discussion in this House on many occasions. When I first came into Parliament it was one of the most hotly debated questions, and the Milk Board was created because the wholemilk industry was then in a very depressed state. All our primary industries were in that condition in those days but I do not think that any of them was in a worse state than the milk industry. Because of the frequent debates that have taken place in this House on the subject of milk, most members probably have a more intimate knowledge of milk than of many other primary products. Tonight the Minister for Lands gave notice of a Bill to amend the Milk Act and I think this will be the ninth amendment to that legislation. The continuous raising of such questions in Parliament has an unsettling effect on the industry and I, together with other members, would like to see it settle down.

Mr. May: Do not all these amendments prove that there is need for inquiry?

The PREMIER: No. I know there has been some criticism of the chairman of the Milk Board but, whoever was appointed chairman of that board would, I am sure, find it impossible to escape criticism. I have been closely associated with the industry and know it fairly well. I am familiar with the difficulties with which it is confronted.

Section 26 of the Act deals with the powers and functions of the board, which is charged with 16 different duties. Those provisions are lettered (a) to (p) and some of them are lengthy and comprehensive. I will not read them to the House as members already have some knowledge of them, but to begin with the board is charged with the regulation and organisation of the production of milk in dairying areas and the supply and sale of milk by dairymen and milk vendors. After referring to transport and other matters, the legislation deals with the measures and means which in the opinion of the board are requisite and necessary to provide a regular supply of fresh, clean and wholesome milk to consumers, and to prevent the supply to consumers of milk which is not or which is believed not to be fresh, clean and wholesome or which is adulterated.

The member for Victoria Park was concerned about the health aspect but as you, Sir, know from your long experience in this House, the health side of the milk question has been discussed here at great length on many occasions and, because of the concern that has been shown in that regard, the Milk Board has been vested with considerable powers. From personal knowledge I know that the board is most energetic in seeing that the health provisions are implemented in dairies, depots and elsewhere. I therefore do not think the hon. member has anything to fear on the health question.

Mr. Brady: How many of the milkmen are checked up on, in the early hours of the morning?

The PREMIER: The milk is sampled when it comes to the depot and, as bacteria multiply very rapidly in milk, if milk is dirty an examination quickly detects the dirt and the milk is dealt with. Dairy inspectors are constantly checking dairy premises. The dairyman is under rigid supervision in every direction. The member for Melville raised a point that is giving us all concern when he mentioned the slaughter of dairy heifers—young calves—for this will in the future have a bad effect on the wholemilk supply and on the meat supply.

We know this slaughtering is going on but it is difficult to suppress it or to know how to deal with these very young calves. I have made inquiries and have discussed the matter with farmers on many occasions, suggesting that they could purchase the calves and rear them, but of course the handling of a young calf presents some difficulties. I suggest to the Select Committee that is at present inquiring into the meat industry, that it might give consideration to this question of the slaughtering of heifer calves and to ways and means that might be devised to prevent it. I think that would come within the scope of the inquiry.

Mr. Hearman: Rear more calves and raise fewer pigs.

The PREMIER: I think the main reason for the member for Warren having moved his motion was the problem that is concerning all members. There is a shortage of milk, and the shortages of a number of our primary products are worrying the Government. I have just mentioned meat and that has been worry enough and still is a worry. Then we have shortages in other directions. Soon members will have an opportunity of discussing the proposed amendments to the Milk Act and I would suggest that the hon. member withdraw his motion and let the Milk Board, as it will be constituted under these proposed amendments, make investigation and report to the Minister. I believe that it would be best to do that. The board's members, being practical men, have a thorough knowledge of the industry and, after all is said and done, it is their duty not only to look after the present milk supply but also to ensure that adequate supply is maintained.

Several members have given reasons why there is a decline in dairy production generally and I do not propose to reiterate what has already been said. But, of course, two reasons put forward are very real ones. One is the higher prices that farmers can get for meat and another is the higher prices obtaining for wool. That is a fact, and, of course, the reason submitted by the member for Blackwood is another. The Government, however, is making every possible effort to increase production, and the previous Government was adopting the same policy to a great extent.

There is to be an extension of the irrigation areas. Irrigation in Western Australia has proved itself. Sometimes we hear talk about the cost of it, but taking the long view I do not think there is any doubt that irrigation has proved itself and the Government has no hesitation in continuing with the extension of irrigated areas. Further, quite a number of soldier settlers are being placed on dairy farms, and before very long they will play an ever-increasing part in raising the production of dairy products. We have the South-West Zone Development Committee on dairy products which makes recommendations as to increased production as the member for Warren well knows. It is advising the Government as to ways and means of stepping up production in the South-West and it has put forward some practical suggestions.

Here again, I submit to the member for Warren that if he knows of anyone who can make suggestions through this zone committee to the Government as to how we can increase production, that would be an extremely good avenue to work through. I met members of this zone committee when they were in Perth and they have put certain propositions to me as regards

the South-West's development, some of which I hope will be carried out and subsequently play an important part towards increasing production in that area. So, having in mind that the Milk Board is already charged with this responsibility and also that we have the South-West Zone Development Committee, of which the Superintendent of Dairying is the chairman, carrying out these investigations, I am unable to see how a Select Committee or a Royal Commission is going to give us any further information other than that which these two bodies can already provide for us.

If the hon. member would agree to withdraw this motion, or if the House will agree to its defeat, I will undertake to ask the Milk Board to make investigations into milk shortages and to report to the Minister as to ways and means of how production can be stepped up. In other directions I think the board is doing a good job. I have referred to health and transport. They are two of the main factors with which the board deals. I think they are satisfactory and in all the circumstances I do not regard the proposed Royal Commission as necessary. The hon. member has ventilated his ideas on this matter to the House and they can be taken into consideration by the newly-constituted board. I suggest, therefore, that the House should not agree to the motion.

MR. HOAR (Warren—in reply) [10.21]: The Premier has put forward a plausible suggestion to overcome a difficult situation, namely, that I withdraw the motion in order that he might allow the Milk Board to make an investigation into all those things which I and others have said about the wholemilk industry, and that a report be made by the board. The suggestion is particularly plausible because the Government has already done that. The Minister read a statement in reply to this motion. When I made the speech to introduce it I knew for sure—as sure as I possibly could be—that its terms must have reached the hands of the chairman of the Milk Board who, in turn, investigated the matter and made his report to the Minister. The Minister's reply to my speech was based on Mr. Stannard's investigations.

The Premier: Your Government showed confidence in him by appointing him and re-appointing him.

Mr. HOAR: That may be so, but at the moment I am dealing with the Premier's suggestion that I withdraw this motion, a suggestion that is not very strong and definitely does not impress me at all.

The Premier: You are hard to impress.

Mr. HOAR: It is far better to face the facts and I would rather see the motion defeated on the basis of the debate on it by members on both sides of the House than withdraw it, and, by a sort of back-door method, destroy the opposition to it.

So, I do not intend to withdraw the motion but I thank members of the various parties who have interested themselves on this subject to the extent of speaking on it.

The first thing that I ought to do is to disabuse the mind of the Minister for Lands once and for all, and completely, so far as the origin of this motion is concerned. During the course of his speech he made many slighting remarks about a certain gentleman who, on one occasion, he called Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He also suggested that I was taking my directions and orders from a man living in St. George's-terrace, who is in charge of the retail trade. I want to tell the House most clearly that the Minister did not know what he was talking about. This motion was moved as a result of complaints made by the State Executive of the Labour Party which, in turn, wrote a letter asking the Parliamentary Labour Party to give consideration to it and, if it thought necessary, to move a suitable motion.

That is the origin of this motion and I have the original letter with me. It is getting rather late and I do not intend to read any portion of it, but I ask the House to take my assurance that what I have said is correct. It is an absolute insult for the Minister to have dealt with this part of the business in the way he did. His remarks affect Mr. Crooks who is the secretary of the Whole Milk Producers' Association.

Mr. Manning: Secretary of the Retailers' Association.

Mr. HOAR: Not at any time did Mr. Crooks come into this picture, nor did he approach me. I approached him and that is the only time we discussed the matter. I required information concerning two matters and I rang Mr. Crooks about them. I consider the Minister's statements, on that aspect, contemptible and they call for an apology to Mr. Crooks. The Minister said that my criticism of the chairman of the board was based on the strong stand he took during the milk strike. He said that one member of the board had led or assisted in the strike and had gone into dairies and tipped milk on to the ground. That was not the reason for my criticism of the board or its chairman, but I should imagine that that was the reason why the chairman desired to destroy producer representation on the board.

Mr. Manning: Careful!

The Minister for Lands: You are very hard on the chairman.

Mr. HOAR: I should imagine that that was the reason why he brought his influence to bear, namely, to bring about that state of affairs. If a board is appointed to do a certain job, and one member of it takes action of that kind—I would not approve of that action any more than would Mr. Stannard—it is not a reason for destroying producer representation.

The Premier: We will do something about that.

Mr. HOAR: I know the Minister is bringing down a Bill; it may even include power to restore producer representation, but there is no guarantee of that. It was a big mistake, from the point of view of producers of this State, when Mr. Stannard and those associated with him, brought pressure to bear on the Government to take away producer representation on the board.

The Premier: Did Mr. Stannard bring pressure to bear? I do not think you can substantiate that.

Mr. HOAR: His recommendation was taken into serious consideration by the Minister.

The Minister for Lands: What was his recommendation?

Mr. HOAR: I should imagine that his recommendation was that producer representation on the board was not acceptable to him as a result of his experience.

Mr. Manning: That is a sweeping statement.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: If that was not Mr. Stannard's idea, whose was it? The Government's.

Mr. HOAR: My criticism was very slight in comparison with the real problem that faces the industry today. I spoke for about a minute and a half on the chairman of the board and did not accuse him of anything when I did speak. All I said was that if an inquiry was held there were those who were willing to bear witness that the board is a dictatorship dominated by its chairman. That is the only remark I made about him and yet it took the Minister 30 minutes, out of a total 40, to reply and defend the chairman of the board.

The Premier: Which section of the industry is asking for the inquiry?

Mr. HOAR: My remarks must have had some substance because, as soon as it became generally known that there was a possibility of an inquiry, I received a request that if it did eventuate, and producers were called before it, the evidence should be held in camera. The reason is that these people fear victimisation and the pinpricking activities that have been a feature of this industry in the past. Such requests have come to me and I have had several stating that the whole thing should be made public. So, there must be some substance in these complaints. Yet, we have the Minister telling us that this is a lot of rot and that an inquiry is not necessary. I have letters from people in the district of the member for Harvey. He might be interested in those.

Mr. Manning: I would be interested in the names of the persons.

Mr. HOAR: They complain bitterly about the activities of the board and its general set-up. People do not say these things for fun. We must accept them as

responsible citizens in the same way as I expect members to treat this matter on its merits.

Mr. Manning: You must accept the fact that many of them have said to me that they consider a Royal Commission unwarranted.

Mr. HOAR: I do not doubt that. We always find some people sitting on both sides of the fence and some people trying to sit on it. That will always be the case. There is no question about that at all. The member for Blackwood gave us a very interesting discourse on dairying, but he did not touch on the wholemilk position, the subject of this proposed inquiry. If that is the argument of the hon. member and the reason for voting against this motion, it is not very sound. We should deal with this subject on a wholemilk basis. It is no use members stating that the wholemilk industry is not separate from the butterfat industry; it is.

Mr. Hearman: It should not be.

Mr. HOAR: I agree. The only reason the member for Blackwood gave for voting against the motion is because it does nothing to bring the two sections of the industry together.

Mr. Hearman: That is not fair. I said that if the Royal Commission provided the answer, I would support it.

Mr. HOAR: That is an acknowledged difficulty in the industry. I appreciate it as much as anyone. There are problems associated with wholemilk production which the hon. member never touched on at all. This question is more important to men who specifically deal with wholemilk than is the expansion of the butterfat industry generally which is a very wide subject. I have no intention of going through every item each member mentioned. If I did so, we would be here until midnight. But the matters to which I refer were raised by various speakers, this one in particular. The Minister said that the board has endeavoured to deal fairly with producers on a price basis determined by Mr. Stannard and the Royal Commission, and a price has been made on that basis, taking into consideration the provisions of the Act.

Mr. Stannard has never been interested in the provisions of the Act so far as the assessing of prices for wholemilk is concerned. Where we are lacking is in the fact that we have not the same price set-up as have other States in the Commonwealth. In all other States, the basis of price calculation is obtained from a very careful survey and the price is the cost of production plus a margin. This board has never favoured that basis.

Mr. Manning: Have you studied the report of the Royal Commission?

Mr. HOAR: I have here a copy of the instructions laid down in the Act itself as to what should be the basis of price fixation in this State.

Mr. Manning: It states in the Royal Commission's report how the price to producers is assessed.

Mr. HOAR: This is what it says in the Act, and this has never been followed. In our Act, calculation is based on butterfat content and value; on bacterial tests; on added value for services incidental to the production of milk; and, if necessary, a premium in periods of scarcity, and surplus milk shall be fixed at selling butterfat rates. This method has never been adopted for calculation by the Milk Board of Western Australia.

Mr. Hearman: Can you say how the prices of butterfat and wholemilk compare?

Mr. HOAR: I know that this has not been accepted and worked on in the same way that it has in other States, and it has been responsible to a great extent for consumers becoming dissatisfied.

Mr. Hearman: How do the prices compare for butterfat and wholemilk?

Mr. HOAR: I cannot give the figure to a penny, but it is somewhere about 5s. per lb. on a butterfat basis. In the Eastern States, they have a costs survey which determines the costs of production, and to that they add a margin. In other countries, such as England, for instance—and I think the member for Harvey mentioned the dearth of wholemilk at certain times of the year—they get more per gallon in the dry period than they do in the flush period. That is another aspect for the inquiry to determine. It is no use the Premier saying, "Leave these matters to the Milk Board," because the chairman himself was appointed a Royal Commissioner, and no-one is going to tell me that the chairman will go against his own findings.

The Premier: You are more worried about the production side.

Mr. HOAR: I am worried about a good many things, and the production side is important. The system at present in Western Australia is more unfair than in any other State in the Commonwealth and is responsible for the lack of interest generally in this industry. The member for Harvey quoted the 40-hour week. I am not afraid of discussing that, but in the Eastern States where wholemilk production has increased whilst ours has been on the downgrade, they also have the 40-hour week. They have the same working conditions as we do, and yet they have been able to present a standard of pricing for producers that encourages them to keep away from wool or meat, and to carry on with wholemilk production.

Mr. Manning: You want to put up the price of milk?

Mr. HOAR: I want an inquiry into all the phases of the wholemilk industry. I say the Government has already put up the price of milk.

The Premier: That is the job of the board.

Mr. HOAR: The board ignores its own Act and has a system of guessing and stabbing in the dark as to what the producer should get for his milk.

Mr. Manning: This question is under review at the present time. The board is carrying out a survey now.

Mr. HOAR: What sort of survey is the board carrying out at the present moment? The Minister said there is no general exodus at all from the industry, and that men actually want to go into the industry, and not to leave it. While I admit that there are a few going into the industry, the way it is working in this State is that if the industry gets a dozen this week, it loses ten men next week. There is no continuity or stability. Men are leaving for a variety of reasons. They might go into other forms of production which are more acceptable and desirable. There are too many leaving the industry today as a result of being dissatisfied with it. One of the constituents of the member for Harvey refers to the price of milk quotas, and says that about 18 months ago he was paying £10 a gallon for his quota, and now a quota can be bought for £3. He wants to know what is happening in the meantime to cause this reduction.

Mr. Manning: If that man wrote to the Milk Board he would be told.

Mr. HOAR: But the Milk Board does nothing at all to alter these conditions. It is no use the member for Harvey telling us that they leave the industry for this, that or the other reason. I know differently. Since I moved the motion, I have received quite a lot of information from various districts and not of any Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde sort either. The information was conveyed to me by people whom I know to be reputable citizens, and I say definitely that there is a demand for an inquiry into the industry because there is no plan. When the conditions drive men out of an industry, notwithstanding that a few more might be encouraged to enter it, wherever we have this constant coming in and going out, there must be something radically wrong with the industry. When producers of wholemilk leave the industry, they create a difficult problem for the Milk Board.

Sometime ago I asked questions of the Minister in order to ascertain how much milk left the metropolitan area by rail for country districts in the years 1946 and 1950. Unfortunately, the Minister could supply figures only for 1950, which was probably just as well from his point of view. Had I been able to obtain the figures for 1946—and they ought to be available in the Railway Department—I think they would have shown that between 1946 and 1950, a tremendous increase has occurred

in the quantity of milk railed from the metropolitan area to the country to supply districts that used to provide for themselves.

There is no over-all State plan. That is what we lack. It is of no use saying that the Milk Board is responsible. What we require is something along the lines suggested by the member for Wembley Beaches. We want a competent man with a knowledge of all phases of the industry from one of the other States that has been successful in setting up a system.

The Premier: We do not want anyone from the other States.

Mr. HOAR: I contend that we do. If we cannot do other than lag behind the other States, it stands to reason that they must have something that we have not.

The Premier: We have local men who know more about the industry here than imported men would know.

Mr. HOAR: I should like to see a comparison made between the conditions here and those in the other States.

Mr. Manning: There can be no comparison of that sort.

Mr. HOAR: I want to know from the administrative point of view how the board operates, what it covers and the particulars of costs. This can be done. When those particulars were obtained, we should follow up by holding a convention, as the member for Wembley Beaches suggested, consisting of officers of the Department of Agriculture, the Health Department and the Milk Board as well as representatives of the producers and all others associated with the production and distribution of whole milk in order to evolve a plan based on the report of the Royal Commission. That is what the State needs, and it cannot be obtained by appointing the chairman of the board as a Royal Commission.

The Premier: The board can get all that information. That is the purpose for which it was constituted.

Mr. HOAR: As to the proposed free milk scheme, this is a very ticklish problem, particularly as to whether milk can be produced at the right time to ensure a continuity of supplies for an ever-increasing population. I consider that nothing short of a thorough inquiry by some body other than the board would lead to the obtaining of reasonable and reliable information. Last summer milk was rationed, and the expectation is that it will be in even shorter supply during the impending summer. If this means that, with the introduction of the proposed free milk scheme, greater restrictions must be imposed upon general consumers, I suggest that the whole purpose of the scheme will be defeated.

There is every indication that the free milk scheme may be thrust upon us before proper consideration has been given to the many difficulties that we know exist.

Owing to our climate, Western Australia is the most backward State of the Commonwealth in the matter of the summer production of milk, and no account is taken in the activities of the Milk Board of the high production costs in the summer months, when some producers' costs are known to be even greater than their returns. This being so, members should pay due regard to my motion, especially if we are going to have a free milk scheme thrust upon us, irrespective of whether it is good for us or not. We do not know whether the State can stand it; we do not know what the impact will be on our rapidly increasing population; in fact we know very little about its probable effects. The Milk Board cannot tell us anything about it, and only by having an independent inquiry can we ascertain what is in store.

The Premier: If we do have the free milk scheme, the Commonwealth can pay for it.

Mr. HOAR: But what about the producers who have to supply the milk? That is the point which is causing me concern.

Mr. Manning: Would not such a scheme give a great filip to the industry? It would provide a good market.

Mr. HOAR: Certainly it would. Regarding the cost of milk to the public, the Minister stated that I did not appreciate the great difficulties associated with the treatment and distribution of milk in these days of labour shortages. I tell him that I definitely recognise those difficulties, but similar difficulties exist in the other States. Therefore we have to determine whether we are shaping up to the problem as is being done in the other States. These difficulties, at any rate, do not prevent the other States from turning out a cheaper finished product to the consumer than we do here.

This is another reason why an inquiry should be made. Why are the margins paid in Western Australia greater than those in the other States? Does the Minister know that the chilling, pasteurising and bottling in one pint bottles ranges from 4½d. to 5½d. per gallon in Victoria, an average of 4½d. per gallon, whereas in this State bottling and chilling in one pint bottles costs 9½d., a difference of 4½d. more in Western Australia per gallon for bottled milk and 3½d. per gallon more for bulk milk as compared with Victoria?

Nobody can tell me that the fact that we have such heavy capitalisation in our treatment plants is not responsible for that cost. I am certain that it is. I inspected Browne's treatment plant, as the member for Blackwood said, and was greatly impressed with all I saw, but the hon. member was quite wrong in saying that had I paid the visit before moving the motion, I would have spoken differently. I did not say anything at all about Browne's.

Mr. Manning: You did say that Browne's were the idol of Mr. Stannard's eye.

Mr. HOAR: My criticism was levelled at the board which, by the policy of monopoly which it has adopted, has caused Browne's to invest so much money in the treatment plants that the firm had to be paid a greater margin than before. As a result, other depots came into the picture on account of the extra money obtainable—depots that had not increased their capital costs. The smaller depots were getting the same margin as Browne's and, as a result of the margins allowed to Browne's in respect of bottled milk, the cost to consumers in the metropolitan area was far greater than if Browne's had never been built.

Mr. Manning: I understand there are other treatment plants with a greater capital expenditure than Browne's.

Mr. HOAR: Then that argument applies to them too. I am talking about the policy which is creating a monopoly in respect of treatment plants in the metropolitan area and which has definitely forced up the price of milk to the consumers. I am not blaming Browne's.

Mr. Manning: You did before.

Mr. HOAR: I did not. Let the hon. member read my speech and he will see that I did nothing of the kind. I blamed the Milk Board for permitting it. Where they are paid 5½d. margin for bulk milk treatment, the same work is done at country depots for 2½d.; so it is no good telling me that people in the metropolitan area do not pay any more because of the over-capitalisation of these places. They must.

Mr. Manning: They do not.

Mr. HOAR: They have to recover it through the price. They are not going to run at a loss. There are a number of other matters I have not dealt with; but nobody, except one or two members, seems to be very much interested. Judging from the remarks of the Minister and other members who have opposed the motion, the main points in the speech I made in support of it have not been dealt with adequately at all. I do not believe anybody has raised a serious argument against my contention that there is no proper planning. All that has been said is that it is the responsibility of the Milk Board. That is no argument at all.

The Premier: Planning in regard to what?

Mr. HOAR: It is no argument in regard to a solution to tell the House that it is the responsibility of the Milk Board, because we have known that all along. We want somebody to come over and tell us what to do.

Mr. Manning: We want more people to milk cows.

Mr. HOAR: Yes; but what we need also in order to achieve that end is to make conditions sufficiently attractive to induce producers to produce milk. They are getting them in the Eastern States. We should find out why we are not getting them here. We can do that only by means of an inquiry, and not an inquiry by the Milk Board. Surely we are not going to ask the board to sit in judgment on itself! There is no firm basis used for the cost calculations so far as the producers are concerned, and I challenge anyone to prove that I am wrong in that assertion. The high cost of recoupment permitted to metropolitan depots, compared with that in the other States, shows that the monopoly of the board has brought about high prices to the consumers. There has been no real argument against or rebuttal of the case I have presented for the appointment of a Royal Commission. I believe that the board would operate a good deal better than at present if we could only have producer representation again. When that was done away with it was the beginning of the end of the Milk Board.

The Premier: If that is one of your chief complaints, we will do something about it.

Mr. HOAR: The Premier can make it one of the chief complaints if he likes. It is the one that I made last. There are many more points that are of greater importance than that. I have dealt with them to the best of my ability, and I hope that the House will approve of the motion.

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

Ayes	23
Noes	20

Majority for 3

Ayes.

Mr. Brady	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Coverley	Mr. Panton
Mr. Fox	Mr. Read
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Styants
Mr. May	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Nimmo	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Abbott	Mr. Mann
Mr. Ackland	Mr. Manning
Mr. Brand	Mr. McLarty
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Doney	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Wild
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Yates

Question thus passed; the motion agreed to.

House adjourned at 10.58 p.m.