of the State, from 10s. 6d. per day to 12s. per day.

Hon. G. W. Miles: Have you any estimate of what the increased cost of these amendments will be?

The HONORARY MINISTER: I should imagine it would be impossible to make an accurate estimate, but the increase will be very small. It has been found necessary to increase the payments to the hospitals in order to improve the position of an injured worker, who has now to obtain hospital accommodation at charges greater than those provided for in the Act. I think that this explanation covers the main proposals in the Bill. No doubt there will be matters requiring clarification when the Bill is in Committee, and I shall then be only too pleased to supply any further information desired. I feel sure that I am expressing the view of every member of this Chamber when I say that the Bill will receive fair and just consideration in this Chamber; and I hope that it will be accorded the same support as it received from all parties in another place. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. B. Bolton, debate adjourned.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN TURF CLUB (PROPERTY) PRIVATE.

Second Reading.

HON. H. S. W. PARKER (Metropolitan-Suburban) [6.4] in moving the second reading said: This is a Bill to rectify an anomaly in the law. The Western Australian Turf Club operates under a private Act, and for many years it has held property, including its building at the bottom of Howard-street. Recently the club decided to purchase two racecourses, and the question arose as to the right of the Registrar of Titles to issue a title under the Transfer of Land Act, as it was thought by some people that the Western Australian Turf Club had no authority under its Act to hold land, notwithstanding that past Commissioners of Titles and past Registrars of Titles have issued titles to the club for land which it has purchased not only in Howard-street, but also in other parts of the State. In order to overcome any possibility of error, it was deemed advisable by the solicitors to the club to secures a private Bill, and this is the measure in question. It has been passed by another place, where all the formalities relating to private Bills have been complied with. I commend the Bill to members. All that is sought by the measure is that the chairman of the club may be registered as the proprietor of land which the club has already negotiated to purchase and of any other land which the club may consider it necessary to purchase for the extension of its courses or its business premises I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Chief Secretary, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 6.7 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Thursday, 30th November, 1944.

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

QUESTIONS (5).

COMMISSIONER OF POLICE.

As to Calling Applications for Office.

Mr. TRIAT asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

(1) Does the W.A. Police Force compare favourably with other State Police Forces?

(2) When was the last public application called to fill the position of Commissioner of Police?

(3) Why are applications for Commissioner of Police now called for from persons outside the Police Force?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied:

(1) Sufficient authentic information is not available to enable an effective comparison to be made.

(2) 25th November, 1932.

(3) It is the usual practice when calling for applications.

PERTH TRAMWAYS.

As to Penny Section to James-street.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he consider the advisability of extending the penny section on the tramway system from the corner of Beaufort and Roe-streets to the Public Library and Museum at the corner of Beaufort and James-streets?

The MINISTER replied:

The question of extending this penny section has been represented in the past but alteration is not considered advisable.

DAIRY CATTLE COMPENSATION FUND.

As to Revenue and Claims.

Mr. HOLMAN asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) What amounts of money have been paid into the Dairy Cattle Compensation Fund in the years 1942-43-44, in respect to—

(a) Registration Fees; (b) Sale of the products of destroyed cattle; (c) Penalties recovered under the Act?

(2) How many claims for compensation have been made in the above stated years?

(3) Have any claims been granted in respect to tubercular cattle? If so, how many?

(4) What amount of compensation was paid out in these years?

(5) How many cattle were registered under the Act in 1943?

(6) What is the amount standing to the credit of the fund at present?

(7) What were the principal items of expenditure for the year 1943?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) (a) 1942, £487 8s.; 1943, £488 12s.; 1944 (11 months), £519 2s.; (b) 1942, £27 6s. 1d.; 1943, £28 13s. 5d.; 1944 (11 months), £150 17s. 8d. (c) Nil.

(2) 1942, claims covering 95 cattle; 1943, claims covering 126 cattle; 1944 (11 months), claims covering 129 cattle.

(3) Yes. Approximately 97 per cent. of the total.

(4)—

	Trust A/c.	Treasury Grant.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1942 ..	378 5 6	252 0 6	630 6 0
1943 ..	779 12 5	519 15 1	1,299 7 6
1944* ..	805 10 7	537 0 11	1,342 11 6

* (11 months.)

(5) 4,886.

(6) £60 15s. 5d.

(7) Compensation £779 12s. 5d.

TRADE APPRENTICESHIPS.

As to Control of System.

Mr. McDONALD asked the Minister for Education:

In view of the number of young men and women in the Services, and others not so engaged, who will later wish to enter on or resume trade apprenticeships, does the Government propose to implement the recommendation of the 1938 report of the Royal Commissioner on Youth Employment, that the control of the apprenticeship system should be vested in a central executive, representative of employers and employees, assisted by trade committees drawn from each industry?

The MINISTER replied:

A report was recently received from the Technical Training Post-war Reconstruction Committee which dealt with this and other matters. The Government will give consideration to the Committee's recommendations early in the New Year.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS.

As to Offences, Accidents and Prosecutions.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Police:

(1) Is he aware that the present unsatisfactory breaches of car lighting presents a menace to the majority of motorists?

(2) Is he aware that regulations are being broken nightly by motorists driving (a) unlighted vehicles; (b) vehicles with only one headlight; (c) vehicles with one bright and one dull headlight; (d) and by cyclists riding without either head or tail lights, and others with head, but no tail lighting?

(3) What was the total number of road accidents for the months (a) June; (b)

July; (c) August; (d) September; (e) October?

(4) How many of these occurred between the hours of 6 p.m. and 6 a.m.?

(5) How many prosecutions have been recorded for breaches of lighting regulations during the past five months?

(6) What is the reason for the apparent lenient treatment of motorists contravening vehicle lighting regulations?

The MINISTER FOR THE NORTH-WEST replied:

(1) No.

(2) No.

(3) June, 271; July, 293; August, 296; September, 217; October, 246.

(4) June, 74; July, 81; August, 71; September, 56; October, 51.

(5) 527.

(6) No lenient treatment is meted out to motorists contravening vehicle lighting regulations.

BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Road Closure.

2, Reserves.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands and read a first time.

BILL—COAL MINE WORKERS (PENSIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Report, Etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) ACT AMENDMENT

Report, Etc.

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

BILL—FINANCIAL AGREEMENT (AMENDMENT).

Second Reading.

THE PREMIER [4.37] in moving the second reading said: The object of this Bill is to ratify an agreement dated the 15th November, 1944, entered into between the Commonwealth and the States for the amendment of the Financial Agreement. The amendment is principally designed to clarify certain matters of sinking fund procedure. Under the Financial Agreement, which was entered into between the Commonwealth and the States in December, 1927, and later validated under the provisions of the new Section 105A of the Commonwealth Constitution, the Commonwealth took over all State debts and provision was made for the establishment of a sinking fund for the redemption of those debts. With the exception of specified classes of borrowings, the sinking fund contributions were fixed at 7s. 6d. per cent. per annum on the debts of the States as at the 1st July, 1927, and 10s. per cent. per annum on loans raised for and on behalf of the States subsequent to that date. Of this amount of 10s., the State concerned was required to pay 5s. per cent. per annum and the Commonwealth a similar amount. Of the 7s. 6d., the State pays 5s. and the Commonwealth 2s. 6d.

The principal exception to the sinking fund contribution of 10s. per cent. per annum on loans raised after the 1st July, 1927, related to loans raised to finance State revenue deficits. In the case of such loans the Financial Agreement provides that the Commonwealth shall not be required to make any contribution to the State sinking fund, and the State concerned is required to make a sinking fund contribution at the rate of not less than four per centum per annum for a period sufficient to liquidate the loan, these contributions being deemed to accumulate at the rate of 4½ per centum per annum compound interest. The object of this provision is to deter States from incurring deficits and, should any State experience one, to encourage it to clear it up in a short period. During the depression years from 1929-30 onwards, abnormal deficits were experienced by all State Governments, and the Loan Council arranged, where necessary, to finance those deficits up to and including the year 1934-35 by means of borrowings from the Commonwealth Bank under the security of Commonwealth Treasury bills. The total amount so borrowed was approximately £53,000,000.

The Treasury bills issued as security for these borrowings had a currency of three months only, renewable from time to time, and were taken up by the Commonwealth Bank. It was considered that the Financial Agreement did not specifically provide for sinking fund contributions in respect

of borrowings of this character because they were deemed to be temporary and would have to be funded later, but the Loan Council agreed that some sinking fund provision should be made for such borrowings. Arrangements were made for contributions to be paid on the same basis as in the case of loans raised for purposes other than revenue deficits, namely, a sinking fund of 10s. per cent. per annum, of which the Commonwealth provided 5s. per centum per annum and the States 5s. per centum per annum. Contributions have been paid on this basis to the National Debt Sinking Fund annually right up to the 30th June, 1944.

A question was raised whether this procedure was strictly in accordance with the Financial Agreement and legal advice on the matter was sought. Opinions have now been received—this was prior to the recent Premiers' Conference—from four leading counsel, who agree that the proper contributions payable in respect of these borrowings are contributions by the States concerned and not by the Commonwealth, and at a rate of not less than four per centum per annum, as in the case of ordinary loans raised to meet revenue deficits. In other words, the loans in question should be liquidated by State sinking fund contributions for approximately 17 years, instead of by contributions for 53 years, and that no payment should be made by the Commonwealth. The deficits, totalling £53,000,000—this was an aggregate that was never contemplated at the outset—were, as I have already stated, incurred in abnormal circumstances, and had the sinking fund contributions at the time been paid at the rate of four per centum per annum, they would have involved still further increased deficits and consequent further borrowings to enable the additional sinking fund contributions to be paid.

The circumstances arising out of these transactions were carefully considered by the Loan Council, as the result of which a recommendation was made to the Commonwealth and State Governments, that action be taken to amend the Financial Agreement to validate the sinking fund contributions that have already been made up to the 30th June, 1944, and to establish, as from the 1st July, 1944, a sinking fund contribution at the rate of one per centum per annum, as against the contribution of 10s. per centum hitherto paid by the Commonwealth and the States. The States have undertaken to redeem £7,000,000 of their bills from their cash resources. The National Debt Commission is to apply £3,000,000 during 1944-45 to the redemption of Treasury bills, this being approximately the total sinking fund contributions to date in respect of those Treasury bills. The new sinking fund of one per centum per annum is estimated to liquidate the remainder of the debt, namely, £43,000,000—that is after the £10,000,000 I referred to earlier is paid off—in a period of 39 years from the 1st July, 1944. Of the amount of one per centum per annum, 5s. per centum will be paid by the Commonwealth and 15s. per centum by the States concerned.

Members will possibly appreciate that the Commonwealth Bank has been embarrassed by this huge floating debt together with the necessity to finance the war loans and other expenditure by means of bank credit. Therefore it was anxious to make some permanent arrangement with regard to this matter instead of having, as in the past to redeem the bills every three months and then re-issue them. Hence the arrangement that has been made. The Commonwealth Bank has agreed to convert the Treasury bills, which have always been regarded as a short-term debt, into debentures with a fixed currency of 39 years, and under these proposals the debentures will be redeemed from time to time from the one per centum contributions to which I have referred. These proposals provide a definite arrangement for the redemption of the Treasury bills which were discounted by the Commonwealth Bank to finance the abnormal deficits arising out of the depression, and I feel they are reasonable in all the circumstances. The proposals have been incorporated in the amended Financial Agreement which is now being submitted in this Bill for ratification by this Parliament. The proposals involve a contribution of 5s. per cent. per annum on the part of the Commonwealth towards the States' debts in question. This contribution was also considered reasonable in view of the very serious financial position in which the States found themselves during the depression years, having regard to the difficulties which the States were experiencing in placing their finances on a more stable basis. That is the position on an Australia-wide basis.

The position of this State at present is that we have a debt of £5,975,000 due to the Commonwealth Bank on the security of Treasury bills for deficit finance raised during the depression. At the present time we are paying 1¼ per cent. interest and a sinking fund contribution of one-quarter per cent. I am not exactly sure of the rate attaching to those Treasury bills at the time the finance was raised. The member for Nedlands may perhaps remember that during the depression the Government of which he was a member had to borrow the money, and I think the rate was five per cent. That rate has been successively reduced since then until about 12 months ago it was made 1¼ per cent. and the State paid one-quarter per cent. sinking fund contribution similar to the Commonwealth contribution. Payments by the State on this debt of approximately £6,000,000 amount to £90,000 a year, while the Commonwealth is contributing £15,000 annually; but the Commonwealth has no legal liability in this regard.

If the existing provisions of the Financial Agreement were applied, we should have to find annual sinking fund contribution at the rate of 4 per cent. on these bills; and as the bills were redeemed by the National Debt Commission, we should have to pay interest at 4½ per cent. on the amount redeemed. This would cost the State approximately £315,000 a year, at the start, and gradually rise as the debt was being redeemed, until it was paid off in 17 years. If the National Debt Commission exercised its powers, the State's contribution would be £350,000 per annum. This is the law as it stands today, and it will have to be applied unless the Financial Agreement is amended as outlined in this Bill. The National Debt Commission has to see that the provisions of the Financial Agreement are complied with—the chairman of the Commission is the Chief Justice of the High Court—and the only way in which the States can obtain relief is by amending the agreement.

Under the proposed amended agreement, the cost in the first year will be very little in excess of the present cost, despite the fact that our sinking fund contribution will be trebled—from 5s. per cent. to 15s. per cent. Part of the arrangement under this new agreement is a reduction in the interest rate from 1¼ per cent. to 1 per cent. which the Commonwealth Bank is prepared to make if the agreement is amended; also to the reduction in the total amount of the bills. The State will make a sinking-fund payment, as I said, of ¾ per cent. instead of ¼ per cent., the Commonwealth continuing to make a contribution of ¼ per cent., as it has been doing previously

As I have also said, the total debt on Treasury bills in Australia is to be reduced by £10,000,000. From our own funds we are required to find £250,000 for the redemption of Western Australian Treasury bills, while our share of the £3,000,000 to be found by the National Debt Commission for bill redemptions on account of past contributions to the sinking fund is £335,000. The bills which we shall have to repay under the proposed new arrangement will amount to £5,390,000—a reduction of £585,000 on the amount now owing. The new arrangement will involve the State in a payment of 1 per cent. interest on the reduced debt of £5,390,000, which will amount to £53,900 per annum, and ¾ per cent. sinking fund, which will amount to £40,425, making the total payment this year approximately £94,000, as against the approximate rate of £90,000 which we have been paying. I may say that the proposals in the new agreement represent the minimum contribution towards bill redemptions which the Commonwealth Bank Board was prepared to accept, and this acceptance was obtained only after considerable negotiations between the Commonwealth Treasurer and the Bank Board. Very strong pressure was put on the Commonwealth Government and the Loan Council to obtain a more satisfactory arrangement from the Commonwealth Bank, but it was felt that the proposed arrangement was fair and reasonable in the circumstances. I may add that protracted negotiations took place between one Loan Council meeting and another, until finally this arrangement was arrived at. Otherwise there would have been a difference of £150,000 to this State, and the debt would have been wiped off in about 18 years instead of 30 years, and of course the addition to the State's expenditure would have been tremendous. I am satisfied that the amended agreement is a reasonable solution of a difficult problem and I am sure it will commend itself to members.

I may mention that the Commonwealth is under no obligation to pay sinking fund at

all, but in the extraordinary circumstances of the times the Government is prepared to go on paying the contribution until the debt is liquidated. Provision is also made in the amending Financial Agreement, which Parliament is being asked in this Bill to approve, that the sinking fund contributions prescribed by the Financial Agreement shall be calculated on the basis of the mint par of exchange prevailing on the 1st July, 1927; that is to say, the date from which the original Financial Agreement took effect.

When the Financial Agreement was entered into in 1927, Australian and sterling currencies were at par; that is, the Australian pound was the equivalent of the pound sterling. By January, 1931, the pound Australian had depreciated to the basis of £130 Australian = £100 sterling. This was, in December, 1931, varied to the rate of £125 Australian = £100 sterling, and this rate has been maintained unaltered since that date. During that period the exchange rate between London and New York has fluctuated very considerably. These variations in the exchange rate between Australia and London and New York were never contemplated when the Financial Agreement was entered into, and contributions have throughout the whole period, from 1st July, 1927, to date, been made on the basis of the mint par of exchange as existing at the commencement of the agreement. Legal opinion has now been received to the effect that in respect of the new loans raised after the 30th June, 1927, sinking fund contributions in respect of oversea debt should be calculated in the currency of the country in which the loan was raised, or its equivalent in Australian currency converted at the current rate of exchange at the time the payment is due. The contributions actually paid, as I have explained, are not in accordance with this opinion.

Rates of exchange have always been subject to variations, but it was never contemplated that the prescribed annual sinking-fund contributions would vary in accordance with movements in the exchange rates. Moreover, it was no doubt intended, and is obviously desirable, that the annual charges to the State Budgets should be reasonably stable. The prescribed sinking fund contribution of 10s. per cent. per annum for 53 years provided a reasonable margin to cover normal variations in exchange rates and other factors, such as differences in market prices of securities repurchased from sinking fund moneys. The very substantial variation in the exchange rate which had occurred in the period to 1931 was, however, one which could not be foreseen and it was not provided for. The effect of this variation on the incidence of the sinking fund scheme inherent in the original Financial Agreement will depend upon future movements of exchange rates during the period of 53 years which commenced on the 1st July, 1927. It is, of course, not possible at this juncture to make any forecast as to whether the present rates will be maintained or whether there will be any change.

For these reasons the Government supports the amendment in the new agreement which requires contribution to be calculated on the basis of the mint par rate prevailing on the 1st July, 1927. It is proposed that this provision be made retrospective from that date in order to validate past procedure. Members will readily understand what the effect would be if the rate of exchange were continued at 10s. per cent. for the States and the Commonwealth while the exchange still remained £A.125 to £100 sterling. The sinking fund payments would not accumulate sufficiently in order to meet the debt in 57 years. On the other hand, if the exchange went back to par and we had been contributing at par all the time, we would have enough money to meet the debt. For instance, if there was a variation of, say, one-quarter per cent. on £550,000,000, which was the oversea debt of Australia, that would be a tremendous burden, but if the exchange went down one-quarter per cent., it would be a great easement.

The next amendment deals with the Chairman of the Loan Council. The amending Financial Agreement also makes provision for the member representing the Commonwealth to be the Chairman of the Loan Council. Up to the present, the Commonwealth representative has been made Chairman of the Loan Council by resolution of the Council itself. The amending Financial Agreement makes this a statutory provision.

Mr. Marshall: What is his position with regard to votes?

The PREMIER: The Commonwealth has two votes.

Mr. Marshall: Two votes to one for each of the States. That is very nice!

Mr. Mann: You had better amend that.

The PREMIER: Some two or three years ago all the States, except Tasmania, lined up against the Commonwealth and their decision prevailed. We were able to outvote the Commonwealth on some particular matter at the time. Most of the amendments are in accord with existing practice, and it was thought desirable to take advantage of this measure to secure their legality. With regard to loan programmes and method of compilation, the Financial Agreement prescribes that the Commonwealth and each State will from time to time submit to the Loan Council a programme setting forth the amount which each desires to raise by loans for each year. In actual practice it has not been feasible to relate the borrowings during a year to the actual loan expenditure during that year. As I explained last night when introducing the Loan Bill, we are raising sufficient to carry us on through this financial year and six months of the next financial year, when we can introduce another Loan Bill.

Public loan raisings must be made at convenient intervals and it has been customary to borrow sufficient money towards the end of each financial year to meet the requirements during the early part of the new financial year until a further loan raising becomes practicable. This procedure is not strictly in accordance with the Financial Agreement, and it is now proposed in the amending Financial Agreement that the loan programmes to be submitted by the various Governments should be the programme of amounts desired to be raised during each year, and not loans raised for each financial year. This involves no alteration of procedure, but merely brings the provisions of the agreement into line with the present practice. With regard to the loan allocation formula the Financial Agreement authorises the Loan Council to determine each year the amount of money which shall be borrowed to meet the requirements of Governments and to allocate that total amount by unanimous decision of the Governments concerned. If the members of the Loan Council fail to arrive at a unanimous decision on this allocation, the total amount borrowed is required to be allocated in the following manner:—

(a) The Commonwealth to be entitled to one-fifth of the total or such lesser amount as it desires.

(b) The balance to be distributed between the State Government on the basis of the average annual "net loan expenditure" during the preceding five years.

Up to the present, it has always been possible for the Loan Council to arrive at a unanimous decision as to the allocation of the total annual loan borrowings, but in the event of the formula being applied at any time the question would inevitably arise as to the inclusion or non-inclusion in the term "net loan expenditure" of amounts applied from loan borrowings during the preceding five years for the purpose of financng State revenue deficits. This matter was recently considered by the Loan Council, and it was decided to recommend to the various Governments that the Financial Agreement be amended to provide that the term "net loan expenditure" shall not include expenditure for the funding of revenue deficits or to meet revenue deficits. All Governments have agreed to this proposal and it is incorporated in the amending Financial Agreement for which approval is now sought. Further, in the immediate post-war period it is anticipated that relatively large sums will need to be included in the annual programmes of the various Governments for the purpose of financing projects for post-war reconstruction, such as housing, soldier land settlement, etc.

It would be manifestly unfair if the formula were to be applied, and the stronger States, which had raised large sums of money for soldier settlement, should have those sums taken into consideration if the formula were applied in the event of a disagreement over the allocation of loan moneys. Such a disagreement actually occurred at the last Loan Council meeting, and it was then agreed that certain moneys allocated during the year should be excluded from the provisions of the formula. This amendment will make the decision legal. The arrangements that may apply in connection with the implementation of these post-war schemes may possibly be such as to render it inequitable for such borrowings to form the basis of allocation of the programmes of future years. However, transactions have occurred in the

past which the Loan Council has agreed should not be regarded as expenditure for the purpose of the formula for allocation of annual loan raisings.

In accordance with the recommendation of a recent conference of Commonwealth and State Ministers, provision has now been made in the amending Financial Agreement which will enable the Loan Council, by unanimous decision, to declare that any specified amount or class of expenditure shall not be included in "net loan expenditure" for the purpose of the clause in the Financial Agreement, which provides for allocation on the basis of the formula in the event of the Loan Council failing to reach a unanimous agreement. With regard to voluntary contributions to the sinking fund, there is no provision in the Financial Agreement at present to enable any State Government to make a contribution to the sinking fund for the purpose of redemption of State debt in excess of that which is provided for in the agreement. In the past amounts have been received by the National Debt Commission in excess of the prescribed contributions and have been applied to the redemption of debt. Another position has arisen which requires statutory sanction.

Members will no doubt be aware that when converting a loan, a rate can be obtained which is perhaps more favourable than the rate on the loan being converted. If the rate of interest was 4 per cent., it might be possible to raise a new loan at £3 15s. per cent. or £3 17s. 6d. per cent. The loan would be issued at, say, £99 10s. or £99 15s., as the case might be, and that is what the lender would pay for a £100 loan. That arrangement was satisfactory, but it did not suit the National Debt Sinking Fund Commission, because that fund did not receive the full amount of the money and had to make arrangements to find the difference. It was very awkward for the States or the Commonwealth to have to find 5s. on every £100 of a loan of perhaps £15,000,000 or £20,000,000. The arrangement was made that the National Debt Sinking Fund Commission should redeem that discount over the period of the loan. It has continued to do that. It was not statutory, but this Bill allows that to be done—that is that the discount can be made up during the period for which the loan is floated.

The objection to paying money out of the Sinking Fund to redeem the discount is that it is not reducing the debt at all, but is making merely a discount payment on the debt. We made that arrangement in 1937 when these loans were floated at a discount, and this amendment is retrospective to 1937 when that procedure commenced. Those are the amendments that we propose to make by this Bill. At the last Loan Council meeting, after protracted negotiations, all the Premiers agreed, on behalf of their respective States, to make these alterations.

Mr. Watts: What will happen if the House seeks to amend the Bill?

The PREMIER: We cannot amend the schedule, although we can the Bill. If we do not pass the schedule the agreement will go by the board and it will mean to this State, in regard to these deficit payments, that we shall have to pay 4 per cent. instead of 1 per cent., which makes a difference of £175,000 in our payment. In addition, the legal disability which at present exists will continue, although I suppose that in some of the instances I have mentioned the existing practice will continue in regard to what has been done such as the Chairman of the Loan Council being the member representing the Commonwealth Government, and the discounting of these payments for sinking fund, and discounts on loans received. I suppose those practices will continue. We will not suffer any serious disability in that regard. Also the Commonwealth has taken over many of the debts floated oversea on our behalf.

We still have a fairly large proportion of our debt owing oversea. We would have to contribute to the sinking fund at the present rate of exchange so that instead of paying £1 to the sinking fund we would have to pay 25s., because the rate of exchange is 25s. Australian for £1 sterling. Also the National Debt Sinking Fund Commission, now that the legal position has been conclusively established, would insist that we pay 4 per cent. on the deficits we incurred during the depression. In addition, the Commonwealth could say, "If you do not agree to that we will not pay something that we are not statutorily bound to pay"—that is the 5s. per cent. that it is paying at present. The Commonwealth could legally make a claim on us for all the 5s. it has spent on our debt of £6,000,000 in the last five or six years.

Mr. Doney: The Commonwealth paid that money without any stipulation.

The PREMIER: The hon. member may have incurred some liability and later on found it was not a legal one.

Mr. Doney: But this was a legal liability then.

The PREMIER: No, there was nothing binding at all. All the Commonwealth said was that it was a temporary debt which ought to be redeemed almost immediately and that it would for the time being pay the 5s. sinking fund on it.

Mr. Doney: Yes, but it was a payment without conditions.

The PREMIER: Yes, but if one makes payments which one has no legal authority to make one can seek to recover them. The National Debt Sinking Fund Commission is a statutory body and has as a member the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia. If it found that the payments it had made were not legal it could recover them from the States.

Mr. Doney: Of course, but they were legal.

The PREMIER: They were not. If the hon. member were a trustee for an estate and paid someone £100 out of the estate moneys for doing some service not commensurate with the amount paid, the beneficiaries of the estate could sue him to make good that amount. We must look to the legal rights when we make payments on behalf of other people. If payments not legally made by the National Debt Sinking Fund Commission are not subsequently validated someone might take action in connection with them—as was done in the James case—by going to the High Court to see that the National Debt Sinking Fund Commission exercised its jurisdiction and powers and authority in the way laid down by statute, and it would have to do so.

Mr. Doney: Even so it would have a very small chance of recovery.

The PREMIER: We thought in regard to the James case that the practice was so beneficial to Australia generally that it would be carried through, yet against the interests of all the primary producers at that particular time action was taken in the High Court which ruled, so far as that particular case was concerned, that certain procedure should be adopted, and James was allowed to do what he sought to do. If the law says that certain payments must be made and certain people take the responsibility of enforcing that law, then the payments must be made, and that is what will happen unless the procedure that has taken place is validated. This Bill is to validate several things, none of them very wrong.

Mr. Watts: And none of them very right.

The PREMIER: Perhaps. Some of them are not illegal, but they are not within the actual legal position. We do not want such a state of affairs to arise. I am sure the Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia does not want to sanction payments that he has not the authority to sanction. If it is demonstrated by legal process that he as chairman of this board has not collected certain moneys from the States that he should have done, then he would simply put in a garnishee order or a caveat or some other legal process to the Commonwealth Government which is always paying us some money. It pays us about £1,500,000 per annum. If the Chief Justice of the High Court served a notice on the Commonwealth Treasurer to pay that £1,500,000 less £40,000, or whatever the amount may be, the Treasurer would do that and we would, as a result, receive £1,500,000 less that amount of money. That is all there is about it. This agreement is beneficial to the State. The Commonwealth has no right to pay the 5s. per cent. on the deficits incurred under the Financial Agreement, but it is willing to continue making those payments if they can be made legally, and this amendment gives that authority. It would be extremely disadvantageous to the State if just because of perverseness we decided we would not ratify this agreement. There is, in fact, every advantage in ratifying it, and it is for the House so to ratify it. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Watts, debate adjourned.

BILL—SHEARERS' ACCOMMODATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Message.

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 3 and 4.

BILL—TRADE DESCRIPTIONS AND FALSE ADVERTISEMENTS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Industrial Development in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Amendment of Section 2:

Mr. DONEY: I want to refer to the definition of "re-processed wool." There seems to be a variety of definitions in respect of this term. These definitions in the Bills of the different States should be identical. This Bill provides—

> "Re-processed wool" means the resulting fibre when wool has been woven, knitted or felted into a textile product . . .

Mr. Scully's draft Bill contains a definition almost word for word with that except that instead of the phrase "textile product" it uses the term, I think, "wool product." I have not a copy of Mr. Scully's Bill before me. I believe, too, that the definition of this same term in the Victorian Bill is different. That seems a pity because not only in connection with the term "re-processed wool," but other terms, too, it is highly desirable that the definitions should be on similar lines. Perhaps the Minister can explain why he considers the definition in this Bill should be different from those appearing in the other Bills.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: This matter received careful consideration and the final conclusion was that it would be preferable not to accept completely the Commonwealth definition but to use the term "textile product." The fact that the Victorian Government has done something similar indicates clearly that the State authorities, who probably have a closer knowledge of the matter and have had previous experience of such legislation, have thought it advisable to depart from the definition suggested by the Commonwealth. The effect will be greater than it would have been had the Commonwealth proposal been adopted.

Mr. DONEY: In the second paragraph of the definition of "textile products," there is a reference to hats, linings, interlinings or trimmings, which are excluded from the definition. How does the Minister intend to ascertain the fabric content of linings and trimmings? There would be occasions when fabrics would enter into the construction of linings and trimmings.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The term "textile products" could not very well be applied to hats, trimmings or interlinings.

Mr. Doney: Not to felt hats.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Perhaps; but there is no anxiety to bring felt hats within this definition. To do so would not help the objective of the Bill. The measure aims at protecting the public from imposition in relation to materials that are alleged to contain wool, and such articles are not usually hats, trimmings or interlinings.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

> That in line 3 of the definition of "woollen goods" the word "two" be struck out with a view to inserting the word "five."

This would provide for woollen goods described as all wool or pure wool containing 95 instead of 92 per cent. wool, with five per cent. of other materials or substance for decoration. We should strive to get the greatest possible percentage of wool. If the amendment is accepted, I propose later to move for the deletion of the words "and three per centum for tolerance."

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I have no serious objection to the amendment, and if the hon. member can assure me that it is in line with the legislation passed in Victoria, I am prepared to accept it. My advice is that the proposal in the Bill is in accordance with the draft Bill of the Commonwealth.

Mr. DONEY: Evidently the Minister favours 95 per cent.. I wish I were able to give the assurance for which he asks. I have a note that Mr. Scully's draft Bill prescribes 95 per cent., but I have not a copy of it. I have a copy of the Victorian Bill, which prescribes 95 per cent., but I do not know whether the measure passed in that form.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I have checked up on the Bill passed in Queensland and find that 95 per cent. is prescribed there. In view of the hon. member's statement, I accept the amendment.

Mr. McDONALD: I cannot speak with any personal knowledge of the matter and sympathise with the desire of the member for

Williams-Narrogin to protect the wool industry and the purchasing public. I hope the Minister will make reference to the wholesale and retail distributors. I am concerned with the difficulties, which may lead to expense to the public, that might arise in the event of fabrics being imported with less than 95 per cent. of wool content, possibly on a 92 per cent. basis. Would the amendment be workable in view of the possible difficulties of merchandising? An oversea manufacturer might send goods one per cent. or so below that stipulated in the definition.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: That difficulty would arise whether the Bill prescribed 92 per cent. or 82 per cent. of wool. I understand that the Commonwealth authorities discussed the matter with representatives of manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers and importers before the draft Bill was decided upon, so we may take it that the point has received consideration. This part of the Bill deals only with the use of the words "woollen goods," "all wool," or "pure wool." It really simplifies the description that might be applied to goods when they contain 92 per cent. or above of wool. Where the goods contain a lesser percentage of wool than 92 per cent., they have to be described in more detail. In view of the discussion that has taken place, I have no objection to the amendment.

Amendment (to strike out word) put and passed.

Mr. DONEY: I move—

That the word proposed to be inserted be inserted.

Amendment (to insert word) put and passed.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That at the end of the definition the words "and three per centum for tolerance" be struck out.

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

Clause 5—New heading and new sections:

Mr. DONEY: The proviso in Subsection (1) of proposed Section 4A contains the following:—

Provided that it shall be necessary to state the name and address of the manufacturer where it is impracticable or inconvenient to do so and the regulations make provision to that effect.

Where would the inconvenience or impracticability arise? What situation is likely to arise that would warrant the inclusion of this proviso in the Bill?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: There may be occasions when it would be impracticable for a trade description to contain the name of the manufacturer. Articles might be manufactured in Russia, Germany, or elsewhere, and sent to London for sale. They might then be re-exported to Australia. By the time the goods in question reached this country, it might be not merely impracticable but impossible for the importer to know who manufactured them. It might also be extremely difficult for him to find out whence the goods emanated, and it would certainly be inconvenient.

Hon. N. Keenan: He would know the country of origin.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: There is no guarantee that he would. The proviso is inserted to ensure that steps can be taken in any particular case to exempt the person concerned in this State from any penalty that might otherwise be inflicted because he did not do something that was impracticable or perhaps impossible to do. The matter has to be dealt with by regulation, and members may rest assured that the regulations will be so framed as to close up every possible loophole for the provisions of the Act to be evaded by deceit or misrepresentation. To make the Act workable and fair to all concerned, we must make provision that where the name of the manufacturer cannot be ascertained it will not be necessary for the person concerned to run the risk of prosecution owing to the fact that the name and address of the manufacturer are not included in the trade description.

Mr. LESLIE: Subsection (2) of proposed Section 4A seems to open the door wide to unscrupulous people. It says—

It shall not be necessary to affix the prescribed particulars relating to the manufacture and to the textile product on or to the product itself, but it shall be sufficient compliance with this section if such particulars are attached or applied to any covering, label, reel, placard or thing used in connection with the textile product provided the same is at all times in such proximity to such product, etc.

In one part of the Bill we say that the product shall be dealt with in a particular manner and here we say that that procedure need not be followed and that it will be

sufficient if a placard is exhibited somewhere near the article. The merchant may have a roll of suiting which is below the standard prescribed for woollen goods exhibited at or on a counter with a placard within a foot of it indicating that the goods are either woollen or all wool. A customer may purchase some of that roll in good faith and then find that the material is not as described. The retailer can declare that he has no recollection of exhibiting such a placard and may evade punishment. I think too much latitude is allowed in this clause to permit of the Act being as watertight as is necessary.

Mr. Doney: It seems to me that the method set out here invites the storekeeper to contravene the law.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: These words are taken from the existing Act, which was drafted by the then Crown Solicitor, now Mr. Justice Wolff, after consultation with all the interests concerned and for the purpose of ensuring that that part of the legislation would be workable. The member for Mt. Marshall and the member for Williams-Narrogin have not suggested any amendments that might improve this part of the Bill, but I assure them that if they set out to draft one they would find the task extremely difficult. I doubt if these words could be altered in such a way to enable the scheme proposed in the measure to be operated in a workable manner by those who will have to operate it. I do not agree that the trader could use this part of the legislation very easily for the purpose of performing a dishonest act. The persons the storekeeper will have most to fear from are those who will police the Act. If there is a table on which articles are displayed and the storekeeper does not affix a trade description to every article on it, he must have close to the goods the trade description provided for here. If an inspector says, "These goods are described by this placard as being so-and-so; I am taking some of them away for expert analysis," the trader cannot subsequently say that the label or placard had no application to those goods because, if he did, he would be liable for having no trade description applicable to the goods. It is obvious that trade descriptions cannot be attached to every article because there may be tens of thousands, if not millions, of certain classes of goods. This provision is inserted to render this part of the Act workable

Mr. WATTS: I admit it is difficult to alter the phraseology of this portion of the Bill. What troubles me is the use of the words in the Bill indicating that the trade description can be fastened to any label and permitting such label to be separated from the goods concerned. The Victorian provision having reference to a similar proposal provides that no such goods shall be offered for sale unless accompanied by and having identifiable with them a trade description, conspicuously displayed setting out in legible characters what those goods purport to be, and so on. That seems to me to be a comparatively successful attempt to ensure that the description shall be part and parcel of the goods themselves and not merely attached to some label or covering which, when the goods are displayed for sale would, of necessity, have to be removed from the goods and would become no longer part of the goods but merely an advertisement in respect of them or a notice concerning them.

Mr. McDONALD: I hope no amendment will be made to this provision without consultation with the people who have to carry out the provisions of this Act. It may be that tens of thousands of pieces of material will be sold and the whole scheme might be made unworkable for the conscientious retailer. Retailers at present have a difficult enough time. Restrictions and regulations regarding the retail business are now so numerous and severe that some retailers are getting quite worn out. I know one man who said he was considering going out of business on to the land and since then he has, in fact, bought a farm.

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

> That a new subsection be inserted as follows:—
>
> (3) No trade description shall contain the words "artificial wool," "imitation wool," "synthetic wool," "substitute wool" or (save as otherwise provided) any other expression which includes the word "wool" or "woollen" in relation to any substance which does not comply with the definition of "woollen goods" in this Act.

In the constant use by competitors of wool of the words "woollen" and "woolly" and of the word "wool" in such expressions as "artificial wool," "substitute wool," "synthetic wool," etc, there is an implica-

tion that wool is no longer necessary, and that there are certain other high quality textiles that can adequately take the place of wool. We know that is not so. If the use of the word "wool" is denied to synthetic substitutes they may be forced to face the purchasing public under their own registered trade name. These parasites should not be allowed to lean on wool and ultimately destroy it.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I am prepared to accept most of the amendment but, on the advice of the Solicitor General I desire the words "does not comply with the definition of 'woollen goods' in this Act" to be struck out and the words "is not wool" substituted. The point the Solicitor General makes is that woollen goods are defined and that therefore the use of the word "wool," instead of the other words proposed in the amendment, is the right approach. If the hon. member is willing to make the necessary alteration to his amendment that will suit me; otherwise I shall have to move that the amendment be amended.

Mr. WATTS: I fail to understand the advice of the Solicitor General. Because of the interpretation in this Bill "woollen goods" or "pure wool" means a textile product which contains 95 per cent. of wool. As I understand the amendment, it is intended to apply to goods which are woollen goods as defined by this Bill, which will be goods having at least 95 per cent. of wool in them. If we accept the proposed amendment to the amendment we shall have it applying only to goods which are of wool, meaning the natural fibre of the sheep without any admixture whatever with no five per cent. of other material or substance for decoration or three per cent. for tolerance or anything else.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I have now studied this a little further and I think that the Leader of the Opposition is arguing against his own desires. The definition of woollen goods, as altered, would apply to textile products containing 95 per cent. of wool. If the amendment is adopted as worded it will be legally permissable to apply a trade description using the words "artificial wool," "imitation wool," "synthetic wool" or "substitute wool" to any woollen goods or article containing less than 95 per cent. of wool. I am sure neither the Leader of the Opposition nor the member for Williams-Narrogin desires that. The amendment suggested by the Solicitor General would tie the thing up to the definition of wool in this Bill and would mean that any article or product that contained no wool could not have those trade descriptions applied to it.

Mr. DONEY: I desire to amend my amendment.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member has already moved an amendment.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I move—

> That the amendment be amended by striking out the words "does not comply with the definition of 'woollen goods' in this Act" and inserting the words "is not wool" in lieu.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. McDONALD: I understand the amendment suggested by the Minister deals with the words "is not wool."

The Minister for Industrial Development: That is so.

Mr. McDONALD: The effect of the amendment suggested by the Minister, I think, is that the terms "artificial wool," "imitation wool," "synthetic wool," "substitute wool," and any other expression containing the word "wool" would then be applicable to goods which contained 100 per cent. wool, with one exception, that under the definition the terms "woollen goods," "all wool" or "pure wool" could be applied to a substance containing 95 per cent. wool. The amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin would allow the application of these or any other phrases containing the word "wool" to any substance that contained 95 per cent. or more wool. In other words, his amendment would extend such phrases as "woollen goods," "all wool" or "pure wool," which can now be applied to goods which contain 95 per cent. raw wool, to allow in addition to those descriptions those other phrases containing the word "wool" to be applied to all substitutes which contain 95 per cent. of raw wool.

The Minister's amendment will enable the terms "woollen goods," "all wool" or "pure wool" still to be applied to substances containing 95 per cent. or more of raw wool, but would not allow any other phrase containing the word "wool" to be

applied unless the substance concerned had 100 per cent. wool. I admit this sounds obscure, and I do not know that I have made myself clear. The member for Williams-Narrogin, by his amendment allows wider application of a phrase containing the word "wool." It can be used in respect of any substance which has 95 per cent. or more wool. The Minister's amendment would restrict the use of phrases containing the word "wool," and would allow them to apply only to substances with 100 per cent. wool except in the case of three phrases, namely, "woollen goods," "all wool" or "pure wool," which, under the definition can be applied to a substance with 95 per cent. or more wool. Both amendments would be in order. The amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin allows more latitude than does the Minister's in the use of the terms containing the word "wool."

Mr. WATTS: During the tea suspension I considered the points I had previously raised, and I am almost convinced of the Minister's point of view. As the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin is worded, there is a risk that one might be permitted to use the words "synthetic wool," for example, in regard to an article which contained no known percentage of wool. Having further considered the matter, I have come to the conclusion that the amendment of the hon. member might quite easily solve the problem if it read—

No trade description shall contain the words "artificial wool," "imitation wool," "synthetic wool," "substitute wool" or (save as otherwise provided) any other expression which includes the word "wool" or "woollen" in relation to any substance which does not at least comply with the definition of woollen goods in this Act.

It would then have to be 95 per cent. or more of wool quite clearly, because it would be at least in compliance with the definition of the Act in regard to woollen goods before those words could be used. But even when one gets to that stage, it is not clear whether we are going to use the term "synthetic wool" in regard to something better than 95 per cent., or worse. I am prepared to accept the amendment suggested by the Solicitor General.

Mr. DONEY: I think the major amount of misunderstanding arises because of the two negatives in the proposed subsection drawn by me. If I were to reconstruct the subsection on the basis of the Minister's idea, leaving out certain words in the middle which are more or less parenthetical, it would then read—

No trade description shall be termed "artificial wool"——

or the other terms—

——unless it contains the natural fibre of the domestic sheep or lamb.

The term "natural fibre of the domestic sheep or lamb" is the statutory definition of the word "wool." My desire is to protect the woollen article by prohibiting the use of the word "wool" with any other words unless the article has 95 per cent. or more of wool. If the Minister's amendment is carried, artificial wool, if it contains only 1 per cent. of wool, can compete with the genuine article. No minimum percentage of wool has been stipulated. Had the Minister mentioned 25 per cent. or 50 per cent., he would have partly overcome the difficulty. I do not see that his amendment is any more acceptable than the one standing in my name.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The object of my amendment is to prevent the use of the word "wool" in relation to goods that do not contain any wool. The terms "artificial wool," "imitation wool," "synthetic wool" and "substitute wool" could be used for the purpose of deceiving the buying public, and I propose to amend the amendment so that the word "wool" may not be used unless the article contains some wool.

Mr. Doney: Unless it contains some wool?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes.

Mr. Doney: Then it could contain only 1 per cent. of wool?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The Bill sets out definitions of the terms "wool" and "woollen goods." Under the amendment suggested by the Crown Solicitor, it will not be possible to use the term "wool" in describing goods that do not contain wool.

Mr. Leslie: If the goods contain some wool, the word may be used?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes.

Mr. Leslie: That is not the intention of the member for Williams-Narrogin.

Mr. McDonald: I do not think that is the meaning of the Crown Solicitor's amendment.

Hon. N. Keenan: Would it be 100 per cent. wool?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Not necessarily.

Hon. N. Keenan: Then it might be only 1 per cent.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The trade description would still have to be true and would have to set out the percentage of wool in the goods. The amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin would permit of the use of the terms "artificial wool" and "synthetic wool" in respect of goods containing more than 95 per cent. of wool.

Mr. Doney: From which no harm would ensue as a result of using the word "wool."

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The hon. member's amendment would not be protective to the extent we want it to be protective. We want to prevent the use of the word "wool" in advertising any goods that contain no wool.

Hon. N. Keenan: What if the goods contain only 1 per cent. of wool?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: The trade description must set forth the percentage of wool. Unless the amendment is amended as I have indicated, the terms "artificial wool" and "synthetic wool" may be used in directions we do not desire. The Queensland and Victorian Acts contain the exact wording I propose to use.

Mr. WATTS: The goods I desire to protect are those which contain 95 per cent. or more of wool. I want to prevent goods that contain less than 95 per cent. of wool having the word "wool" used in the description, whether it be artificial wool or synthetic wool. An uninitiated consumer would not be able easily to distinguish. If he saw "wool" on the label, he would doubtless think the article was made from the natural fibre of the sheep. The member for Williams-Narrogin wants to prevent the use of the word "wool" in any combination in respect of any goods that do not comply with the definition of "woollen goods," namely goods containing at least 95 per cent. of wool. I wish to ensure that any article that contains less than 95 per cent. of wool shall not have any reference to wool attached to its description. The Minister is unfortunately supported by the Victorian measure, but there is this much difference that the Victorian Act contains no definition of "woollen goods" as does this Bill. The position is extremely difficult. I am prepared to accept the Minister's amendment in the meantime.

Mr. McDONALD: If the amendment be passed, I suggest the Minister discuss the matter again with his Crown Law advisers. As it reads, it means this: "Wool" means 100 per cent. wool. If we eliminate the negatives in the amendment, the amended clause means that the words "artificial wool" may be applied to any substance which contains 100 per cent. of wool. Put in the negatives and the clause means that "artificial wool" cannot be applied to a substance which does not contain 100 per cent. of wool. That is rational, but I do not think it coincides with the Minister's intention. Therefore I suggest that the clause might be reconsidered.

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

Mr. DONEY: Part II., Trade Descriptions, proposed new Section 4B., Subsection (1) provides that any person who applies to a textile product a trade description the particulars of which do not comply with the requirements of Section 4A of this Bill or of the regulations, or are in any respect false or incorrect, shall be guilty of an offence. How in the Minister's opinion shall we stand in the case of, say, Porongorup rugs exported from this State to Victoria for sale, if the Victorian inspector shows the goods to be not true to label? How would the Victorian inspector proceed against the Porongorup firm? Or, reversing the situation, what would be the procedure in the case of Onkaparinga rugs in any State of the Commonwealth except South Australia?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: This provision sets out, I feel, a round of offences in the event of a prosecution being launched under the measure. One defence is that where the defendant is a distributor he cannot be expected to provide more particulars in regard to any product than the particulars available to him, and if he has to the limit of his ability provided all those particulars, then it ought to be a ground of defence for use by him that he has to the limit of his knowledge and ability supplied all the information available. That does not mean that he would necessarily be found not guilty, as there might be other factors entering into the

case, and those factors would be taken into consideration.

Mr. DONEY: The Minister has not grasped my point. He has taken me up on the point of the prosecution of a Victorian trader in regard to Porongorup rugs, in case the rug turns out, on examination by the Victorian inspector, not to be up to the trade description—say, 90 per cent. of wool instead of 95 per cent.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That is covered by Subsection 4 (c).

Clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clauses 6 to 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Amendment of Schedule, Repeal and new Schedule:

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

> That in line 1 of the Schedule, after the word "goods" the word "when" be inserted.

I think it will be well for the Committee to know that here the amendment has reference only to Subsection (1) of the Schedule. We need to ignore altogether the fact that sub-paragraphs (2), (3) and (4) are in the same section, which refers to plant, furniture and so forth. Here is a case of obvious ambiguity, and the ambiguity may not be too easy to elucidate. The words "not being textile products" may be interpreted in two ways, depending upon where the emphasis is laid. They can be interpreted, although it is not so intended, as an assertion that bedding, blankets and rugs are not textile products, but it would be absurd to interpret them in that way. Those items would almost certainly be made of wool. I think the phrase should be altered to read as follows: "That the following goods, when not textile products," etc. Conceivably, blankets and rugs may in the future be made of some material other than textiles, such as rubber waste.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: There might be something in what the member for Williams-Narrogin has to say upon the construction of this part of the Bill. The intention of the Solicitor General, who drew the Bill, was that bedding, blankets and rugs, when not covered by the definition of textile products, should nevertheless come under the provisions of this measure and so have applied to them compulsorily trade descriptions. The wording might be altered as follows:—"The following goods, except where any of them come within the definition of textile products," etc.

Mr. Doney: You are giving precisely the same meaning, but using a few more words.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: There is a difference, because the wording which the member for Williams-Narrogin proposes is still complicated.

Mr. Watts: Would the Minister move his amendment if the member for Williams-Narrogin withdrew his?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: Yes.

Mr. DONEY: I ask leave to withdraw the amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I move an amendment—

> That in line 1 of the Schedule, the words "not being textile products" be struck out with a view to inserting other words.

Amendment (to strike out words) put and passed.

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: I move an amendment—

> That the words "where any such goods do not come within the definition of 'textile products' as set out in this Act" be inserted in lieu of the words struck out.

I am not convinced that this wording is correct. I will, however, discuss the matter with the Solicitor General and, if he can improve on the amendment, the wording will be altered when the Bill is before another place.

Mr. WATTS: The Minister has removed an ambiguity by his amendment. It is important that ambiguous phrases should be clarified, otherwise trouble will occur in the future when someone is called upon to interpret them, as he might construe them in a way quite different from what we intend.

Amendment (to insert words) put and passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 11, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

BILL—LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL (WAR TIME) ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Education (for the Minister for Justice) in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2—Delete all the words after the word "deleting" in line 12, and substitute the words "the word 'forty-four' in the third line and substituting the word 'forty-five.'"

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: There is no objection to this amendment, which simply seeks to insert the word "forty-five" instead of the words, which are in the amending Bill, "for the duration of the war and one year after." It extends the operation of the principal Act for one year. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

BILL—ELECTORAL (WAR TIME) ACT AMENDMENT.

Council's Amendment.

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

In Committee.

Mr. Marshall in the Chair; the Minister for Education (for the Minister for Justice) in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 2—Delete all the words after the word "deleting" in line 11, and substitute the words "the word 'forty-four' in the third line and substituting the word 'forty-five.'"

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION: This amendment is similar to the one we have just dealt with and is acceptable. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

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

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

BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).

First Reading.

Introduced by the Minister for Works and read a first time.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS [8.17] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is a very important one. It proposes to establish for at least a section of permanent Government employees a system of legal appeals against promotions where previously those sections have never enjoyed a right of that nature. It is true that some sections of Government employees, mostly in the salaried classes, have enjoyed, either by law or agreement or arrangement, the right of appeal against promotions. Those Government employees who have enjoyed the right of appeal against promotions only by arrangement, which has had no legal backing, have naturally been worried because of the right being available to them only as a matter of grace on the part of the Government or the governmental authority in charge of the system. For a long time in this State there has been an increasing number of requests from permanent Government employees for legislation to be introduced to establish beyond question the right of permanent employees to appeal against promotions. There are many arguments for and against the requests and for and against the proposed system contained in this Bill.

Although the Government has been requested over a period of several years to introduce legislation of this character, it has not acted previously because it was anxious to give the whole matter the fullest possible consideration: First of all for the purpose of deciding whether such legislation should be introduced, and secondly for the purpose of trying to develop the legislation in such a way as to make it as satisfactory as possible. I do not intend to claim that this Bill is the last word in regard to a matter of that description. The Government is not wedded to every word and clause in the Bill. It feels that suggestions may be made in this Parliament for the improvement of the measure and it will be happy to receive suggestions for the improvement of the Bill, especially its machinery provisions. The Government hopes that the principles of the Bill will be acceptable to the majority of members in this and another place. Over the years, and especially in more recent years, there has been a growing discontent amongst some Government employees in regard to the fact that no legal right of ap-

peal against promotions existed and amongst others that no right of appeal, legal or otherwise, has existed.

I do not suggest for a moment that all of the discontent has been justified. It is easy to understand that when a man or a woman, more particularly a woman perhaps, applies for promotion and he or she is not successful, a feeling of dissatisfaction develops because the unsuccessful applicant rightly or wrongly—usually wrongly—considers that his or her qualifications are better than those possessed by the person who has, in fact, been promoted to the higher position. Whilst that is probably the case there has, I feel, been a fair amount of justifiable discontent not only on the part of unsuccessful applicants for promotion, but, indeed, on the part of many employees who have not applied for the particular promotion but who, because of their position in a department and because of their experience and their knowledge of the persons who applied for the promotion, feel that the one promoted is not, in fact, better than or has as good qualifications as one or other of the applicants who filed applications for promotion. I think that probably every one of us knows of at least one instance where there have been indications of some factor other than efficiency influencing a promotion, or of some factor other than seniority influencing it.

After all is said and done those charged with the responsibility of recommending and making promotions are only human. They are liable to make mistakes and, in addition, they may be susceptible to one or more of the many more or less outside influences which operate in regard to the promotion of some person to a higher position in the Government. Not only can influence operate but there can be favouritism quite apart from any influence when we realise that there is a difference between the term "favouritism" and the term "influence." I know at times they can be interlocked so as to be almost the same as each other, but at other times there is a considerable difference between the exercise of influence and the exercise of favouritism. There is also the fact that in any Government department, and probably in any department of a private business, some employees are closer than others to the recommending officer and to the appointing officer. That position arises by the very nature of the operations of the department.

Mr. McDonald: It even happens in the Army.

Mr. Leslie: Very much so!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I should say it happens more in the Army than in any other organisation in the world. It is easy to realise that where an employee is working under the eye of the head of the department all, or most of the time, that employee will almost assuredly create an impression upon the head of the department. The impression might be favourable, or it might be unfavourable. Where it is favourable it certainly places that employee in a much better position to obtain a satisfactory recommendation than the employee in the same department who, perhaps in the personal sense, is never under the eye of his departmental head. So there is a varying degree of chance in that regard. There is at least a varying degree of opportunity for an employee to have his work noticed permanently by the head of the department. In one instance he is in constant contact with a certain employee; the employee might even be working in the office of the head of the department, or next door to it, whereas many of the other employees of that department might only see the head of the department within working hours once a week, once a month, or once a year. So it is quite natural and, to some extent justifiable too, that when a head of a department is, in those circumstances, called upon to make a recommendation he is strongly inclined towards the employee who is constantly under his notice. Members can easily realise that such an employee might not necessarily in point of merit, in point of efficiency and in point of the other necessary qualifications be better than some officer working well away from the head of the department.

We could argue with some logic that the officer working always away from the head of the department might be the better one because there is not so much supervision over him and, because there is not that supervision over him, it might be easy for him to become lax and careless. So I think that the arguments I have advanced under that heading alone are sufficient to show that the present system is not by any means a satisfactory one, and does not necessarily achieve the best result. Quite a deal more

could be said to indicate the weakness and unfairness, and even the danger, of the present system. It might be thought that influence of one kind or another does not operate to any substantial extent in the making of promotions in the Government service. I am not able to say whether it operates to a great extent, but I think we can all agree that it does operate to some extent. It might be thought that political influence operates. Perhaps to some extent, consciously or unconsciously, it does, but I think there are other influences which operate to a greater extent than that, and the influence which is probably the strongest of all is the social influence. I have seen some cases where, in my opinion, the social influence has been the predominating one in deciding between two or more applicants for promotion to a higher position. So I submit to members that there is substantial room for improvement in the present system.

Mr. Needham: Fancy social influence prevailing over merit!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I know that even when the appeal board is set up we shall be able to place on it as members only human beings and that those human beings may be, to a smaller or greater extent, liable, unconsciously I think, to certain factors of influence, to persuasion or to something of the kind which might result in the decisions of the board not always being 100 per cent. right. However, I think we can confidently anticipate that the board to be set up under the provisions of the Bill would be certain to arrive at many more right decisions than could possibly be made under the present system, or rather under the present lack of system. I want for one moment to indicate what, in my opinion, will be the main benefits from this proposed legislation. In the first instance the greatest possible care will be taken by the recommending authority, or the recommending officers, in selecting a certain person out of a number of applicants for promotion to a higher position. It stands to reason that if a person knows that the action he proposes to take can be appealed against to a special authority, he will be much more careful than he otherwise would be. As a result of that, I think the recommendations for promotion that would be made if this Bill becomes law, as I hope it will, would be recommendations based very largely upon the main principles justifying such promotion. Because of that there should not be the avalanche of appeals which some members think might be likely to occur under legislation of this description.

I know that at the first reading of the Bill it might appear that everyone who applies for a higher position and is not appointed to it, will lodge an appeal. It might very well be that when the legislation is operative that might apply to some extent; but if the recommending authorities are extremely careful in their recommendations, it will soon be established that an appellant will require to have a remarkably solid case to place before the appeal board if he is to succeed in the presentation of his appeal. Consequently as a result of that I think an early rush or avalanche of appeals would very soon decrease. On the other hand, if there is no right of appeal, in many instances the unsuccessful applicants develop a feeling that they have been dealt with unjustly. They develop grievances which they nurse, just as a woman who is a mother for the first time might, with the greatest possible care and attention, nurse her first born babe. We know what happens to a man or woman who nurses a grievance for any lengthy period. The grievance develops into a sense of injustice and creates a psychological effect that is demoralising to the person concerned, and sometimes proves very demoralising also to other persons within the office or department in which the individual with the grievance is working. I have no doubt that every member of this Chamber has, at one time or another, had to be in close contact, perhaps for long periods, with one who nurses a grievance. If anyone can suggest a worse mental punishment than that, I would like to know of it.

Where the right of appeal is given to a legal authority and where the members of the appeal board are men who can be expected to give careful and, to some extent, judicial consideration to the claims of the different appellants who go before the board, the appellants who do not succeed will at least have the feeling that they have had two chances of establishing their claims to higher positions—in the first instance to the head of the department or the recommending authority, and subsequently to the appeal board itself. Because of that, there will be not nearly to the same extent in future the tendency to develop grievances and to nurse them to such an extent as to impair the use-

fulness and efficiency of the persons concerned or, up to a point, of the persons who work with them. I have met many Government employees, from time to time, who have been extremely upset and agitated about some promotion that has taken place. Many of those employees have not been applicants for promotion to the office to which the appointment has been made. They have known all the circumstances and all the applicants for the higher position; they have worked within the department or the section of the department concerned, and have felt that the wrong thing, the unjust thing had been done. Something has caused the promotion of a person who did not have equal claims to those of other applicants for the position.

When men and women feel that an injustice of the kind has been perpetrated, they become very upset. They talk and growl about it and take it home with them, and the grievance develops until, as has happened on more than one occasion, there is an upset of substantial proportions, and all the negotiation in the world is needed to establish a smooth working condition in the department or sub-department from then onward. Therefore this Bill will, to a large extent, obviate that sort of thing in future. I am not suggesting for a moment that it will obviate this entirely, because, until the Minister for Education, through the education system, is able to build up different men and women who will do the right thing in all matters and give to every man and woman a condition of mind that is 100 per cent. fair and reasonable, we shall always have some complaints and grievances, even though the right and just thing has been done.

This Bill has been drafted to some extent upon similar legislation in the State of Queensland, which legislation has been operating for several years.

Mr. Doney: What other States, if any, have similar legislation?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know of any other State that has similar comprehensive legislation. Every State has a system of appeals against promotions, but in all States except Queensland, the system is very limited in its application. It applies only to certain salaried classes of employees. In Queensland, however, the legislation is fairly embracing, inasmuch as it covers a very large number of wages employees as well as all the salaried employees. Therefore this Bill can be compared only with the legislation of Queensland.

Some weeks ago I wrote to the Queensland Minister for Labour, Mr. Foley, for the purpose of obtaining a written expression of opinion on the Act and the manner in which it operated in that State. He replied saying there was no doubt of the success of the appeal board system, and emphasised the point that it supplied a definite method for the adjustment of real grievances and, to some extent, for the adjustment of imaginary ones. He said there was no suggestion on the part of anyone in Queensland to abolish the Act. There was some criticism of the Act, but this was all in the direction of having it improved from the point of view of the different classes of Government employees. He also said that the Government was considering a number of suggestions that had been offered for the extension and improvement of the Act.

Mr. Doney: Did he make known to you what those suggestions were so that they might, if you so wished, be embodied in this Bill?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes; in the framing of this Bill, consideration has been given to those suggestions. It would be possible to speak for a long time in more or less general terms on the Bill, but I hope I have said enough to indicate a justification for a change in the existing system insofar as that system does apply, and also a justification for establishing a system of appeals against promotions for those permanent Government employees, mostly wages men who, up to the present, have never had any right of appeal against promotions.

I come now to an explanation of the more important features of the Bill. "Department" includes, in addition to ordinary departments, the Agricultural Bank, every State trading concern, the Fremantle Harbour Trust Commissioners, every harbour board, every Government hospital and every Crown instrumentality where the employees are paid with moneys, other than grants, appropriated by Parliament. Where two or more departments are administered by the same Minister and where a department is divided into separate sub-departments, each department or sub-department is regarded as a separate department.

"Government hospital" is defined as meaning any hospital, including any convalescent home, established, maintained and managed wholly by the Government as a Government institution. "Employee" means a person employed by the Government in a permanent capacity, which means he or she must be regularly employed in circumstances which justify the belief that the employment will be continuous and permanent. The definition of "employee" is almost identical with that in the Superannuation and Family Benefits Act.

Notice of any vacancy or of the creation of any new office is to be published in such manner and for such period as shall be prescribed by regulation. This will afford every employee concerned a reasonable opportunity of knowing of the existence of the vacancy or the creation of a new office, and therefore allow a reasonable opportunity for every person concerned to make an application for appointment if he or she so desires. Notice in writing is to be given to the unsuccessful applicants of the intention to appoint the successful applicant. Any appointment of the sucessful applicant is to be provisional and temporary pending the hearing and determination of any appeal. Appeals against promotion are to be restricted to those employees who apply for the vacancy; in other words, if a person does not apply for the vacancy when applications are called, he or she will not be entitled subsequently to appeal against the promotion that has been made. Appeals will not be allowed in cases where—

(a) the vacancy to be filled carries an annual remuneration at a rate higher than £750 unless the Governor shall declare that appeals shall be allowed upon special grounds;
(b) an employee has attained the compulsory retiring age but has been continued in employment.

In Queensland there is a schedule to the Act, a schedule containing the positions in the Government service in connection with which appeals against promotions cannot take place. When the Act was originally passed through the Queensland Parliament, the schedule was extremely lengthy. It has been added to since by regulation, and today is of almost frightening length. I had a check made of the number of positions which we might include in such a schedule if we decided to follow the Queensland example in that regard. The list of positions which would have had to be included in such a schedule, had it been contained in this Bill, would have been so lengthy as to have caused every one of us in this House a good deal of worry. So we have adopted a different system altogether, the system being that no position carrying a rate of salary or wages higher than £750 per annum shall be a position in connection with which an appeal against promotion will be allowable. But we have included in the Bill a proviso that the Governor-in-Council may, where he considers that special grounds exist, allow an appeal or a number of appeals to be lodged in connection with a position where the annual rate of salary or wages is above £750. Appeals will not be allowed in cases where an employee has attained the compulsory retiring age but has been continued in employment. Where the terms and conditions of employment appertaining to a vacancy or new office are regulated by the provisions of an award or industrial agreement, only those employees who are members of the industrial union which is a party to such award or industrial agreement shall have the right of appeal.

Mr. Doney: That might need a little amendment, eh?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We shall be glad to hear the member for Williams-Narrogin speak on this part of the Bill when the second reading debate is carried a further stage. The proposed board is to consist of three members, one of whom shall be a stipendiary or police or resident magistrate nominated by the Minister. He will also be the chairman. The second representative is to be appointed by the Governor and is to act as the representative of the authority which recommended the promotion. The third member is to be a representative of the employees and is to be appointed in each case by the union of which the appellant is a member. Where there is no union or the union fails to appoint a representative, the appellant may himself appoint a representative. The term "union" will include the Civil Service Association, the School Teachers' Union and the Railway Officers' Union in addition to all unions registered under the Industrial Arbitration Act. The person to act as representative on the board of an appellant who is a member of the Civil Service Association shall be the member of the Public Service Appeal

Board elected by the Civil Service Association. The representative to act for an appellant who is a member of the School Teachers' Union will be the member of the Public Service Appeal Board elected by that union. There may be cases where those who appeal against a promotion might not all be members of the same organisation. In such a case the organisations concerned are to try to agree upon a representative to go on the board to represent the appellants. Where mutual agreement cannot be reached, a representative is to be appointed to the board by regulation made under the Act.

Mr. Seward: This board is not to replace the Appeal Board?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. Under the proposed legislation the appellant will be entitled to have a representative on the board. That will make a board of three —the magistrate as chairman, the representative of the recommending authority, which means of the department, and the representative of the appellant. Where two or more employees appeal against a promotion, all the appeals shall be heard and determined together. Where more than one appeal is upheld, the board shall finally decide between the successful appellants. It is quite conceivable that six unsuccessful applicants for a position will appeal against a promotion that is to be made. That could conceivably occur, and two out of the six appellants might succeed with their appeals. Then it would be still a question of deciding between the two successful appellants. Therefore the Bill provides that the board shall go further with the appeals and make a final decision as between the two successful appellants.

The remuneration to be paid to the members and secretary of the board is to be prescribed by regulation. Where the appellant resides in a remote locality, the board may appoint a competent person to take evidence on oath in that locality. Such evidence is to be forwarded to the board and considered and decided by it. Where a successful appellant has to travel to a town or city other than the town or city in which he is employed, the board is empowered to recommend to the Minister the allowance of unavoidable travelling expenses. The Governor's approval will be necessary to the payment of such expenses. I think the wording of the provision will probably give the discretionary power to recommend in that regard. An appeal is allowable on the following grounds:—

(i) superior efficiency;
(ii) equal efficiency and seniority to the employee promoted.

"Seniority" is defined as under—

(a) As between employees holding positions or offices in the same grade or classification when such positions or offices are graded or classified—seniority by longer period of service;

(b) As between employees holding positions or offices in different grades or classifications when such positions or offices are graded or classified—Seniority by higher grade or higher classification.

(c) As between employees engaged in the same kind of employment at the same rate of salary or wages when the positions or offices held by them are not graded or classified—Seniority by longer period of service;

(d) As between employees engaged in different kinds of employment at different rates of salary or wages, when the positions or offices held by them are not graded or classified—Seniority by higher rate of salary or wages.

The board will have the right to decline to hear any appeal which, in its opinion, is frivolous, unreasonable or vexatious. The board may also fine any appellant an amount not exceeding £5 where an appeal is considered to be frivolous, unreasonable or vexatious. An appellant may be represented before the board by an agent, but not by a solicitor. The board is to possess the powers of a Royal Commission. Where an award or industrial agreement contains any provisions or conditions affecting promotion, the board in hearing any appeal against promotion to such office shall have regard to those provisions and conditions. The decisions of the board are to be binding upon the appointing authority and the recommending authority concerned and due effect will be given to such decisions. Every appointment then made by the appointing authority for the purpose of giving effect to a decision of the board shall be final and conclusive and not subject to any further appeal of any kind.

I mentioned at the beginning that there are in existence some systems which allow appeals against promotion. Some of those systems are covered by legislation. This Bill, however, is comprehensive, inasmuch as it proposes to cover all permanent Government employees. The other Acts to which I have referred will, therefore, of necessity conflict with this proposed legis-

lation, and consequently the Bill provides that where they do conflict this proposed legislation is to prevail. There is very little more I require to say at this stage. I repeat that the Government is not wedded to every clause or to every word of every clause of the Bill. Probably some suggestions will be made for the improvement of the Bill both inside and outside Parliament. Wherever those suggestions might come from, the Government will be willing to give them consideration; and, where they appear likely to improve the Bill in relation to its machinery provisions, the Government would willingly adopt and include them. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1944-45.

In Committee of Supply.

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Marshall in the Chair.

Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £201,730 (partly considered):

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [9.5]: It is not my intention to cover a great deal of ground with respect to the Estimates introduced by the Minister for Works. There are, nevertheless, one or two matters which I must mention, or I consider I should not be doing my duty to my constituents or to myself. I refer more particularly to the observations of the Minister on certain comprehensive water supplies which have been the subject of much discussion, high-sounding phrases and investigation during the last four or five years, but which up to the present have not borne any fruit whatever. That aspect of the matter would not at this date have concerned me very greatly, as I fully appreciate that the difficulties occasioned by the war and the consequent shortage of manpower to a very great extent, and of material to a lesser extent, would have prevented any definite activity during the war period in the direction I mentioned. There was, however, in the observations of the Minister a word or two here and there which indicated to me the certainty that, so far as the district in which I am interested and the southern areas of the State particularly are concerned, no activity would take place in the immediate future in regard to the provision of water in sufficient quantities and of good quality where that water is required; for the Minister, in discussing the proposals to enlarge the holding capacity of the Mundaring Weir and the Wellington Weir, expressed the opinion that he thought it would be necessary to give first priority to the Mundaring Weir, so that the areas between the metropolis and the Goldfields should be dealt with first and receive a greater supply of water in order to cope with the resurgence of the goldmining industry, for example, after the war, and the other aspects which he mentioned. I submit that that is not the way to look at the proposal. Far be it from me to suggest that the requirements of the Goldfields and the districts lying between the metropolitan area and the goldfields should not be attended to, and as promptly as possible.

My point of view is entirely contrary to that, but I desire to submit to the Committee and the Minister that the areas I have just mentioned have for many years past enjoyed a water supply which I think I am right in saying has never failed, and which there is no sufficient reason to believe will fail to any great degree in the immediate post-war period. There was upon the Goldfields a very much larger population, so far as men engaged in mining are concerned, before the war than there is now; and there was also in the agricultural areas which are served in some degree by the same line a much greater population in years gone by as the electoral rolls and other statistics show, than there is today. During those periods, when the greater population existed, and when there was a maximum engagement, or very nearly a maximum engagement, in the goldmining industry, the water supplies provided for those areas never failed; they were never without water. There may have been restrictions for short periods; there may have been times when the people were not able to use all they might have desired to use; but there was never a time when they were unable to obtain any supplies at all; and what they did obtain was water of the best quality and at rates comparable with those paid in other districts—although, in many instances, I admit they were too high. But there is no suggestion in the Minister's remarks that by giving first priority to the work in those areas any alteration is going to be made in rates; so that question, for the moment, does not come into it.

Let us compare the situation of those areas I have mentioned, and which I have traversed, for a few moments with the situation of the area that I and some of my colleagues on these benches represent, where there has been a maintenance of the population that existed in the pre-war period and where indeed, for many years—as once again the electoral roll and statistics will show—there has been almost completely lacking, and in some instances entirely lacking, the principal amenity of life—to wit, water—in any quantity and of good quality. Without any question, those areas—if there is to be any priority given to work in the post-war period—should be first priority; because their experience has been such—not for one year but for many years—as to indicate that they are entitled, if anyone is entitled, to consideration in the very early stages of the time when it is possible to do work on a large scale. As long ago as 1936, I brought to the notice of this House, by way of a motion, the position in regard to the Great Southern water supplies; for, on the 21st October, 1936, I moved, in order to have this subject discussed and investigated—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into—

(1) existing water supplies in districts on and adjacent to the Great Southern Railways, having particular regard to (a) the towns in such districts on whose behalf applications have been made; and (b) the requirements of the farming areas.

(2) What action, if any, should be taken for the improvement of existing water supplies in places where they are inadequate and the provision of public water supplies where none is available, including practicable sources and cost of supplies.

In the course of the speech I made, I pointed out that the total rainfall registered at that time at the Katanning Post Office for the then current year had been 1,366 points, or approximately 13½ inches. Of that registration, about 12 inches fell between the 1st April and the end of June. I then mentioned that there was at Katanning a water supply—provided through the activities of Government engineers and the acceptance of liability for a loan by the Katanning Water Board—which was then capable of conserving about 31,000,000 gallons and in which at that time—the 21st October, 1936, or approximately six weeks from the normal end of winter—there were about 2,000,000 gallons or one-fifteenth of its capacity, notwithstanding that there had been 1,366 points of rain. I proceeded to inform the House that during the 19 years that scheme had been in operation the ratepayers there had not been able to obtain sufficient water during ten seasons and the railways had had to go to the expense of carting water during six seasons.

I pointed out that during those six years the water had been completely cut off both from the ratepayers and from the railways prior to the 1st January; so that for the whole period from January to the next winter rainfall they had been without water. Subsequently I was able, on the 16th December, 1938, to take Sir George Pearce, who was then a Federal Minister, for a stroll across the bottom of that dam, because it was perfectly dry—a fortnight before Christmas! In a little while, I am going to give the Committee some later information, because I wish to be perfectly fair in regard to this matter. At that time, however, the water contained in that hole was in accordance with the sample I produced to this House at the time I moved the motion and it was of the colour of dark chocolate. It was in insufficient quantity and was of extremely poor quality.

As a youngster I was present, in 1917, at a meeting at Katanning at which the engineers of that day discussed with the public—who attended in quite large numbers—the question of the establishment of the water scheme. They stated, on some examination by those present, that the scheme they proposed would fill the dam on a 15-inch rainfall; that without fail it would be sufficient for the township for many years; and that the water would be of good quality. The result of their achievement—as I subsequently had the privilege of telling the Premier at a deputation at Katanning in 1940—was that it had never filled on a 15-inch rainfall; that it was not sufficient for the township; and that it was not water of good quality—in fact, that it was entirely the reverse. It was on those and other representations that, in 1940, the Premier came to the conclusion that a readjustment of the Water Board's liability should be made and that the board should be permitted to borrow another sum of £20,000 in order to complete the construction of a false catchment area of bitumen which was to be 60 acres in extent and to

cost approximately £25,000. From the Treasury, £20,000 was borrowed at 4½ per cent. and the previous loan was reduced by absorbing the sinking fund, which had been regularly contributed to by the board and by the ratepayers irrespective of whether they had water or not. That left the board with a liability of approximately £25,000, including £20,000 in respect of the bitumen surface.

After further discussion with me, the Treasurer was good enough to pay out of the Treasury the difference, of approximately £5,000, between the £20,000 so raised by the board and the £25,000 which the bitumen surface cost. To what state has that brought us in 1944? Once again we have had approximately 1,350 points of rain; and instead of catching 2,000,000 gallons, which was the result of the earth catchment, we have caught or did catch something like 17,750,000 gallons, which was the result of the bitumen catchment. But the railway service had again been cut off at a time when there was never greater need for it to have water in that vicinity. It is compelled today to carry water for its own needs, from as far south as Lake Matilda and I believe that, as that water is not suitable, it is now taking water from Elleker which is 100 miles from Katanning. We have already heard that in the neighbouring town of Narrogin a considerable amount of money has been expended—more than in Katanning—and it is purely an obligation of the Government because all the town can do is to collect the rates and, if those rates are not sufficient to meet the loss on the Government scheme, then the Treasury must bear whatever loss is incurred, and in one or two years to my knowledge it has amounted to £2,000, and still the difficulty has not been solved. Therefore we have two towns there—irrespective of others for which I have the greatest sympathy—each of about 3,000 people, each the centre of a progressive district, each requiring water just as much as any other area in the State and each occupied by people who like beautiful homes and who have seen their beautiful homes ruined, as far as their gardens are concerned, three or four times in the last seven or eight years.

Yet we are told that if there is to be a priority in regard to post-war reconstruction of comprehensive water supply, it will be the Eastern Goldfields areas that have had water supplies ad lib.—thank goodness and thank the foresight of our predecessors—for the last 40 years. The time is long past when that sort of idea should have been changed. I hope that I shall be able, in the course of a few weeks' time or perhaps less, to hear from the hon. gentleman that at least some effort will be made as soon as the war position makes it practicable, to give some relief, not as a second or third priority, to those people by bringing water from the Wellington weir or by doing something else within the competence of the engineers whose opinions and qualifications I do not for one moment attempt to dispute. I am prepared to leave the methods to them, but I do say that there are in connection with a comprehensive scheme from the Wellington weir to serve these areas many considerations to be dealt with owing to the fact that during the long period of years no really determined attempt—I think I can say that advisedly—has been made to solve the water problems of the towns to which I have referred.

The expenditure that has been made on the schemes that have been put down, in many cases proving total failures and in others partial failures, has cost the State or the local authorities concerned the best part of £500,000, and there is little, if anything, in those areas today to show for that money. There are bitumen catchments and excavations which hold water when Divine Providence provides sufficient rain to fill them but that, within recent years, has been so rare an occurrence that it can be said that there is little to show for the money that has been expended in the way I have mentioned. The local authority at Katanning has on its hands at the present moment a liability of approximately £30,000, which in the ordinary course of events will not be paid by sinking fund contributions except for a small part of it over a period of about 25 years. What is to happen to that liability if some other and larger scheme with greater prospects of success is put in in that area? No mention has been made of that. No-one really knows what the proposal is—whether it be a first or any other priority.

We have been told that great works will be carried out, but we have not been told by what method they will be financed, nor have we been told and this is more important at this stage—what attitude it is proposed to

adopt in regard to the existing obligations of local authorities who, as in the instance of Katanning, have their own schemes. Then we have other considerations concerning this comprehensive scheme. Are the agricultural areas to be treated, so far as rating is concerned, on the same basis as the eastern areas? If they are to be so treated, are the rates to be identical with those charged elsewhere, or are they to be less or more? As a direct consequence of the hiatus of years during which no sufficient action has been taken in regard to the Great Southern there are differences which warrant my saying that the same principles as to rating should not be applied to these areas as were applied to the areas where, in many cases, water supplies on a wide scale preceded settlement, or were known to be following closely upon settlement.

In the Great Southern districts—south of Narrogin, anyway—there is not a farm where a sum of from £300 to £1,000 has not been expended on water conservation. While that water conservation may not have been so successful as to warrant those people from objecting to any other system being brought in, at the same time it is a consideration because in most cases borrowed money has been used to provide it and the obligation in respect of that borrowed money today would be between £15 and £50 per annum according to the capital expended, whereas in other areas, more favoured as to time of settlement and water supply, such considerations do not arise because dams and other water conservation schemes of that type were not undertaken, so that the question of the financial obligation involved as a result of them does not exist. I am the last person to say that these difficulties are incapable of being ironed out. Quite the contrary.

But as a representative of these districts and as one who wants to be reasonably fair in his discussions on these subjects with his constituents, I think that I and others similarly situated are entitled to know just what is in the Government's mind in regard to these matters. It would then be possible for me, and others like me, to acquaint inquirers with the information that I received from time to time. I could say to them that the assumption is that the work is going to be done and what it is likely to cost, and that the Government is considering the matter and that such and such is likely to be the position. But I have not the faintest idea what the position is. I am asked frequently enough, but there has been no public statement made and my answer principally has been that I presume these schemes to be so much in embryo that no-one can give a satisfactory answer. It appears now, however, that these schemes are not so much in embryo because they are sufficiently advanced for the suggestion to be made that they shall not be the first priority, but that in the dim and distant future something might be done. I want to assure the Minister that that is not satisfactory to the people of the principal town in my electorate.

The Minister for Works: That is not a fair statement.

Mr. WATTS: It is as I read the hon. gentleman's speech in regard to this matter, because in no circumstance did he hold out anything more than was held out by the Minister for Works—not the present Minister for Works—at the road board conference in reference to this subject in 1943, except that one gained the impression that there was no determination as to which work would be dealt with first, whereas the most recent speech by the present holder of that very high office gave me the impression, gleaned from the words he used, that it would not be a very early proposition after the war period because of the needs of some other area already well served in comparison with the area to which I referred—and yet was to have first priority. I propose to leave the question of these major water supplies and to make just a few references to the eastern areas of the Great Southern district. The people there, of course, are in a very much more difficult position this year than they have been in the past. Hitherto, when difficulties of this description have arisen, they have been able to have water hauled by the railways to supply their needs. This year, however, it is beyond the capacity of the Railway Department should the need arise, which is very likely to be apparent, to render assistance in that direction. That is so because of the tremendous strain imposed upon the Railway Department in connection with its ordinary services as well as in connection with services elsewhere.

In this instance, the Minister has taken some steps in a long-term way, as it were, to deal with the difficulty in my district because he has authorised the expenditure of a considerable sum of money for the construction of storage tanks in the area around Pingrup and Pingaring. Unfortunately for him and for those concerned, he is not able to say when a start can be made with this work. I feel sure that the Minister is taking every measure to see that men and materials for this work are provided in the reasonably near future, because this is not the first time by any means that these districts have been in such a position. Whatever we do with regard to a national and comprehensive water supply scheme, it will be a long time, quite obviously because of the distance from the starting point, before water can be supplied. I am certainly grateful to the Minister for the consideration he has given to the matters I have referred to. But surely in such matters, when the Commonwealth Government is providing money for drought relief in various States and is under considerable obligation to do something for this State financially, if the need should arise in the near future, as indicated in the reply the Minister for Agriculture gave in response to a question the other day, it would be reasonable for that Government to take some action in connection with water supplies such as I have referred to, seeing that those undertakings have been approved by the Government of the State. It should see that men and materials are made available so that the works could be put in hand in order to catch some water next winter. I have no guarantee, in the absence of some suitable holding ground, that we shall not be in a similar position next year.

The difficulty at Pingrup, for instance, is that only shallow dams can be sunk. If they are constructed below a certain depth, contact is made with salty conditions, so that the water that would be obtained could not be used, even if any could be caught. Again, if shallow dams are constructed, a large part of the water impounded evaporates because the average farmer cannot afford to roof them. If they are roofed, the capacity of the average dam is not sufficient to hold out over a dry season. In these circumstances, the practice has grown up of building concrete dams and roofing them under the supervision of Government engineers. Where that has been done, the work has proved very successful. More such dams are required and the Public Works Department, through the Minister, has approved of the construction of more of them. Sites have been chosen, but the labour and materials will not be available for their construction even next year. Thus the need for the strongest representations that can be made to the Commonwealth Government in that regard is, I think, apparent and reasonable, too. The Commonwealth Government knows the position with regard to the drought. Under existing conditions, a greater and ever greater quantity of primary production is required in connection with the conduct of the war and the supplies requisite for the Armed Services.

Difficulties in that direction throughout Australia are apparent and tremendous The lessening of supplies because of drought conditions has emphasised the difficulties, and surely every reasonable step that can be taken within the powers of the Government to minimise the possibility of similar conditions recurring ought to be taken. In this regard I feel that the Minister will do his best to have this matter dealt with. I thought I would discuss the matter this evening so that every member, and perhaps the Press as well, could have a proper understanding of the position. I am not in the habit of making complaints. Not since 1936 have I raised my voice in this manner on the question of water supplies. At that time the conditions were desperate and I submitted a motion the purpose of which was to secure an inquiry into the whole question. Owing to the opposition of the then Minister for Works, the motion was defeated but, in the course of his speech, the Minister assured me and others that we need not fear inactivity on the part of the Government. Eight years have passed. I did not fear the inactivity of the Government until a few nights ago when I heard the Minister's statement in this House. I then realised that at the end of eight years we had made no more progress with regard to the provision of water supplies in the Great Southern area than we had in 1936. In consequence I determined to say just what I thought on the subject, and I have taken this opportunity to do so in the hope that I may be taught

a little better on the subject of country water supplies.

MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER (Subiaco): I thank the Minister and, through him, the officers and employees of his department for the courtesy that has been extended to me during the past year. My requests on behalf of the Subiaco electorate have been met. Work required has been done properly and promptly. Last night the Minister mentioned that some municipalities and road boards had not submitted post-war plans in connection with works to be undertaken. I do not know whether the Subiaco Municipal Council is among them; but if so, I shall see that the matter is rectified next week. In the light of past experience, I have every confidence that any post-war plan placed before the Minister will receive not only consideration but will be given effect to, if it is at all possible. There are many schools in my electorate, and I realise that it is very difficult for the department to deal with all the requirements of schools and other institutions in the metropolitan area. I am glad to be able to say that I have not failed to have most of the work that I have requested carried out satisfactorily. For this I thank the Minister and his department.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly): In speaking to the Estimates submitted by the Minister for Works, I first of all wish to supplement the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition regarding the water supplies in the Great Southern districts, but particularly do I wish to mention the township of Pingelly. That long-suffering township has still the same water supply—if we can dignify it by calling it a water supply—as it had 20 years ago. From time to time the people have put up various projects, all of which, when examined, have been pronounced to be too expensive, and so they drag along with a scheme that is hardly usable. The water is too hot to be of use for household purposes and it cannot often be used for gardens and, for the large majority of the people in the township, the supply is cut off altogether. This is a tragic state of affairs to be dragging on year after year because, although that water is unfit for human use, and although it is cut off from the premises of the people, they still have to pay for it, and if they are not prompt in their payments, they receive the usual blue summons. I can imagine the outcry that would occur in the metropolitan area if the people there were asked to pay £3 to £5 a year for water they could not use or for water that was not reticulated anywhere near their premises. This is not fair or just to the people of Pingelly. For 12 or 15 years, I have complained of this state of affairs and it is high time some action was taken.

But this is not the worst. When it comes to an exceptionally dry season like the present one, not only have the people to pay for the water they do not get, but in addition, when water is brought to the town by rail or other means to provide household supplies, they are called upon to pay 5s. per 100 gallons for it, plus the cost of transporting the water from the railway station to their homes. I certainly look for an alteration of that system. If we cannot devise some plan to afford much-needed relief, the engineers of the department should be asked to do it. An investigation was made of what promised to be an artificial scheme, but unfortunately this occurred on the eve of the outbreak of war, and I suppose it proved to be unsatisfactory because it has not been proceeded with. As a result, the people of Pingelly are still waiting and wondering when on earth they are going to get some relief.

With the Leader of the Opposition, I had hoped that we had reached what might reasonably be considered to be the end of this state of affairs, but my hopes were not buoyed up when I heard the Minister say that these works would be put in hand two years after the cessation of hostilities. When we look around and find that the construction of similar works is not being postponed in other States, we are entitled to ask why their construction is being deferred here. In Tasmania the authorities were even able to build a bridge during the war, and surely a water supply is much more important than a bridge! Even from the point of view of the defence of this country, the provision of adequate water supplies in the country is essential. Without my entering into details, members will understand the reference when I say that certain investigations were made some time ago with a view to determining just how

many of the inhabitants of the State could be accommodated in certain parts of the country should it have become necessary to move them further inland, and that when the investigation was made it was found that only about one-tenth of the people whom it might have been necessary to move into those areas could be accommodated, owing entirely to the shortage of water supplies.

The war, of course, has to be brought to a successful conclusion and it seems to be moving that way, but it would not require many undue happenings to occur to cause this country once more to be threatened. Therefore it behoves us to profit by the lessons we have learnt and come to some decision on this important matter. I hope that steps will be taken without delay to overcome the difficulty of water supplies in the Great Southern districts and give the people much-needed relief. When members of the farming community get on in years and desire to retire they cannot continue to live in those districts because it is impossible for them to have a garden, and most people like to have one. A few years ago, we went to the expense of putting down a bowling green, and it is now a monument to the destructive powers of the Pingelly water scheme; in other words, it is just a wilderness. This is the sort of thing I want to see terminated and terminated in the near future.

Following on the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition regarding any scheme installed to serve country towns and districts, I, too, would like to have some information about them, because it has to be remembered that no matter what they are —good, bad or indifferent as they might be—they would not serve certain farms. Many farmers have put in schemes that have cost them a lot of money, with the result that today they have efficient water supplies, but it will not be a fair thing to ask those men to submit to being taxed a certain amount per acre or per year, whatever basis might be adopted, when they do not want to use the scheme at all—taxed merely because the pipes will be run within a certain distance of their farms. I think such farmers would have a just grievance. I am quite prepared to see a scheme adopted by the Government having for its object the putting down of dams on all farms as far as possible. Almost every year money is expended in some part of the State in order to convey water to the district for human consumption and stock purposes. That money is expended and there is very little to show for it.

In recent months the Agricultural Bank has adopted a plan under which a certain sum of money, about £100, is advanced to a settler to enable him to put down a dam. I express the opinion that that is not a good system to adopt. It would be far better if the department under the control of the Minister for Works arranged for two or more dam-sinking units to travel from farm to farm and put down the requisite type of dam according to the size of the farm, one which the farmer could roof and equip with a windmill. If that were done, there would be an assured supply of water on those farms. I appreciate that there are farms in some of the districts mentioned by the Leader of the Opposition where salt is prevalent and a plan of this sort would not be feasible, but such farms would be few in number. If we had a system of that sort, it would be of considerable benefit to the farmers and the State, because the farmers have plenty of other work to do, and instead of their taking six months to sink a dam, a dam-sinking unit could put one down in a couple of weeks. I know of a dam in a particular farm that was put down 23 or 24 years ago. I pass it periodically and on no occasion have I seen the water in that dam down more than two feet. Dams should be systematically put down in that country, and then we would not have the recurring water trouble every year. This scheme would be less expensive moreover, than the other scheme proposed.

While on the subject of water supply, let me mention that there are certain rock catchments in that district which could be considerably enlarged. The rock catchment at Tinkurrin is most important. The rock is exceptionally large in a killingly dry area. The Railway Department has a tank there that holds about 2,000,000 gallons, and only a small part of the rock catchment has been used for water supply. In order to utilise the whole of that rock, two more tanks could have been put in, giving a further large supply of water in that dry area. The only other matter to which I desire to refer is the statement of the Minister when introducing his Estimates that the works he had indicated in his speech would be put into

operation two years after the cessation of hostilities. Now, that statement requires a little explanation.

The Minister for Works: Not two years after the cessation of hostilities, but during the two years immediately following the cessation of hostilities.

Mr. SEWARD: I am glad to have that explanation. For the first two post-war years, I understood, the States would have to finance their own works without Commonwealth assistance. That seems to be at variance with the experience of other States. I read in a statement made by a South Australian member of Parliament, for instance, that the post-war works approved by the National Works Council of South Australia would provide employment for about 1,000 to 2,000 men during the two years following the cessation of hostilities. It appears from that statement that those works were approved, and it seemed that Commonwealth assistance was given.

The Minister for Lands: No.

Mr. SEWARD: That is the unfortunate part. I mentioned this matter in speaking on the Budget.

The Minister for Lands: Commonwealth assistance was to be given for the first two post-war years, in which State expenditure would be impossible.

Mr. SEWARD: It is most difficult. We have our Budgets and our Loan Estimates and our post-war arrangements placed before us, and it is very difficult for a private member to get a thorough grip of all those things. One has to keep contact with the various reports as well as one possibly can. However, I am glad to know that we are on an equal footing with the Eastern States in those matters. The subject I wish to refer to is one of terrific urgency, even more so than when we had a debate in this House on it a few weeks ago. I refer to the Railway Department. According to the Minister we have a post-war programme of £1,200,000 to be spent on rehabilitation of the railways; but so far we have not got details of what is to be done with that sum, or the sum that may be spent. On what requirements in the way of rollingstock is the sum of £150,000 to be expended? The sum of £32,000, which was mentioned is very small for rollingstock that is needed The provision of engines and rollingstock is of tragic importance to the department, and the position gets worse every day. I would like to know just exactly what amount is going to be spent in that way, because we find that there are certain amounts being spent without explanation. There is an amount of £15,250 to be spent, no doubt to the delight of my colleague the Leader of the Opposition, on a water supply at Mt. Barker; and £5,000 is going to be spent on the Perth railway station platform, which expenditure will not bring in revenue. All our efforts should be concentrated on the building of engines and rollingstock.

At the present time the ' ailway Department has cancelled the transportation of between 200 and 400 trainloads of stock for the Midland Market, solely because the department cannot haul it. We have wool stocked up in the country districts because the railways cannot haul it. Similarly, we have wheat stacked in the country. The dairying people are crying out for clean stock and have not been able to get it. The Railway Department simply cannot haul these urgent requirements. We have between 5,000,000 and 7,000,000 bushels of wheat practically lying idle in this State because the railways cannot haul it. That is a tragic position. I have every reason to believe that if it could be hauled, the Australian Wheat Board would ship a great deal of that wheat, which the Eastern States require; but it cannot be done. The wheat cannot be hauled.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is deviating from the administration of the department of the Minister for Works. He will have an opportunity later to speak regarding the railways. The Committee is dealing with Public Works and Buildings.

Mr. SEWARD: I referred to the railways only because the Minister mentioned post-war works. I do hope something will be done, and urgently done, in that direction, to give relief to this very urgent need. I have now mentioned all the matters that I wish to refer to on this Vote, but I shall desire to say something on the Loan Estimates.

MR. HOLMAN (Forrest): The speech of the Minister for Works in introducing his Estimates was very enlightening, and it offers great scope. In particular I was glad to hear the Minister mention that the Electricity Advisory Committee would probably furnish the results of its deliberations be-

fore the end of the year. I was equally glad to hear his announcement that the construction of the Fremantle power house would in no way prejudice the going-ahead with the decision of the Electricity Advisory Committee regarding the South-West power scheme. At the same time I am not fully convinced by the Minister's reply to the member for Murray-Wellington as to how the two schemes would go forward if they were both put into operation at the same time—providing, that is, that the deliberations of the committee were favourable to the construction of the South-West scheme. The Minister certainly said that the scheme would not be interfered with, but that was hardly the kind of deliberate answer that is satisfying, insofar as it is not the answer that is wanted. That answer would be that the two schemes could be built at the same time. The Minister also mentioned the addition to the Wellington Dam.

That work may in some degree dovetail with the South-West electricity scheme, because by the raising of the walls of the dam and the consequent increase in water conservation the necessary supply of water would be available for any project in that particular area where we believe the scheme might be built. The Minister also said that various irrigation and water conservation works would be carried out in the South-West. I am now referring to those works which, owing to the war, had to be postponed. He drew the attention of the member for Murray-Wellington to them, but forgot the member for Forrest. Although the Minister did not say so specifically, I believe that he was referring to the Stirling Dam, which is in the Forrest electorate. I hope that when the schemes are completed, irrigation will be carried through to the Benger district, and that the Forrest electorate will get some of its own water for a change. The member for Murray-Wellington also said that Pinjarra was in need of a new water scheme, because the increase in the salinity of the Murray River was having a deleterious effect on the present water supply. He also said that water could be brought down from the hills, so again it would come from the Forrest electorate.

I suggest to the Minister that if he takes the member for Murray-Wellington seriously and intends at some time to use the water from the hills in that area, he should also give consideration to running the water the other way towards Dwellingup, and give that district a water supply. It seems strange that in an area which has a 40 inch rainfall we should be complaining about lack of water. I can quite understand the views expressed by the previous speaker and others who have contributed to this debate on the subject of lack of water supplies in their districts. Dwellingup has been without a water supply ever since it was selected as a townsite. Luckily, within the past few weeks there has been another downpour of rain in that district, and this has assisted the people of Dwellingup and the surrounding districts to fill their tanks. There is a town pump at Dwellingup which takes one back to the pioneering days. The women and children have to go to this hand-pump in order to get the water required for domestic use. I hope the Minister will take that fact into consideration. The Minister also said that a sum of £1,600,000 will be expended on main roads. That money will come from the petrol tax that will accumulate until the end of the war. The Minister will, I trust, give due consideration to the roads in the South-West. I know this is a hardy annual; it has been brought up for the past ten or 20 years.

Recently, I was reading "Hansard" of 1934 and noticed that my late sister was then complaining about the state of the roads in the timber areas. At that time the Minister was, like myself, a private member, and as such spoke his mind as private members sometimes do. During the course of the remarks of my late sister she mentioned certain roads in the Forrest electorate, and said that the timber workers suffered greatly because of their condition. They are in a much worse condition today. I was recently travelling over the road from Dwellingup to Pinjarra and found the roads so bad that I actually got out of the car to see if I had a punctured tyre. The road are in a shocking state and the wonder is that a person is not shaken out of the car altogether. When my late sister made that remark to which I referred Mr. Hawke, as he then was, interjected, "Hear, hear!" My sister then said, "The hon. member has had experience of them. Members of the Government also have driven over them." I am hoping that now I have jogged the Minister's memory he will recall his experience. Later on my late sister remarked, "These

are about the worst roads in the timber area." The Minister interjected, "In the world." I hope he will bear that remark in mind when he comes to deal with road matters, because the roads in that district are in a still worse condition now.

I desire to mention the Brunswick water supply. A new scheme was put into operation there in 1938 or 1939, and the rates charged have been a source of criticism by the people of the district ever since. I took the matter up before I joined the Forces and was told at that time by the then Minister that, on account of the capital expenditure, interest and sinking fund and maintenance costs, he could not possibly reduce the rates or the cost of water to the consumers in the district. The interest on that capital expenditure is five per cent. and that is a heavy burden for the people to bear. In addition, the sinking fund is one per cent., so that six per cent. has to be found on the capital expenditure by the residents of the district. We have heard of various works that are to be put in hand, on which the interest charged will be two per cent. or less. There should be some equality in these schemes so as to place the people on the same basis as all ratepayers will be if the new schemes that are envisaged are completed. Since then, on looking through the Auditor General's report, I have found that for 1943-44 there was a surplus of £856 in respect of the Brunswick water supply. I hope the Minister will take that into consideration and look into the question of the cost to the consumers with a view to a reduction of the rates. The Minister referred to a certain dam. I hope he was speaking of the Stirling Dam, because that will be a great help to the irrigation areas of the South-West. In the Harvey, Wokalup and Benger areas there is a lot of land that can do with more irrigation, which will not be possible until the Stirling Dam is completed.

There is another point I have mentioned before and which I intend to mention again, because I do not think repetition of these things is harmful. I hope when that constructional work begins, the employees engaged on it will have decent housing. I have mentioned earlier this session the fact that just prior to and during the first years of the war, employees engaged on constructional work had to work under disgraceful conditions. Their housing arrangements—they were living under canvas—were equally disgraceful. I hope there will not be a repetition of that state of affairs but that the new order of which we have heard so much will be applied to these workers. Another matter to which I wish to refer is the position of the Town Planning Department. I have looked through the Estimates from the inception of the Town Planning Commissioner's Office and have discovered that, although the Town Planning Commissioner has had assistance, those persons have only been employed in a temporary capacity. It is strange that in regard to the office of the Town Planning Commissioner there is no evidence of planning.

I suggest that some stability be afforded that branch of the Public Works Department, so that it can plan ahead. There has been one person in the office over a period of years who should have qualified for a permanent position under the Public Service Act, but he is still employed in a temporary capacity. Some other department might want his services in the future, and the Commissioner will have to look for another assistant. I have no compunction in speaking on this matter, because on various occasions I have had to call on the Town Planning Commissioner for assistance, and never has he failed me. The assistance he has rendered my electorate has been gratifying both to myself and to the electors I represent. I think the same could be said by members representing other electorates in the South-West and other portions of the State. I was reading in "The West Australian" recently that the Commonwealth is evolving plans as a result of which the work of the Town Planning Commissioner will be greatly increased. I commend to the Minister the advisability of going into this matter of the Commissioner's staff with a view to permanent appointments being made. I also believe that an increase in the staff will be required very soon. Probably the bulk of my contribution to the debate on the Estimates has been a little parochial, as I have been reminded by the member for East Perth, and of a slightly critical character. Bearing that in mind. I wish now to thank the Minister for the assistance he has given me since I have been back in harness. That assistance has been deeply appreciated by me and by the people I represent.

MR. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall): In view of the pleas that have been submitted to the Minister from various country centres for priority in water supplies, I feel that I would be lacking in the duty I owe to the districts I represent if I did not submit for the Minister's consideration an urgent No. 1 priority claim on their behalf.

Mr. Withers: It goes by seniority here. We have been here longer than you have.

Mr. LESLIE: If that is the case, leaving aside the question of one's length of service in the House, I consider that the districts I represent have prior claim on the ground of seniority, by virtue of the fact that they have waited longest for the water supplies I am requesting on their behalf. So the hon. member's interjection supports my claim. In one part of my electorate—the North Baandee-Kodj Kodjin area—requests have been continually put forward for an extension of the goldfields water main. Both the present Minister and his predecessor have received deputations by the dozen, appealing for an extension of this service. The present Minister has told me he is sympathetic towards the requests put to him but that he is limited by shortage of manpower and of pipes. I would like to inform the Minister that if he can provide the pipes, I will guarantee that the manpower will be found to put them down. The farmers in those areas are so concerned with the urgency of the problem that they would devote the hours they would otherwise spend on water carting to installing the pipes. I suggest to the Minister that he might make investigations at the Department of Agriculture, where the supply of water pipes is controlled; because, in conversation with an officer of that department, I was surprised to learn that one-inch to four-inch pipes were in the State in abundance. If these pipes are available the Minister has my assurance that his manpower troubles are over.

Mr. Doney: Did you ascertain where those four-inch pipes are located?

Mr. LESLIE: No. I think the Minister is in a better position than I am to find where those pipes are, but if he requires my assistance to ascertain their whereabouts my services are at his disposal. Reference has been made to the urgency of water supplies in the South-West and Great Southern districts. The member for Williams-Narrogin is one who has referred to that matter. I am not in a position, so far as a number of my country towns are concerned, to talk about a shortage of water supplies from the existing schemes, because we have no schemes. In many of the larger towns in my electorate the residents have had during the last 30 odd years to rely upon their own initiative and enterprise for an adequate supply of water from a roof catchment. When those supplies reach the stage where they are so low as to cause concern the residents have to resort to water carting. I pay 25s. per thousand gallons and so do all the other residents in the town where I live. There is no question of 2s. or 7s. 6d. per thousand.

Mr. Holman: The average cost would be high for a bath.

Mr. LESLIE: We measure our baths by the cupful, and that has to do for the whole family. Not only that, but in the case of most of the sources from where we get our water we have to take action to render the water fit for domestic purposes. I believe that I have an absolute No. 1 priority for water supplies in the north-east wheatbelt area. The north Baandee extension is crying out to be done immediately. The question of replacement of a considerable area of existing pipes serving on the No. 1 or Barbalin water scheme is also one of urgency. I regret I can find no reference in the Loan Estimates to the £9,500,000 or the £11,000,000 water scheme that is to be a post-war reconstruction job. But even if that were put forward as a No. 1 priority job on the cessation of hostilities—as I hope it will be—then I say that in the districts I am referring to, namely Kodj Kodjin, South Trayning and North Baandee, the problem is so urgent that neither they nor the country can afford to wait until such time as the huge prospective scheme has been started. Any expenditure undertaken immediately cannot be considered unnecessary because a scheme of a far more comprehensive nature is ultimately to be introduced

I remind members that from my electorate the cry for adequate water supplies has been voiced in this House for many years —often by a lone voice—by my predecessors. It is an unusual occurrence to have, coming forward in such extreme urgency, an appeal from other parts of the State for adequate water supplies. That is not because members representing those areas

were in any way lacking in their duty in previous years, but the urgency did not exist to the same extent then as it does now. I wish to deal with the question raised by the member for Pingelly in connection with dams on farms. I agree with him that every endeavour should be made to encourage farmers to put down dams to conserve their own water supplies, and they should have every measure of assistance in that connection. One of the best ways in which farmers can be encouraged to undertake that work is by an alteration in the existing method of levying the water rates. If farmers were charged for the actual water they used rather than on an acreage basis irrespective of whether they used one gallon or 20,000 gallons of water, many—in fact, I believe most of them—would to a considerable extent conserve the water they require and so ease the call upon the reticulated water schemes.

Many farmers in my electorate pay up to £70 a year whether they use the water or not, but if they paid at the rate of as much as 7s. 6d. per thousand gallons they would probably have to pay no more than £20 a year. I now wish to refer to another matter raised by the Minister, and that is the question of military damage to country roads. I was pleased to hear him say he had advised some local authorities to prepare a case for submission to the Commonwealth Government. I am wondering, because he referred only to the northern parts of the State, whether he is aware that in the central part of the State considerable damage has also been done to many of the country roads because of the heavy military traffic, and that many of those local governing authorities have been put to considerable expense to keep them in a usable condition for the ordinary travelling public. One such road I wish to bring to the Minister's attention is that running from Goomalling to Nungarin.

Members have heard of the thousands of vehicles at present at Nungarin. I can assure them that the number there is nothing compared with the number that has travelled over that particular road. Not only have heavy motor vehicles travelled over it, but the heaviest of tanks used by the military authorities have passed over it—as well as other roads—and turned it into worse than a rough bush track. The local governing authorities in the districts through which the road runs have—and all praise to them for it—spent money, which in my opinion they were not morally or legally entitled to spend, so as to maintain it in a useful condition. Most of those local authorities are today, like the State Government, in the position that they have certain money in hand that they cannot spend immediately. But their outlying roads have had to be neglected so much that when normal works proceed they will be called upon to expend far more than they will be able to lay their hands on. I ask the Minister whether he will include the road boards through whose districts the Goomalling-Nungarin road passes, with the other road boards to which he referred, and suggest to them that they also prepare a case and submit a claim for consideration by the Commonwealth Government and that, above all, his department assist these boards in their claim. I ask him to give these boards his moral and personal support in any representations his Government may make to the Commonwealth Government.

[*Mr. Mann took the Chair.*]

Mr. Cross: Do not you think it is the job of the road boards to mend the roads?

Mr. LESLIE: It certainly is.

Mr. Cross: Then why should the Government do that work?

Mr. LESLIE: The road boards should attend to it provided their traffic causes the damage to the roads.

Mr. Cross: Are the road boards asleep?

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. LESLIE: The boards are well awake to their responsibilities.

Mr. Cross: It would not appear so.

Mr. LESLIE: They are so well alive to their responsibilities that they are spending money that, in my opinion, they are not legally or morally bound to do, in an endeavour to maintain the roads in a usable condition.

Mr. Cross: They are not main roads.

Mr. LESLIE: That makes no difference. The military authorities do not consider whether they are or are not main roads.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! If the hon. member will address the Chair he will get on very much better.

Mr. LESLIE: Again I suggest to the Minister for Works that in any representations he makes to the Commonwealth for the expenditure of money on the reconstruction of roads he will include the Goomalling-Nungarin Road.

Vote put and passed.

Votes—Town Planning, £1,900; Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau, £3,310; Labour, £1,787; Factories, £8,160; Arbitration Court, £5,300; State Insurance, Office, £5; Department of Industrial Development, £5,190—agreed to.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Tuesday, 5th December, 1944.

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

QUESTION.

SHIPPING SPACE, SHORTAGE.

As to Raw Materials and Manufactured Goods.

Hon. L. B. BOLTON asked the Chief Secretary:

(i) Is the Government aware of the great difficulties manufacturers have in securing necessary shipping space, mostly for raw materials from the Eastern States?

(ii) Is it a fact that space is more readily granted for completed articles, most of which are in competition with locally-made goods?

(iii) Will the Government use every endeavour to have the present unsatisfactory position investigated, with a view to remedying same?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(i) Yes.

(ii) This has occurred, but it is not the general practice.

(iii) The Government is constantly taking action through the State Shipping Advisory Committee, of which Mr. J. Child, Chief Clerk of the Department of Industrial Development, is secretary.

ELECTORAL REFORM SELECT COMMITTEE.

Extension of Time.

On motion by Hon. C. F. Baxter, the time for bringing up the report was extended to Tuesday, the 19th December.

BILL—METROPOLITAN MILK ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 30th November.

HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [4.40]: The amendment which is proposed by this Bill, while having some far-reaching effects, is not considerable in extent so far as the control of the milk position in the metropolitan area is concerned. Were I only interested in the amendment, I think I would pass it without speaking, because I feel it is only one of the extra powers which should be given to the Milk Board. I am speaking, however, because I feel that this is not the correct method of handling the milk position as it is at the moment, and I shall endeavour to point out as I proceed that such small amendments to a Bill of this type are surely not wise when the whole Act needs considerable revision. To make my point quite clear at this stage, I intend to move an amendment that the Commissioner of Public Health be a member of the Milk Board. I hope to be able to show members the reasons for the change I am suggesting, and why I am asking the Government to revise the Act in toto, and not bring down a small amendment such as is comprised in the