

operations of the State Insurance Office along the lines proposed. I oppose the second reading.

On motion by Hon. G. Fraser, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 9.29 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Wednesday, 2nd October, 1946.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### ROAD FUNDS.

*As to State's Share of Petrol Tax, Etc.*

Mr. RODOREDA asked the Premier:

1, What amounts on account of road funds have been received from the Commonwealth Government, being this State's share of petrol tax for each of the years 1942, 1943, 1944, 1945 and 1946?

2, What amounts were expended for each of the above years?

3, What was the balance to credit of road funds at the 30th June, 1946?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Year ended 30/6/42, amount £403,720; 30/6/43, £302,420; 30/6/44, £334,017; 30/6/45, £399,435; 30/6/46, £594,787.

2, 30/6/42, £271,029; 30/6/43, £204,016; 30/6/44, £216,343; 30/6/45, £314,227; 30/6/46, £364,255.

3, £899,888.

### GOLDMINING.

*As to Use of Bulldozers and Provision of Boring Plants.*

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Mines:

1, Has consideration been given by the Mines Department to the possibilities in the use of bulldozers in assisting prospectors to discover new gold-bearing reefs or payable lodes?

2, If already tried, with what results?

3, How many portable boring plants, of recent approved pattern, has the Government in operation in boring for gold?

4, What depth are these plants designed to bore?

5, On what basis are the plants operating?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, Not to date.

3, Six mobile boring plants have been ordered from the manufacturers, who advise some delay in completion owing to shortage of channel iron and castings. The first is expected in approximately four weeks' time.

4, Approximately 150 feet.

5, It is intended to loan them to approved applicants.

6, I have also approached the Commonwealth Government with a request that it makes available for purchase by this Department from Army stocks four heavy portable compressor and drill units. A decision is being awaited.

### MT. BARKER HOSPITAL.

*As to Staff for Re-opening.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Health:

1, Has the staff been found that is necessary to enable the hospital at Mt. Barker to re-open?

2, If so, when will it be available?

3, If not, are urgent steps being taken to provide it in view of the urgency of condi-

tions and the substantial population of the district, and when is re-opening anticipated?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, and 3, Every possible step is being taken to secure staff, but because of the general shortage, a date for re-opening cannot be suggested.

### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS.

#### *As to Explanation of Items.*

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON asked the Premier:

1, In Public Accounts for the financial year 1945 under Return No. 2, Consolidated Revenue Fund, the figures are balanced by recording a surplus after adjustments of £4,490 3s. 9d. In the similar return No. 2 for the financial year 1946, the figures balanced exactly without disclosing substantial broken figures. Will he explain this achievement?

2, In the Public Accounts, 1945, there is a line "Home for Aged People" showing an amount of £65,633 17s. 7d. on both the debit and credit sides. In the Public Accounts for 1946, the figure is £96,075 12s. 1d. Will he explain the increase—

(a) the amount contributed by the Lotteries;

(b) the earnings from the investment of these specified funds?

The PREMIER replied:

1, The year ended the 30th June, 1945, resulted in a surplus of revenue over expenditure of £4,490. The year ended the 30th June, 1946, resulted in a "balanced budget," as the Grants Commission made up the amount of shortage of revenue £912,558 14s. 0d., thereby enabling revenue and expenditure to be of equal amount, £14,407,557.

2, The Lotteries Commission contributed the whole amount other than interest earned.

The Lotteries Commission contribution during the year was £30,000.

Capital, when received from the Lotteries Commission, is invested, but interest is paid to the Lotteries Commission.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Mr. Holman (Forrest) on the ground of urgent private business.

### BILLS (3)—FIRST READING

- 1, Comprehensive Agricultural Areas and Goldfields Water Supply.  
Introduced by the Minister for Works.
- 2, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Justice.
- 3, Anatomy Act Amendment.  
Introduced by the Minister for Health.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Totalisator Duty Act Amendment.  
Transmitted to the Council.
- 2, Friendly Societies Act Amendment.  
*Passed.*

### BILL—TRAFFIC ACT AMENDMENT.

Reports of Committee adopted.

### MOTION—SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

#### *As to Reduction of Land Prices.*

MR. THORN (Toodyay) [4.40]: I move—

That in the opinion of this House the Government should immediately introduce legislation similar to the provisions of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act, 1919 (Section 11) (as amended by Section 4 of the Discharged Soldiers' Settlement Act Amendment Act, 1919) providing for the reduction by 50 per cent. of the price of land acquired or held under the Land Act by any ex-members of the Forces, or the dependants of any member thereof who lost his life on active service.

I placed this motion on the notice paper with a desire to get information on the subject. I believe the Minister for Lands has something to convey to the House regarding it so I shall not delay members for long. At Albany about eight months ago a deputation waited upon the Premier to discuss the position of soldiers from the last war. The object is really to apply to soldier settlers from the recent war—I refer to those who purchased Crown land—similar conditions to those granted to soldier settlers from the 1914-18 war. Subsequent to the deputation, a question was asked in this House regarding the matter and the Premier replied that attention was being given to it. The motion is self-explanatory and there is no need to discuss it at length. The Minister has definitely intimated to me that the Government has dealt with the subject and has informed me that an amendment of the Act is in contemplation—the Minister has already been courteous enough to show it to

me—that will fill the bill. I have much pleasure in moving the motion standing in my name.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [443]: As the member for Toodyay intimated, a deputation did wait on the Premier to discuss this matter and the Government has given considerable attention to it. A Bill has already been drafted and, in fact, is at present with the Crown Law Department prior to its introduction in this House. It provides for an amendment to the Land Act and what the member for Toodyay has in mind will be included in the Bill. As the hon. member stated, the motion speaks for itself. After 25 years of experience in connection with the system adopted after the 1914-18 war, the fact was demonstrated that many anomalies had been created and the Government feels impelled to deal with the difficulty in a different way. Members will admit that the two wars are hardly comparable from the standpoint of arriving at a definition of "discharged soldier." In the earlier war the soldier had been oversea and there was little argument about his position. It is quite different with the last war and great difficulty has been found in arriving at a satisfactory definition of "returned soldier." I think the definition included in the Bill that will be presented shortly to members will be considered fairly satisfactory, but the Government does not desire to be dogmatic in that regard. It is difficult to differentiate between the soldiers who went to the last war. For instance, it is quite possible—in fact, such instances have occurred—for a man to have enlisted and been away from his farm for a long period and yet not have left Australia.

**Mr. Thorn:** There was the Armoured Division.

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** Yes. I have been told that that division was one of the best trained and best possible to get together. After three years of strict training, the division never heard a shot fired in anger. It is possible that some of those men were away from their farms for the whole period and at the same time for another man in another unit to have been sent oversea, yet the latter might not have had half the period of service credited to a man in the Armoured Division. Such anomalies make it very

difficult to define just what is a returned soldier. Finally, the Government adopted a definition which is included in the Bill and members will have an opportunity to review it. The Government and I myself, as Minister, are prepared to give full consideration to any alteration that members may suggest as necessary, provided always that we do justice to the men we are trying to help.

**Mr. Watts:** You are mellowing with the years.

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** The knocks I have been getting in the Legislative Council may have had some effect upon me. At any rate, my sympathies are with the men who have experienced difficulties in this matter. The effect of the 1918 Act was to reduce the purchase price of conditional purchase land by 50 per cent. in favour of the returned man. I have never been able to understand, and cannot even now, why the purchase price payments were described as rent. The Act provided that the payments in respect of the C.P. land were to extend over a period of 25 years and those payments were designated as rent. Under the 1918 Act the returned soldier when he came back from the war was granted a reduction of 50 per cent. and his payments were spread as rent over 25 years. That created a series of anomalies. For instance, the returned man who had the freehold of his property received no concession at all. On the other hand, the man who took up 1,000 acres at 10s. per acre received back something like £250. Another man who took up, say, 50 acres for a vineyard or a market garden received a maximum amount of £25. Here again anomalies crept in.

**The Premier:** One was in connection with a man who desired to sell his property in the interim.

**The MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I was going to deal with that next. A man might have returned from the war and been on his property for 15 years, but for some reason best known to himself decided to sell his property to a civilian, no returned soldier having indicated any desire to secure it. The Act provided that although he had been receiving the rebate over the years, he had to refund the whole amount so rebated because he had sold the property to a civilian. Thus he had to refund to the department all the money he had received as the result of the concession. Under the Bill that the Govern-

ment proposes to introduce, the soldier will receive a 50 per cent. reduction in his rent, to use the word that is commonly applied to the payment, and in the event of his selling to a civilian he will not be asked to repay any of the 50 per cent. concession which he received during the whole period he was on the land.

There are two questions to be considered. Take the eligibility of the person! This is difficult, but I think we shall be able to overcome it. In fact, it is to be debated on the discussion of the R.S.L. plebiscite. I think that is the best way to overcome the difficulty, and I hope it will be appreciated that the Government on this occasion is endeavouring to give the soldier who takes up land under C.P. conditions the full benefit of the concession of a 50 per cent. reduction of the rent as long as he is on the land; and if he sells to a civilian, the latter would not expect to get that concession. In fact, he will not get it. The 1918 Act brought about a considerable amount of collusion which has gradually been discovered. A soldier decided to sell to a civilian, who bought and went on paying rents at the reduced rate. At the end of the 25 years, he applied for and got the freehold of the land and nobody knew that he had been paying the reduced rate. The soldier had gone and there was not much use then in endeavouring to recover the 50 per cent. reduction. Soldiers are just as human as other persons. However, if this proposed legislation passes, that sort of thing is not likely to recur.

I have given notice of an amendment which appears on the notice paper, to make the motion coincide with the legislation which it is intended to introduce. However, I would suggest to the member for Toodyay that he might withdraw his motion under an absolute assurance that at the earliest possible moment the Government will bring down the proposed legislation. The matter is in the hands of the Crown Law Department now. If the hon. member is not prepared to withdraw his motion, then I shall have no option but to move my amendment.

**MR. THORN** (Toodyay—in reply) [4.53]: I shall withdraw the motion with pleasure, as the Minister has given us his assurance that he is introducing the Bill which he mentioned and which I think will

give the soldier a much better outlook than that which I have asked for. I accordingly ask leave to withdraw the motion.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

## **BILL—ROAD DISTRICTS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 18th September.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.54]: The Bill which the member for Katanning has introduced is one which aims at giving road boards the right to acquire buildings for use as hostels for the purpose of accommodating children attending schools in country districts. The Bill also proposes to give local authorities power to construct buildings for that purpose. Therefore, the Bill is one which is likely to gain the support not only of members of the Government, but of every member of the House. There is a clear indication that, with the consolidation of schools in country districts and the establishment of what is known as the area school, the demand for accommodation for children will increase and go on increasing for many years to come. The accommodation problem is already acute in some of the big country towns and would have been much more acute except for the activities of the Country Women's Association in certain centres and also of some churches, which have taken the initiative in either acquiring premises suitable for hostels for school children or in having suitable premises built for that purpose.

It is not easy to anticipate the number of road boards likely to take advantage of this alteration to the law, if Parliament approves of it; but I think it desirable, where the need exists, for local governing authorities seriously to consider the question of operating under this law, if it passes. Local governing authorities are answerable to the local people. Although members of road boards are elected under a restricted franchise, nevertheless they are answerable to the local people to a large extent and consequently there would be guaranteed, I should imagine, sound management of any hostel acquired or erected by a board. In any event, the Bill does not place any compulsion upon any individual local authority; it merely gives the authority the right to

discuss and decide upon the advisability of the authority taking action along the lines set out in the Bill. Consequently, there is not much room for debate on the proposal contained in the Bill. If the Bill becomes law, and I think it undoubtedly will, the place for discussion and debate will be in the road board room when a board is considering the advisability of acting under the provisions of the Bill. I do not think it can be suggested that any road board in the State is likely to do anything reckless, wrong or desperate under provisions such as these.

Our experience has been that local governing authorities consider a question of this kind very closely and can be relied upon to do the sensible thing. My own view of the establishment of these hostels, irrespective of whether they are acquired by churches or by branches of the Country Women's Association, or by road boards or any other organisation, is that the actual management is the all-important feature. If the management is good, then undoubtedly the schoolchildren being cared for will have their best interests safeguarded; and in saying that I am referring not only to their physical welfare, because there are other aspects perhaps more important than the physical side which have to be considered and safeguarded when schoolchildren are being accommodated and cared for in these hostels. I desire to indicate the support of the Government for the Bill. I hope it will not be passed through all stages today, because I know the Minister for Education is keen to make a contribution to this debate. He is, of course, particularly interested and concerned. He told me before he went to the country today that he would support the Bill, but would like an opportunity to make some remarks on it before it finally passed through this Chamber.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

### **BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

Returned from the Council without amendment.

### **BILL—BOOKMAKERS.**

#### *Second Reading—Amendment to Inquire by Royal Commission.*

Debate resumed from the 18th September.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [5.5]: Were I convinced that the Bill introduced by the Minister would, even to some extent, achieve the aim he has in view—namely, the restriction and control of betting—I would be prepared to give it very ready support. But I hope to show that that objective will not be achieved by this measure, and that therefore there must be other considerations than the mere acceptance of this measure in its present form before we have disposed of the question now before the House. I do not doubt for one moment the sincerity of the hon. gentleman in the beliefs he expressed. I know, as indeed he told the House, that he has no personal interest and has not had any personal interest in the matter of betting. Like him, I am equally ill-informed on that subject. The same as the Minister, I do not believe personally in betting as a pastime, and in consequence I trust that the hon. gentleman will not doubt my sincerity when I say I do not think this Bill will achieve the objective he has in mind. At this stage I think I had better express my conviction that an alteration of the present situation is essential.

I look upon the present situation as one which requires the most careful consideration, because doubtless—and it is not apparent in Western Australia alone but in most of the Commonwealth and in many parts of the world—there has grown up a determination among a section of the people to ignore the laws which have existed and to carry on the pastime in which they wish to indulge. I will go further and express the belief—indeed, the conviction—that people cannot be prevented by legislation from betting. I would say, therefore, that it is impossible for us to achieve by legislation, even if we consider it desirable, the abolition of betting; because there is inherent in human nature, and particularly in some people, a desire to speculate which, when transferred to the question of betting, becomes simply a desire to gamble. I do not profess to set myself up as a critic of my fellow-citizens in possessing that

desire. I simply believe that we should—as I think the Minister believes and indicated—endeavour to prevent any unnecessary extension of those practices because they do not achieve any particularly good results but sometimes do bring about bad results in regard to the health and happiness of certain sections of our people.

While we can concede and agree, therefore, that it is not practicable by a stroke of the pen or by legislation in this House to put a stop to betting, even if we all considered it desirable so to do, at the same time I entirely agree with the hon. gentleman that its restriction and control are absolutely essential and must be dealt with as early as possible. But, as I have mentioned, I am in grave doubt whether the system of registration or licensing—to use another word for it—which is proposed under this Bill, will do other than increase betting on an alarming scale; and I hope in the course of a few minutes to explain why I think that is bound to be one of the results of the measure.

Nor am I enthusiastic in the matter of registering or licensing bookmakers at all. I do not like the idea of legalising people to make large individual profits out of the frailties of human nature, and particularly the frailties of that section of the community in which most of us move; I mean those that may be called the ordinary citizens of this country. In the metropolitan area I see dwellings and possessions which are owned by those gentlemen who have been carrying on this business illegally for a long period and which, from the point of view of cost and amenities, are many times better than anything the men and women from whom they have taken most of their profits can ever hope to achieve; and I do not feel disposed, this afternoon, at any rate, to legalise the profession in which they indulge in order that they may, under a legal procedure, continue to enhance their fortunes at the expense of an increasing number—because I believe it will be an increasing number—of those people.

I have carefully studied the Bill. It was perhaps fortunate that the House decided to adjourn shortly after the measure was introduced because, as a result, I have had more time to go into it than has sometimes been the case with other Bills that have

come before this Chamber. One of the points that was raised with great strength by the Minister was the prevalence of offences against the existing law in the last few years, with which point I entirely agree; and as I have said, I am anxious to minimise those offences as far as is humanly possible. But I am convinced that under this measure, if it becomes law, in a very short time there will be more offences than there have been against the existing law and, as experience has shown in other places, it will become necessary to amend the law and to impose new penalties and create new offences in order to remedy the situation that may arise, if experience elsewhere can be taken as a criterion, under the law that will then exist.

I see great difficulty in policing the requirements of this Bill as to limiting approved premises to one place. I have not the slightest doubt that skilful dummying will soon get over that, and I venture to say it will be more difficult for any investigating body or police officer to discover such illegal dummying than it has been to find the actual person who is responsible for the offences that have been the subject of prosecution under the existing law in our State in recent years. There is no question in my mind that detection will be very difficult. It will be the natural desire of certain people to evade this law; and I am convinced it will be easy to do so and that there will be numerous offences against this provision, many of which I have no doubt will be detected and will be the subject of prosecution, but many of which will not.

I also see a desire to evade stamp duty on betting tickets which, as I understand, has not been paid on bets off the course in recent years, and the payment of betting tax would induce those who have hitherto desired to carry on this business and failed to obtain registration under the new law, if it becomes a law, to conduct betting in the black market, which I believe is the new name for illegal betting in South Australia, and which will no doubt come into use in this State if the Bill becomes an Act. I also wonder whether the limitation of hours during which business may be carried on will not be wellnigh impossible for the board—if it is created—to enforce. I submit that if bets are not made out of hours by person and person in actual contact, they will certainly be made by telephone or other

means. There is no provision in the Bill that betting shops shall not be on premises licensed under the Licensing Act of 1911. I think there should be such a provision.

I think it most undesirable that a licensed betting shop should be on premises that are part of premises licensed under that Act. In fact, I believe that betting shops—if they are to be allowed at all—should not be allowed within a prescribed radius of an hotel or other licensed premises. I do not like the proposed constitution of the board. In my view there is little or no real need for representation, either elected or selected, of the Turf Club or the Trotting Association. In my opinion, if this Bill becomes an Act, those institutions will be effectually protected by the provisions of the Bill itself. I do not think those who will deal with the questions that come before the board—if it is constituted—should be persons associated with the actual practices concerned in horse racing and betting.

In licensing other things where we have desired to restrict and control, as in the case of the sale of liquor, the persons on the Licensing Bench, which is the controlling body, are not associated with the trade at all. In fact, the Licensing Act expressly prohibits them from being associated with the trade. I therefore think that the third and fourth members of the board—after the magistrate and public accountant have been appointed—should be persons who in the opinion of the Governor are worthy of appointment because of their capacity and administrative ability, and that they should not be associated directly in any way with the matters that they are destined to control. I take it that the rules to be made by this board—which, incidentally, will be the major portion of the control if control ever comes about under this Bill—will be made by the board itself, and it will therefore be a legislative body, with very considerable powers.

It is true, if I understand the Interpretation Act aright, that the word “regulations” and the provision regarding the disallowance of regulations under that Act will apply to rules made by the board, but it seems to me that the usual provision, that regulations should be approved by the Governor before they are gazetted and become effective, is very desirable in this measure, if we are going to have a board. Nor is there any provision in this Bill for restrict-

ing the number of bookmakers that it is proposed to register. As I see it the discretion of the board will be limitless. There can be as many bookmakers as there are now, or more, or less, just as the board sees fit to indicate. I think we ought to give consideration—if we are going to regard this as a measure of restriction—to laying down some number by which the board should be guided as to the number of licenses or registrations that should be issued by it.

The Bill is deficient in a number of other directions, to my mind, and I will take time to refer to one or two of them. It makes no provision that a bookmaker's registration shall not be given to the licensee of licensed premises, and, in the absence of that provision, there is nothing to prevent the board from granting such registration to such a licensee. In my opinion, it is as undesirable to allow such a licensee to be granted registration as a bookmaker, as it would be in the case to which I referred a few minutes ago. Another most important thing that is absent from the Bill, and which struck me immediately the Bill was introduced, is power for anyone to object to the situation of approved premises. The Bill simply provides that somebody may apply for approval of premises and, if the board approves, it shall publish its approval in the “Gazette,” and there the matter ends. The residents of the neighbourhood, no matter how objectionable it may be to them, and no matter how sound their reasons may be for thinking the premises should not be allowed in a particular place, have no redress whatever under this Bill. They are not even authorised to present an objection to the board.

Even a police officer or a member of the local authority has no right whatever under the Bill to make any objection to the approval of premises by the board. Again I turn to that measure which has remained upon our statute-book for some years with a moderate amount of success, the Licensing Act, where almost any interested person—and particularly police officers and representatives of local authorities in whose districts the proposed licensed premises are to be—may lodge an objection on certain specified grounds or any additional grounds to which the Licensing Bench may think it is proper to listen, and the decision of the bench must be given on the objection before

the granting of the license for those premises can proceed. I can see no sound reason why there should not have been a similar provision in this measure. In fact, it seems to me that the Bill is extremely deficient in many matters that ought to have received consideration in it. It has given me the impression that it has been hastily drawn, without taking into consideration a number of matters that seem to be of the essence of fair play, and very necessary if we are to make any contribution at all to the objectives that the Minister has in mind. There is no provision for a prohibited list of persons likely to impoverish themselves by excessive betting.

Mr. Rodoreda: Would you want to make them walk a chalk line?

Mr. WATTS: There is no provision such as that contained in the Bill introduced by the member for Murchison in 1938, with regard to tips. In Clause 21 of that measure there was a provision imposing a penalty of up to £30 on any person who provided such tips, other than a licensed bookmaker. In this measure there is also a clause that restricts the power of the Commissioner of Police to inspect premises. Apparently he is not expected to do so. He is not expected to inspect any premises that have been approved by the board, without the request of the board. That does not suit me. The Commissioner of Police or any police officer should, in my opinion, have the first right in that regard and if the special provision in the measure is not going to take away from the Commissioner the power that one would assume he normally has to inspect of his own volition, why is it in the measure? I think that if the Bill proceeds we will not restrict the power of the Commissioner or of any police officer to take such action as they think fit in the inspection and searching of premises.

Let us think what are the prospects of enforcing this provision relating to the furnishing of returns of the total amount received in bets and returns of the total number of bets made, with the object of enforcing the taxation provisions that are the subject of assessment in this Bill, and the imposition of taxes, which will be the subject of another Bill. I think there will be a natural inclination to evade the law, and in order to prevent that evasion there would have to be a

large number of persons engaged in the supervision of such premises.

Mr. Fox: You are an optimist!

Mr. WATTS: I venture to say that black market bookmakers will be in a position to give better returns to the bettors, because they will not pay the tax. I venture also to suggest that no one will be able to find out just what their transactions are. Unfortunately, I am an optimist. I am optimistic enough to believe that there is a large number of honest people in the world, but I am also sure that there are—I am convinced that officers of the Taxation Department would most heartily agree with me—a number of people who are shrewder than any Act of Parliament when it comes to getting round little matters of this kind, so I submit to the Minister that he should give that question more consideration. It seems to me that the Bill has been somewhat hastily prepared and has failed to give consideration to a number of aspects, some of which I have mentioned. I feel that a skilful person could drive a metropolitan omnibus through this measure without the slightest difficulty.

The Minister for Lands: Surely not one of those big long ones!

Mr. WATTS: I believe that even the trailer type could be used for the purpose. As one who has had some experience as a legal practitioner, I feel that I would love to be in the position of finding ways and means of evading the provisions of this measure, and I venture to say that, with a little thought, plenty could be found.

Mr. Fox: They do not ask legal practitioners to do that, do they?

Mr. WATTS: Not as a general rule. Nevertheless, at times it is convenient to apply some of the small amount of legal knowledge one possesses to a matter of this sort, and one often arrives at a conclusion different from that possessed by people who have not had that little experience, and this is why I mention that particular aspect of the matter. If the member for South Fremantle would like a little private guidance, I daresay an opportunity could be arranged.

The Minister for Lands: Do not make him worse than he is.

Mr. WATTS: I should like to ask the Minister, if this Bill be passed and betting transactions are legalised, is he going to



provide by some other law that there shall be no litigation in respect of betting disputes? So long as betting remained illegal, it has been impossible to sue the bookmaker or the bettor in the courts in the matter of betting transactions, but has the Minister given consideration to what will be the effect of legalising betting and the desirability or otherwise of these people being able to sue one another in the courts, and the need for altering the law so that even legalised betting may not be the subject of litigation in the local and supreme courts of the State?

To me, it would seem to be most undesirable that we should enable litigation to take place in respect of betting transactions, even though they may have been given the cloak of respectability under this measure. The effect of enabling bookmakers or those who bet with them to recover their dues in the courts would surely be to extend considerably credit bookmaking, which is not desirable, as I believe every member will agree. Cash transactions may be all right, but I think every member will agree that credit bookmaking is something that ought not to be encouraged, and certainly this proposed alteration of the law, if I am correct in the point of view I am expressing, could have no other effect.

Mr. Styants: People bet on the nod on the racecourses now.

Mr. WATTS: But we do not want to encourage it by enabling bookmakers to recover in the courts. We have a somewhat similar provision in the Licensing Act, namely, that only bona-fide lodgers and residents may run up an account and be sued for it. I think this idea should commend itself to the Minister. Now I turn to other matters. I have touched on some of what I believe are decided weaknesses in the measure and which render it desirable, if the Bill is to become law, that the measure be substantially re-drafted because it will not cover things that obviously are desirable even if we agree with the principles enunciated by the Minister and the Bill. We have declared that it is our duty to reduce betting as much as possible, and not to increase it or even to run the risk of doing so. As I have said, there is nothing in the Bill in its present form that leads me to believe that any such reduction will result.

I confess quite frankly that I cannot put up any concrete, definite proposal at this stage that would enable me to say that these are the ways and means to do what we have in mind. I only feel that the existing proposals will not attain that end. The Minister, in the course of his remarks, quoted the Lord Bishop of Adelaide. I think that gentleman said that the most urgent need was the creation of a right public opinion. I, too, think that is so, but there is nothing in the Bill to contribute towards it. Nor was there anything in the observations of the Minister, except that he quoted the Lord Bishop of Adelaide. I submit that we could help to form this right public opinion, if not immediately, at least in the near future, by a campaign of education on this subject in our schools. This might entail some expense, but the expense would certainly be justified. We might also suggest the preparation and dissemination of propaganda among adults in order to create this right public opinion to which the Minister made reference, but, as I have said, there is nothing in the Bill to provide for either.

There is nothing in the Bill to guarantee that the creation of a right public opinion will even be attempted. No suggestion has been made that the revenue that would be derived under this measure should be used for the purpose. There is nothing in the Bill to redeem or improve the present situation, which I firmly believe the Minister himself is extremely anxious to achieve. I reiterate that I agree that betting cannot be stopped by legislation, and anybody who sets to work to that end is, in my opinion, going to have an extremely difficult task, in fact a Herculean task. In my view the Minister struck the right note when he quoted the Lord Bishop of Adelaide in regard to creating a right public opinion, but again I say there is nothing in the Bill that makes any contribution towards the desires of the Lord Bishop or of the Minister. Because I believe what I do, I am prepared to concede that a mere claim to enforce the present law provides no solution of the problem. But we have never tackled the problem in any other way. Our only submissions have been the existing law and Bills resembling the present one, which incidentally is virtually a copy of the Act which is in force in Tasmania, and closely resembles in its principles and also in its

details the legislation which was passed in South Australia in 1933.

Have we in this State ever had any proper inquiry into ways and means whereby this right public opinion might be created and whereby betting might be both controlled and minimised? I think we have not. It is a well-known fact that this Bill is not the production of any searching inquiry into the subject. As I have remarked, it is virtually a copy of the law in existence in Tasmania and, as I have also said, under the South Australian law of 1933, virtually the same proposals were enacted. South Australia set up a Betting Control Board; provision was made for the licensing of bookmakers and for the payment of a tax; provision was also made for returns in great detail to be lodged by the bookmakers of their turnover and their betting transactions. But those laws in the State of South Australia have certainly made no contribution to reducing betting. They have certainly made no contribution to reducing betting that is now legal, and I greatly doubt whether they have made any contribution to reducing betting that is illegal in that State.

In 1934 the South Australian Betting Control Board said it had practically ignored the Tasmanian Act as local conditions and the board's knowledge of the illegal methods obtaining in South Australia rendered it of not much practical use. I think those sentiments might have equal, if not stronger, application to Western Australia. Tasmania is a very small and comparatively closely-populated island. South Australia is a much larger place, not as big as Western Australia, but creeping on in that direction. Western Australia is the most thinly populated and the largest of the States of the Commonwealth. I venture to suggest that, in a State like Western Australia under these circumstances, it is extremely unlikely that the law which is in operation in Tasmania would serve any better purpose than the Betting Control Board in South Australia contended it would serve in that State.

In 1932 a Royal Commission was appointed in South Australia, and it estimated on the advice of police officers that there were 54,306 habitual bettors and 643 bookmakers in South Australia. At that time the estimate was apparently about one in

10, of the population of South Australia, which was approximately half a million. When the board was appointed, it expressed exactly the same opinion as the Minister and I have expressed; its main object was to eradicate illegal betting and to aim at reducing betting. The Minister, when moving the second reading, said it was his desire to restrict the business to the utmost possible extent. Let us see how these efforts at restriction have fared in the neighbouring State of South Australia. In 1932 the Royal Commission in South Australia estimated that the volume of betting in the State was £2,600,000 per annum. This was borne out by the first six months' experience of the board's control when the total turnover disclosed was £1,304,000 and the total bets disclosed were 5,397,575. That was roughly equivalent to what the Royal Commission estimated for a full year, namely £2,600,000, while the number of bets for the six months—5,397,575—was slightly under 11,000,000 for the full period of 12 months.

The 1935 report of the South Australian Betting Control Board disclosed that the total turnover had increased to £4,500,000, an increase of about 95 per cent., while the number of bets had increased to 22,000,000, or 200 per cent. increase on the previous year. Interstate races—races held outside of South Australia on which betting took place—showed an increase of 15 per cent., but the board stated in its 1936 report that the turnover had increased to £6,113,990, another increase of approximately 50 per cent. on the previous year. The number of bets it did not disclose in the report. For the year ended the 30th June, 1938, the turnover had increased to £7,740,912, and the number of bets to 36,548,000, or over 300 per cent. above the original figures for the full year. In 1939, the turnover was £7,639,707, and the number of bets was 35,950,000. In 1938 the intervening year, in an effort to reduce the volume of betting the South Australian Act had been amended again. The main amendment was the imposition of an additional tax, this time on winning bets. In addition, a number of new licenses were created with penalties, in an attempt to overcome the abuses of the Act which had arisen in the meantime.

So, after they had amended the Act to reduce the volume of betting by imposing

a winning bets tax, as the board reports, we find that the turnover came down only by a matter of £100,000, and the number of bets by a little less than half a million in nearly thirty seven million. In 1940, the board prohibited mid-week betting off the course, allowing only for Saturdays and holidays. The figures were then, with these two types of restriction, a turnover of £6,639,073, and bets to the number of 27,186,042, or nearly 300 per cent. greater than the figures in the first full year after the board's operations. The board reported that the average per day of racing turnover had, however, increased by 22 per cent. off the course, and 83 per cent. on it, and, the board says, that but for its action in prohibiting mid-week betting, there would have been another substantial increase in the aggregate turnover.

For the period during the war, in South Australia racing, it appears, was prohibited. By the end of 1945, betting was again in full swing, although no betting shops were in operation. The turnover was disclosed as steadily rising, being £8,962,430, or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  times what it was in 1933. In 1941, the board expressed the view that the amount of unlawful betting was negligible, but in 1945, it stated, "It is now alleged that 'black market' betting is prevalent." "If that be true," it goes on to say, "the increased betting turnover is only partially revealed." This point is magnified by the fact that in 1945, lawful betting was confined to the metropolitan area of Adelaide, and therefore includes no figures for nearly half the population of South Australia. So much, then, I would say for the board's earlier belief that the operations of a measure of this nature would both control and restrict betting. I have said that I realise that betting cannot be prevented. I repeat that, but I think it can be minimised, and I have given reasons why I do not think this Bill can achieve that end.

I do not want to denounce the Minister because, as I have said, I believe he was sincere in his belief that this measure would do what he thought. The purpose of my observations so far has been to endeavour to show him that there are reasonable and solid grounds for believing that that is not likely to be achieved by a measure drawn simply as this one is. The present position is

entirely unsatisfactory. There are facilities in respect of which official prosecutions never take place, namely, on the race-courses which are available to the people of the metropolitan area and some other limited few places. They are denied to the people of other areas of the State by circumstances out of their control. If it is proper that one section should have these facilities it is equally proper that the other half should have them.

The only question to be determined is, is it proper and how shall it be done? We have therefore to find some means which will either prevent or restrict betting and give equal terms to all sections of the State. Fourteen years have elapsed since the South Australian Commission made its recommendations, one of which was for a State-wide totalisator, which the Government passed over. In the opinion of some people, I am told it is advisable that that aspect should be investigated in the light of more modern developments since that period of 14 years. At least it would take away something which I have said I consider is one of the most undesirable elements in this Bill; that is, that certain individuals will be allowed lawfully to make huge profit gains by battening on the foolishness of a number of their fellow-citizens.

Mr. Rodoreda: Publicans do that now.

Mr. WATTS: Admittedly, and were we discussing that question I probably would express some opinions concerning it with equal frankness to what I am doing on this subject, but I am not in a position to do that now. I am dealing with a Bill to control and restrict betting and I must not offend. I am surprised at the hon. member, seeing the position he holds in the House, trying to lead me astray in that manner. It has been submitted to me that a State-wide totalisator would be a practicable proposition. I say that the machinery of its management and control is beyond me to propound. It may be found upon inquiry that it would have the effect which we desire to achieve; on the other hand, it might be found quite to the contrary. I am unable to declare as to its practicability or desirability at this stage, but I mention it for a reason that will be clear in a moment.

I would say that the matters involved in this Bill and those associated with them and have been mentioned by me are more

worthy of inquiry than was the measure brought forward last session to alter the control of trotting in this State, and had the Bill as introduced by the Government at that time been accepted by this Legislature in its then form, I venture to say it would have produced a far poorer law than that which will be produced if the report of the Royal Commissioner who was subsequently appointed to deal with that subject is put upon the statute-book. His proposals were substantially different while, in my view, and I think in the view of nearly all who have read them, achieving far superior and far fairer results and more satisfactory results than those contained in the Bill brought down by the Government in the first instance.

I have received a number of communications from people who are not altogether enamoured of this Bill but at the same time are not prepared to say that some action should not be taken. I have a communication, some of which I will read to the House, from a person who has had something to do with the racing game and matters associated with it and, I think, knows a good deal about it. This person is not an official of any of the racing clubs but is just an ordinary citizen. He has, however, had something to do with the institutions and those that are associated with them. That person writes in the following terms:—

With reference to the Bill now before Parliament, there are several points you might well consider.

First: A large proportion of the population will bet under any circumstances, but they do not care for bookmakers and will accept other means of throwing away their money on horses if these are legal, or look like being more profitable to themselves.

Second: The scattered nature of the population here makes it physically impossible for large numbers of horse-lovers (?) to go to the races, and they follow them per radio. This entertainment is provided for them by owners and spectators via the Turf Club: other punters don't pay the Turf Club or the Government for their fun—they pay the bookmakers. This is not in the best interests of the horse-racing industry, as it contributes largely to the skulduggery that does go on, for—

Thirdly: So long as there are professional bookmakers the situation can and does frequently arise when a bookmaker has far more financial interest in the failure of a horse than the owner, trainer and jockey can have in its success. There are a good many owners, trainers and jockeys who book bets and thus get well in debt, making things easier for the

bookmakers to rig races. Thus the licensing of bookmakers is not at all likely to clean up racing.

Fourth: Big bettors and bookmakers are wellknown to each other and could well defeat regulations by a black market in the big money. That is, longer odds could be offered for unregistered bets where the parties are well-known to each other and are used to betting on the nod.

Fifth: If this Bill is lost and no attempt made to cope with the problem, the reputation of the State Houses will suffer. Amendment along the lines I put forward might do a lot of good. To pass it unamended will build up a vested interest very hard to break down at a later date.

I propose—

(1) No off-the-course bookmakers allowed.

(2) Course bookmakers, who have been tacitly condoned by the Government and Turf Clubs (at a price) be given a limited lease of life (say, three or five years), and no new ones to be licensed. As these have operated openly, and paid a tax on a good deal of their business, they deserve a little more consideration.

(3) Local authorities to be given power to run totes in their areas. The same percentage of bets to go to the Government as at present, the percentage now taken by the tote on the course to be divided between the Club providing the sport and the local authority running the tote.

It should be a matter for the proposed betting board to decide, after inquiry, whether external totes should be linked to course totes. Road board areas and the municipal areas they surround should provide a sufficient pool in most country areas. It would be possible to have linked totes in the metropolitan areas and independent ones outside if thought desirable by the betting board.

(4) The board should limit the number of races outside W.A. to be betted on during any one day, and the Bill should provide a limit to days and hours of betting on those days. (I propose Saturdays and public holidays from 12 noon on.)

(5) The board should be an honorary body, to arbitrate and advise.

(6) Totes should be forbidden to advertise or to sell tickets to anyone under 18 years.

This sort of set-up would be acceptable to the general public. Since it would obviously increase the racing clubs' income, and thus stakes, it would help those who put capital or labour into racing, i.e., breeders, owners, trainers, and jockeys. It will be opposed, either openly or behind the scenes, by some eminent people who are not generally known to be in the racket, and by big bettors who like to be very sure of the odds before they lay their money down.

The limiting of betting to Saturdays will mean a good deal more work done in city offices on Friday afternoons, where now discussion of doubles charts sent out by bookmakers on Fridays is the chief business of the day. The abolition of bookmakers will also mean the abolition of the S.P. touts who now seem to be in every city building, and make a nice sideline out of teaching typists and clerks to gamble.

Those are not my views; the House must not think that they are. I frankly confess I could not formulate such views because I have not sufficient knowledge of these matters. I do not say for one moment that I could subscribe to a proposal such as that as being likely to be an effective solution of the problem, but I do say that it and similar suggestions that have been made are worthy of consideration before the Legislature comes to the conclusion that it has effectively dealt with the problem. I also want to know whether it is possible to minimise betting by an amendment of the existing law, or whether the existing law, if differently applied, would achieve the same result. I say quite frankly at this stage that I do not view with pleasure the imposition of sentences of imprisonment on these people, as has occurred with considerable regularity in recent weeks.

I do not know that we should not distinguish, somewhat more than we do, between certain classes of offences when imposing imprisonment. I had some controversy here the other day with regard to restricting the discretion of magistrates by demanding that imprisonment alone should be imposed in respect of a certain offence. I do say, however, that the bookmakers are primarily responsible for the imprisonment that has occurred because they have permitted the same people, after a warning had been given, to appear before a magistrate on a second and perhaps a third occasion with the consequence that the magistrate, as he was perfectly entitled to do, carried out his professed decision to impose imprisonment. If these sentences have brought this matter to a head in a hurry then I say quite frankly that I am prepared, while further consideration is given to the subject-matter of the Bill, to subscribe to a temporary measure, which for the time being will do away with imprisonment for the existing offence. But apart from that I am not satisfied in my own mind that other types of amendment to the law would not achieve the result that the Minister has in mind.

In fact many people—reasonable people; I am not accepting the views of those who are far to the right or the left in this matter—believe that a solution of the problem could be found along those lines, and that legality is undesirable. While they recognise that the existing state of affairs could not entirely be put a stop to, they think that if the matter is to be more effectively controlled than it has been it could be done by an alteration of the existing law by which bookmakers, who would be prepared to carry on under a somewhat more restrictive law, should be allowed to do so without legalisation. There are numbers of points of view on this question and to ask me to say that the proposition of the Minister—after the review of the Bill that I have given and of the conditions existing elsewhere—is a satisfactory one to request Parliament to assent to without more consideration and further facts and evidence, seems to me to be unreasonable. It appears that the matter has been allowed to stand without any activity for approximately eight years, because that period has elapsed since the member for Murchison, in 1938, introduced the Bill to which I have already referred.

The Minister for Mines: No, I introduced a Bill in 1935 and 1936. In 1938 the then Minister for Agriculture introduced one.

Mr. WATTS: I am sorry. At any rate it is eight years since the last measure was before the House. So it does not seem to me, in all the circumstances of the case, that there is any pressing need for the passage of this Bill at present. We have, as I said, the opportunity temporarily to amend the law rather than see these people sent to prison while the whole question is in a state of flux. To that course I am prepared to subscribe. I do not think there is any necessity to pass the Bill, or any legislation of a similar character, without a searching inquiry into ways and means the more effectively to limit, restrict and control betting in this State. Believing that, to the motion before the House I move an amendment—

That all the words after the word "That" be struck out with a view to inserting the following words:—

"in the opinion of this House the second reading should not proceed until after a Royal Commission has inquired into and reported upon the question of betting in Western Australia on and off the course, including—

(a) the proposals in the Bill;

(b) whether in lieu of the proposals in the Bill a State-wide totalisator operated and controlled by a trust responsible to the Government would be a more desirable proposal; and

(c) what could be done to minimise betting, and what amendments to existing laws would best contribute to that end;

and that such Commission should have for its chairman a judge or magistrate, and include four other members of whom two should be persons versed in matters connected with betting, and the other two representative of those organisations which are opposed to betting being legalised."

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1946-47.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

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

*Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £264,123 (partly considered).*

**MR. TRIAT** (Mt. Magnet) [6.11]: I listened carefully to the Minister last night when he dealt with the proposed building programme, and I was pleased to hear that he had a staff of men building on behalf of the Government and that the service rendered by those men was satisfactory. Quite recently in my electorate it became necessary to renovate, or really re-build, two sets of school lavatories, one for the boys and one for the girls. They were very small lavatories, comprising three seats. They were built of second-class weatherboard, no linings, wooden seats and a small gable roof. It was a long time before we could get someone to tender for the job. There was much heartburning on the part of the parents and citizens' association and the road board. Tenders eventually were submitted and, to my astonishment, the cost of these small lavatories, of three seats, was £320!

The Minister for Lands: £50 a seat.

**Mr. TRIAT**: Yes. The same thing occurred with the post office where one seat cost £50. The time has long gone past when people could tender excessive prices for Government jobs. If a staff of men were retained on the Goldfields for the purpose of renovating Government buildings it could be usefully occupied. There is a lot of work to be done on schools, public buildings and other Government buildings. Usually when

a job has to be done we find that the price is so excessive that it is not carried out. Another factor is that the class of material used by many private contractors is not conducive to comfort or cleanliness. Many of the interior walls of schools are painted a very drab colour with the result that there is no brightness about them. I do not know whether that is because the department cannot afford to pay more for better and brighter materials.

Young children brought up in dirty, dingy school surroundings, and who have to use dirty and cracked washbasins, are not likely to turn out clean and hygienic citizens. That these conditions exist is a grave reflection on the department concerned. I am now speaking of the Gwalia school. Everyone concerned there, the headmaster, the parents and citizens' association and others, have bitterly complained about these conditions which have existed for the last two or three years and still are existing. The same thing applies at Agnew where there is a poor type of school.

*Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.*

**Mr. TRIAT**: I was dealing with the position regarding Goldfields schools and had referred to one in my electorate at a place called Agnew. The mine there is 80 miles north of Leonora and the district is very hot. The temperature in summer is well over 100 degrees. The school has not a large number of pupils, and the average attendance would be 18 or 19. The children have to walk a mile or more from the mine to the township. Attempts have been made to secure the erection of a shelter shed. The school building is of wood with an iron roof, but there is no accommodation for the children. The main verandah faces the east and at recreation time or during the luncheon hour the children have to sit about in the shade wherever it can be found so that they may eat their lunch in comparative comfort.

As I mentioned, applications were made for the erection of a shelter shed, and when arrangements were in train it was found that no labour was available to undertake the work. The system suggested by the Minister for Works whereby gangs of Government workmen would be established in different parts of the State, would be welcomed in that district. At Leonora and

Gwalia, as well as elsewhere in my scattered electorate, it would be of great advantage to have Government workmen available in the district to undertake whatever was necessary. I can understand that no-one would tender for the erection of a shelter shed at the Agnew school. It would be too far for the contractor to go and the cost would be too great. In such circumstances, the Minister's scheme would certainly meet with our approval, particularly if effect were given to it in our district.

Then again the water question affects us very considerably. For some time past I have been endeavouring to have a water supply scheme installed at Agnew, which township consists of about 40 houses and a population of, roughly, 200. At present the only method of obtaining water is to take advantage of the wind when it is blowing to operate the windmill. That system is quite out of date. At times for four or five days on end the wind does not blow at all there, and the tank for the town water supply will not hold sufficient water to enable the people to be supplied for drinking purposes. Water has to be carted from the mine to make up the deficiency. I have urged the department to embark upon a scheme to augment the water supply at Agnew. The suggestion is that a small electric pump shall be installed so that when the wind does not operate the windmill the current can be switched on and the continuance of the supply maintained. As it is the 5,000-gallon tank, when full, is adequate enough to meet all requirements. I trust the department will give further consideration to the suggestion. Much the same difficulty exists at Leonora, but it is a rather different proposition there. The town has a pumping station but £5,000 or £6,000 could be spent with advantage to the people there. Of course, Leonora is a bigger place than Agnew, and therefore a larger water supply is necessary.

During the course of his remarks the Minister referred to the potash position. I have been interested in that subject ever since it was first mentioned in this House. I was the principal member who actively objected to private individuals holding the potash lease, and I was extremely pleased when the Government decided to work the deposits itself. I have not been to Campion to view the operations, but I have read a lot about them and have discussed the

position with men from that centre. I believe the future of the potash works at Campion is sound. I know that the Government has sunk a lot of money in the operations, and that, unfortunately, the resultant product has not been up to the standard expected. That is quite understandable because potash has not been produced in the manner undertaken here anywhere else in Australia. I have always been a firm advocate of Western Australian brains to do Western Australian work, but when there is a particular job to be done, one of which we have had little experience within the Commonwealth, we should search overseas for some expert who could be induced to come here and put Campion on its feet once and for all.

I am convinced that the operations at Campion will be successful in the long run. The State is the only producer of potash in the Commonwealth and that commodity is required for industry. We know that in America and elsewhere there are undertakings producing potash, but if we endeavour to get an expert from one of those countries it will be futile to expect him to come out at the rate of salary paid to our State professional men of £300 or £400 a year, or even at the rate paid to politicians of £600 or £700 a year. We will have to pay the man for his ability. The Government would be well advised to offer an expert a five-year contract at £5,000 a year in order to put the Campion undertaking on a proper basis. There is a big demand for potash for fertilisers and those who require supplies will go where the best is obtainable. While the market is there we should take advantage of the position and secure the services of a man of ability and experience to enable us to turn out potash from our alunite ore under the best conditions.

The only other matter I desire to refer to was mentioned by the Minister and concerns Collie coal and the production of gas. I congratulate the Government on what it has done in that respect. Prior to the arrival of Mr. Fox in this State, everyone, including the departmental experts, definitely stated that the quality of Collie coal was so poor that it would be impossible to produce gas from it. As a matter of fact, one of our prominent fuel technologists obtained his degree as the result of a thesis he wrote on the poor quality of Collie coal. I know that that was in accord with the

general opinion, especially on the part of the coal experts in Western Australia, prior to Mr. Fox's arrival. I can remember meeting the Minister in company with Mr. Fox, and it did not take the latter long to persuade the Minister to provide Government assistance in order to try out his theory. The tests conducted at Midland Junction proved definitely that gas can be obtained from Collie coal for industrial or domestic purposes. The tests made in comparison with oil for industrial purposes, were overwhelmingly in favour of Collie coal. Speaking from memory, I think the results showed after a nine and a half days' test that the cost of procuring gas from oil was round about £13, whereas the cost was only £5 from Collie coal for the same work.

There is no doubt about the satisfactory nature of the test carried out at the Midland Junction workshop. I know that the Government is conducting further investigations with regard to the production of gas from Collie coal, and the economics of the proposition. I am rather surprised that the Midland Junction test did not disclose information on the economic side of the problem. I understand that a cleaner will be required. However, I trust the Government will give the matter a thorough testing out so that we shall be able to make use of Collie coal for the production of gas for domestic purposes at a price that will enable us to compete against the imported coal from Newcastle. We will have a splendid opportunity in that respect during the next few years. I believe that with the ability we have in this State, our own local coal will be able to do the work that we require of it.

I am not conversant with the coke position. I certainly placed on the table in the hall a sample of coke from Collie coal, but I am a layman and do not know the details. However, that sample did prove that Collie coal can be coked. I have no doubt that with some further investigations and tests, Collie coal, from the metallurgical point of view, will be found suitable for the provision of coke for use in the manufacture of steel. What has been accomplished already is a wonderful achievement. I must say, however, that, in view of my experience of Mr. Fox's work in Western Australia, the greatest obstacle he had to overcome was not the production of gas or coke from Collie coal but the obstruction-

ist attitude of departmental officers. The difficulty he experienced was not in connection with his ability to produce gas or to procure coke from Collie coal, but was to get departmental officers to agree to work in co-operation with him. From personal experience I know that the latter was his greatest difficulty. However, I think that position has been remedied—I presume that is so seeing that he is now at Welshpool. I trust he will succeed further with his efforts to produce our essential requirements from Collie coal and every credit is due, not only to him but to the Government, especially the Minister concerned, for what has been achieved. I shall not say much more on this Vote.

I feel the Government will, during the current year, do a lot towards the renovation of existing buildings and the construction of others required in the back country areas. There is plenty of work in Western Australia for teams of skilled artisans—carpenters, painters, and various other types of workers—who will be able to undertake work that is so necessary in the outer areas and who will be prepared to continue that work with satisfactory wages as long as they desire to do so. I trust that in addition to reasonable wages they will enjoy the benefits of superannuation. Under such circumstances we shall have bodies of men available for work who will do a good job instead of the shoddy type of work turned out by some contractors, particularly of the type that wanted £300 for the provision of half a dozen lavatories at Gwalia, to which matter I referred at an earlier stage. Such men are prepared to rob the people of the State whether it be the taxpayers through the Government or private individuals. I certainly welcome the remarks of the Minister and trust he will persist with his suggestion for the establishment of teams of public works operatives.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [7.43]: First of all, I want to thank the Minister for Works and his departmental officials for the work carried out in my electorate. I usually am in a position to pay this tribute to the Public Works Department because the officials have been so helpful and have carried out most of the work I have suggested. There are one or two matters I would like to place before the Minister. Very often work authorised is



not carried out promptly with the result that in the end it costs more than it would have had the job been done immediately upon approval. I will cite the instance of the fence at the Thomas-street school. It is in a very dilapidated condition. About 18 months ago I brought the matter under the notice of the department and have twice mentioned it since. The fence has not been repaired with the result that whereas at first only a few pickets were down, now the whole fence is practically demolished and an entirely new one is required.

Then there is the matter of the subway under the railway from Hay-street, Subiaco, to Hay-street, Jolimont. As members are aware Jolimont is becoming very industrialised and heavy traffic makes use of the subway, which is not very wide. Two fatal accidents occurred there within a few months and my own car was also smashed up at the subway. I think the accidents there are caused through vehicles proceeding from Railway-road and meeting vans entering the subway, with the result that they collide. I ask the Minister if he will do what he can to widen the subway, which would be very helpful indeed. The member for Mt. Magnet mentioned the cost of work done by contractors for the department. I would like to point out, on the other hand, that I have seen work done by the department that cost quite a lot. However, it is not my wish to criticise the department because, as I said, I believe it is a very difficult department to administer and I think that every officer in it is doing his best for those who apply to the department for something to be done.

**MR. DONEY** (Williams-Narrogin) [7.46]: Circumstances force me, contrary to my usual custom, to speak very briefly to the Works Estimates. The member for Subiaco was offering thanks for the good work that the Minister had done in her electorate during the past year. The best I can do in that direction is to offer thanks in advance for the great work that I believe the Minister will be doing in my electorate—I hope, anyhow; I am not too sure on the point—during this current financial year. My colleagues tell me that yesterday the Minister took one hour or thereabouts to introduce his Estimates and I have no doubt whatever that he covered the various activities of his department in his customary very thorough manner.

The Minister for Lands: He flooded your place with water and electricity.

**Mr. DONEY**: That is not known to me.

The Minister for Lands: Is it not?

**Mr. DONEY**: Anyhow, I was unavoidably absent yesterday and consequently had no idea of the subjects with which the Minister dealt, except from the very brief report in this morning's Press. I had hoped to find there a reasonably complete report of what the Minister said, but all I could find was a reference to water supplies. That reference, of course, is interesting to me.

**Mr. Watts**: The Minister talked a lot more about other subjects.

**Mr. DONEY**: I presume he did, but I was disappointed at the very brief attention afforded by the Press to the Minister's speech. At all events, the principal reference in the Press report was to the big water supply project calculated to affect principally the Great Southern district but also the Goldfields and other parts of the State. What slightly perturbed me was the intimation that the Minister had decided to commence work first on the Mundaring project. The retaining walls of both reservoirs are to be raised so as to enable the Mundaring reservoir to hold three times its present quantity and the Wellington dam four times what it now holds. The Minister then went on to say that about 80 men are at present engaged on the Mundaring project, but he made no reference at all to what work was to be done, or when it would be done, in respect of raising the Wellington dam.

I would like the Minister to inform the Committee when he intends to start work on the Wellington project. Perhaps too he might be good enough to say exactly what reasons prompted him to commence first with the Mundaring section. That section is designed to serve the needs of the metropolitan area and the Goldfields; and since those two sections of the population are already very amply catered for, and since the Minister knows—as we all do—of the shortages that are constantly occurring in the Great Southern district and to the eastward thereof, I repeat I would very much like to know what the Minister intends to do in the way of commencing work in that part of the State.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [7.50]: The brochure brought out by the Public Works Department in connection with the scheme for goldfields and agricultural water reticulation is a most informative document. I was very glad to note that in a scheme for a project of this magnitude so much preliminary thought and estimation had gone into it. When we undertake projects involving the expenditure of many millions of pounds, it is hopeful to see there are signs that the whole subject has been fully surveyed. I do not propose to say anything on this particular scheme at this juncture. I notice the Minister has on the notice paper a Bill for the purpose of approving of the scheme, and that will be the subject of discussion no doubt in a few days' time. I wish to say that I do not think we can exaggerate the importance of projects of this kind in Australia and particularly in Western Australia. The time has come when the subject might well receive examination on a continental scale.

In the province of Bengal in India, which suffered such great hardships quite recently from famine, steps have been taken to enter upon a vast water conservation scheme; and the then Governor of Bengal, Mr. Casey, who originated the project, which I think involves an expenditure of £150,000,000, not only had inquiries made by the expert officers of the Bengal Civil Service, but was able to obtain, by the courtesy of the United States of America, the loan of two officers, I think, of the Tennessee Valley project. Those officers, with their expert knowledge and great experience, were able to investigate the plans which had been prepared at Calcutta and, with some suggestions, to approve of them. That province of India is, I believe, about to embark upon this immense water conservation project which may prove to be to the permanent advantage of the millions of people who live there. A great deal has been said and written of recent years about water conservation in Australia, including water derived from certain areas in Queensland, areas which are well known to the Premier. I should be glad to see the State Premiers, in conjunction with the Commonwealth, prepared to regard water conservation on a continental scale and to obtain, from oversea if necessary, the highest possible advice on how such projects might be undertaken and completed throughout Australia. But I await the introduction of

the Minister's specific Bill on this matter before saying any more on the subject.

There is an item in the Estimates relating to town planning. It has always appeared to me that the amount allowed is very small. I cannot speak with any exact knowledge of what this department does, beyond such knowledge as we all have of the terms of the Town Planning Act; but the amount of the Vote for the current year is less than £3,000, although I notice there is an increase of £729. In a State so sparsely occupied and so largely undeveloped, this department has always appeared to me to be one of enormous potential advantage. We have an opportunity such as is given to very few countries to ensure that our towns and their environs, and perhaps our road system, are planned in such a way as, when carried through, will make them superior to those in the older countries of the world. Where a State is so vast and distances so great, it seems to me exceedingly difficult for the small staff of this department to give the attention to these matters that they deserve and to formulate plans for the future which should be possible and desirable in a State like ours. So I hope the Minister will consider the advisability of strengthening this department, which will still remain a small department but which has such great potentialities in the planning of the layout of our new and growing towns.

I listened with great attention to the remarks of the Minister under the heading of Industrial Development. That is a highly technical subject. When the Minister brought down the various measures dealing with the works at Campion and Wundowie, I stated—and I think this was the opinion of all the other members of the House—that we just had to accept what the Minister said, he of course acting on the advice of the experts in his department. The ordinary member was in no position to express an opinion upon the soundness or otherwise of the projects which were proposed. We all agree that we want to make the best possible use of the resources that we have. That, of course, is a mere platitude; but I think we all agree that we are not to be blamed if, to some extent and with reasonable prudence, we proceed on a basis of trial and error in a new country. It would pay the State, as the member for Mt. Magnet said, in this and similar matters to secure the highest possible advice not only with respect to matters

in hand, but also matters that may be in contemplation. If we can get experts wherever they can be secured and whenever necessary from oversea, the money spent in making as sure as we can that these projects are well based, will more than repay the State.

It is quite evident from the Minister's statement, which was candid, that some of these projects—the potash project in particular—are still in the experimental stage. It is not to say that the potash project may be a total loss, it is not to say that it may be a very serious loss, if the difficulties in connection with the quality of the product are not overcome; but I think the Government might well consider whether the stage has not now been reached when these particular projects, which involve the outlay of a very large sum of money, might be re-examined. If it is in doubt, they any necessary measures that can be taken for variation would justify the expenditure which would be laid out. If that expenditure is justified, then by all means let us proceed. But I hope that matters of this kind will receive continual scrutiny so that if we have to face any modification of our designs we will do so promptly and while we can, as far as possible, save the State from any expenditure which might otherwise be uselessly made.

The other activities of the department are those with which we are familiar. They proceed on lines that have been tried and tested over many years. There are difficulties involved through lack of materials, but so far as the routine work of the department is concerned that appears to be a subject on which it is not necessary for one to comment. It is proceeding according to the usual plan. But there are matters in the Minister's statement referring to developments of possibly very great importance and value to the State which at the same time require to be very carefully examined and as to which a continuous examination obviously needs to be made.

**MR. FOX** (South Fremantle) [8.2]: I am very pleased to hear that the retaining wall at Mundaring Weir has been started. I hope the Government will give some attention to providing amenities for the men who are going to be employed on public works. I suppose we are all aware that many public works will have to be put in hand to provide employment for a lot of

people. I remember, between 1930 and 1938, visiting some of the camps in the South-West, and it was pitiful to see the conditions under which the men lived. Out in the rain they had a couple of forked sticks with another stick across the top of a fire by means of which they endeavoured to boil their billy and cook their tea. I consider that men are entitled to better conditions than that and I hope provision will be made to erect a decent canteen on such jobs and provide the men with proper camping accommodation. It is nearly time that such a plan was put into effect. I understand the Government intends to do something like that at Mundaring Weir and I believe that fairly decent camps have been constructed in the South-West where a new railway line is being built. I think that is one of the first things the Government should attend to; namely, to see that the men doing such work are well looked after.

**Mr. Seward**: What railway line is being built?

**Mr. FOX**: A small one out to a mill in the South-West.

**The Premier**: It is a timber line.

**Mr. FOX**: Yes. There is one work of an urgent character which needs to be undertaken in Fremantle. I refer to the erection of a breakwater at the Fish Markets jetty. During the last few years quite a number of fishing boats have been wrecked, and that sort of thing entails a big cost to the owners of the boats. They are unable to insure the boats and almost every one that has been blown on the rocks over the last nine or ten years has been totally wrecked. The Minister has promised to construct that breakwater. I understand that the weather conditions during the winter were too boisterous to allow the work to be commenced, but now we are having fine weather I hope an early start will be made on the project, which is urgently needed. I do not know whether this is the time to talk about roadmaking, when other urgent works need to be started or completed; but I would point out that on the Rockingham-Mandurah road there is an enormous amount of traffic in the summer months. About 5,000 people go to Rockingham and Safety Bay in the summer, and perhaps a greater number visit Mandurah. The road is very narrow and in some places

the vehicles, when passing one another, have to go to the side of the road, with the result that it is being broken away.

Mr. McLarty: They are widening it now.

Mr. FOX: That is in one place. I put that request to the Minister. If a motor-bus should happen to run over the side of the road and it broke away, there would be a chance of the vehicle capsizing, which might result in great loss of life. That is one very important work that needs to be undertaken. The holiday traffic is very dense and there is a danger to travellers along that thoroughfare. I would like to mention parking in the City of Perth. There are not very many places where a parking area could be established capable of accommodating all the cars that come into Perth, but there is one suitable spot. I refer to King's Park. It would be possible to provide a parking area under King's Park without interfering with the park at all. Excavations could be made underneath and the area could be reinforced with girders and concrete.

Mr. McDonald: You are in my constituency now!

Mr. FOX: Some cars from my district travel to Perth and cannot find a place in which to park, so I must try to have some provision made for them. In the area I have suggested we could provide space for practically every car coming to Perth. We would be able to excavate sufficiently to put the whole of the vehicles there. Another point is that the project would be self-supporting. The parking fees would pay for the excavation. I think our engineers might give serious consideration to that suggestion to see whether it would be possible to carry it out. Some provision will have to be made in the near future, because the parking places are becoming very congested, and I do not think cars should be permitted to park for all time in the streets, because that makes the passage of traffic very difficult and is conducive to accidents.

MR. TELFER (Avon) [8.8]: In many ways I think the Minister for Works is to be congratulated on his oration last night. Quite a lot has been said about water and I hope that matter will soon be dealt with. The subject of main roads is one that has not been discussed very much. I think the Minister is right in giving an assurance that

these main roads will receive attention, for they are the arteries of traffic and I consider they require extension in many directions. Industrial development is making satisfactory progress, but if it be possible I would like something more done in the manufacture of farm machinery and equipment in Western Australia. The amount of money sent away from this State for farm equipment is altogether too great. If something along the lines I have suggested could be done, it would go a long way to provide further employment. I would like to thank the member for Mt. Magnet for the suggestion he made to the Minister when speaking on the potash works at Chandler. His advice to the Minister to bring oversea experts to deal with the problem, if it cannot be handled by the professional men in the Western Australian service, was very sound.

MR. PERKINS (York) [8.10]: The Public Works Estimates cover a great deal of ground which is of interest to all members in the Chamber but particularly to country members. I think all of us are fully aware of the difficulties with which the Minister for Works is confronted at present in carrying out the various projects being asked for in all parts of the State. I do not think any of us wishes to make his job harder than it is. We know that in every electorate a great deal of building of one kind or another is required. I refer to public as well as private buildings. Many of the public buildings are urgently required but it is very difficult to ask that the erection of such buildings should be put in hand immediately when so many people need houses so urgently. So we must exercise restraint in asking that public buildings be proceeded with at present, whereas in other circumstances I think we would be entitled to request that they be treated as works of urgency. In regard to some public works, however, I am not by any means certain that the Government is taking all the steps necessary to make it possible for them to be undertaken and completed as quickly as they could be if it attempted to acquire plant and materials to enable it to execute the work efficiently and expeditiously.

Reference has been made to roads. At present, the roads in our State generally are probably in a worse condition than they have been in at any time within

the memory of the younger members of this House. I refer not only to main roads but also to those under the control of local authorities. That has been brought about by conditions entirely outside our control. It is only natural that if equipment and energies have been utilised for war purposes, there must have been some deterioration in such things as roads. But although we can easily explain the poor condition of our roads, we should be planning to remedy those conditions as soon as possible. Local authorities are doing what they can. Many are raising their rates considerably and are getting what labour and equipment they can to rectify the trouble in their own areas. But it will be necessary for the Main Roads Department to push on as quickly as possible with the improvement of conditions on main roads. I am sure the department will receive every co-operation from local authorities where those bodies can make any materials available, because it is to their interest to have good main roads through their districts to lessen the pressure on their subsidiary roads.

It is only natural that, if the main roads through districts are improved, the tendency will be for the side traffic to shift on to those main roads as quickly as possible and shorten the distance they travel over subsidiary roads. Also, if the main roads are put in decent condition in the first place, people will not mind so much if they have a bad trip over the shorter distance on side roads in order to get to the main roads. It is important to get our main roads into good condition as quickly as possible, and it is particularly important to the people living in districts served by those roads. I think we are entitled to hear from the Government what steps are being taken to obtain the equipment necessary for the Main Roads Department to press on with the job of improving main roads as soon as labour is available and the necessary plans can be made. I think the Minister will agree that at present that department is desperately short of equipment. Before the war the policy was to use as little mechanical equipment and as much manpower as possible on road work, and in that period when unemployment was rife no doubt such a policy was necessary. Nowadays, when manpower is short and there is urgent need to complete as much

new road work as possible, a different policy should be followed.

In view of the policy followed prior to the war it is natural to expect that now, when the tendency is to use more mechanical equipment, such equipment will be in short supply. Manpower is now more costly than in the past and it will therefore pay to use all the mechanisation possible. The opinion has been held by some engineers employed by the Public Works Department that the cost of road making prior to the war would have been less, had more mechanical equipment been employed by the Main Roads Board. Much experience has been gained by some of our engineers who have served with various engineering departments of the Armed Forces and who have seen what can be done by the highly mechanised units of the American Forces. At present the cost of road making and similar work can be revolutionised by the use of suitable equipment.

Mr. Triat: Your farming costs would also be revolutionised if you adopted American methods.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not think the member for Mt. Magnet knows much about the subject. If he inquires into it he will find that the mechanisation of Australian agriculture has gone as far as, and in some cases further than that of American agriculture. At all events that subject is not under discussion.

Mr. Triat: Mechanisation was being discussed.

Mr. PERKINS: I think the interjection was made without full knowledge of the subject.

The Minister for Works: Had you made inquiries about the efforts of the Main Roads Department to obtain plant and equipment, your speech would have been much shorter.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not say that that department has not attempted to secure equipment, but I think the Government should tell us what it intends to do. I have sometimes wondered whether the Main Roads Department is sufficiently seized of the importance of acquiring mechanical equipment. If the Minister can tell us that the department is taking all necessary steps, I will be satisfied.

The Minister for Works: You can be assured on that point.

Mr. PERKINS: I am glad to hear that. It seems that we will hear more about water supplies in the near future when the Minister moves the second reading of another Bill. Whatever is done regarding that Bill, it will be some considerable time before any further comprehensive water scheme can be constructed to serve agricultural areas that are not served at present. The areas reticulated now are in some difficulty and I do not wish to criticise what the Minister has done, but I would ask him to make an announcement as to when he is likely to effect the improvements that he has in mind. All the area that I represent has been reticulated to some extent from the Goldfields Water Scheme. The main in the York area was laid down many years ago and is now seriously corroded, the flow of water being much reduced. In addition the draw on it has increased considerably. Market gardeners operating at York produce, during a portion of the year, a large proportion of the vegetables sold in the metropolitan market. For much of the year they rely on water obtained from the Goldfields scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: I think the hon. member is getting away from the Vote.

Mr. PERKINS: I am sorry. I thought water supplies came under this Vote. I know the Minister has been anxious to do all he can, but here again the efforts of the department have been handicapped by shortage of supplies. I think the people concerned are entitled to know when the Minister expects to be able to make the necessary improvements, so that they can plan their affairs accordingly. If he can make an announcement I am sure those people will be much happier about their position.

HON. W. D. JOHNSON (Guildford-Midland) [8.23]: I recently made a trip into the more remote parts of our agricultural country, in the area represented by the member for Pingelly. At a public gathering there I promised to bring this matter before the Minister for Works, during the discussion on the Estimates. At places called Lake Varley and Lake King, in an area known as the Lakes District, there is a fine settlement of a limited number of people who are rather remotely domiciled

beyond the head of the existing railway at Newdegate. When the land was thrown open for settlement the settlers were encouraged to go there by a promise that rail communications and transport would be made available within a reasonable time. Later on the Government of the day considered that a railway would be too expensive, compared with the production of the settlement, and decided to provide a main road instead, comforting the settlers with the promise that they would be given a good main road from Newdegate to the Lakes District.

When production started to increase and it was necessary to provide a market, Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited, in negotiation with the Government, arranged to put on the side of the road bins similar to those placed beside the railways to receive wheat. The Government then arranged transport from the roadside bins, almost in the centre of the Lakes District, along the main road to the rail-head of Newdegate. The service has been good and is appreciated by the settlers, but the roads leading from the various farm holdings to the bins are in a deplorable condition. I have not seen worse roads anywhere. It seemed marvellous to me that they could accomplish so much with their motor trucks and other forms of transport.

I went out to see one or two particularly bad places and appreciated how difficult it was for the settlers to cope with the transport from their holdings to the central bin in the Lakes District owing to the roads not being properly formed or crowned off. When representations were made for assistance to provide a subsidiary or feeder road into the main road, the settlers were told that the Main Roads Department was responsible for the main road and that they should be responsible for the other road. This, I think, is a wrong conception and is a departure from the understanding originally arrived at. The main road is actually a substitute for a railway and was put there to avoid the expense of building a railway. Therefore the road should, in my opinion, be recognised as a rail road, and then any main roads constructed should be feeder roads to the bin on the main road site as it would be for any other railhead centre.

Wherever there is a bin at a siding, the main roads are provided by the Main Roads

Department. To feed the bin at Lake Varley money has been spent on a main road leading from Newdegate to Lake Varley, and the department maintains that it is not responsible for the construction of the feeder roads to the bin. This is different from the practice adopted in other centres. I know that the member for Pingelly appreciates the point I have raised. It is a matter to which the Government should give early attention because the settlers are trying to cope with an almost impossible position that could be speedily rectified if some of the road-making plant were sent to that centre to form the roads and create a crown so that the roads, instead of being scooped out and forming a waterway, could be effectively drained, as they could be in most of the parts I visited. I submit the matter for the consideration of the Government.

It is not often that roads and bridges are a topic of interest to the Guildford electors. However, we are grateful to the Minister for a bridge project that is now actually in hand. I refer to the new bridge which the Government is co-operating with the Swan Road Board and the Guildford Municipal Council to construct across the river leading to the Swan and Caversham districts.

The Minister for Works: The Guildford council was mean about it for a while.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The council repented later and I think will demonstrate that the decision was a hasty one for which it was sorry. However, the position was met by the prompt decision of the Swan Road Board. I commend the department for doing this job thoroughly. In the past we have been far too parsimonious when undertaking such works. The department is forming an approach to the new bridge, and the structure is being built in such a way as to be able to cope with modern transport. I am grateful to the Government for its promptness in coming to the rescue of the local authorities and putting the bridge in order because its condition has been a source of anxiety to the local governing bodies for many years. During the flood periods that have been experienced so frequently in recent years, the bridge has been inundated.

I commend the Government for its decision to instal a system of sewerage within the congested residential portion of Midland Junction. This is a much-needed work, and

I was pleased to hear the Minister say last night that he considered it had been unduly delayed and that it would be now proceeded with. I commend the Public Works Department for its activity in preparing the plans for the period of transition from war to peace. The Commonwealth has assisted commendably by preparing for the demobilisation of a large number of men who will have to be provided with work or with sustenance—we hope more work than sustenance. I believe that the planning done in this State will enable the Government, when the pressure comes, to absorb those men who would otherwise be unemployed.

At the moment money is easier than it will be a year or two hence. It is when the purchasing power of the people begins to diminish that we look to the Government to start spending in order to take up the slack, as it were, and maintain employment. Owing to the way in which the Government has organised matters, I think we shall be able to cope with the position and shall not have a recurrence of the disastrous experiences following the 1914-18 war during what is now termed the depression period. That was a sad experience for all of us because we had people underfed and no work was available for them, and the State was in a helpless position financially to aid them. We should overcome that to a great extent by preparation, and the control of finance is now different. I look forward to the time when we shall be tried out to see whether we have prepared in such a way as to meet the position and to give the liquid effect of money a free run, as it were, so that the Government may release money when private spending is slack and pull it in again when private spending is buoyant. The public economy can be balanced in such a way that slumps and prosperous periods will not occur, but so that there will be a general standard that can be maintained if Commonwealth and State Governments continue to pull together as they are doing at present.

**MR. McLARTY** (Murray-Wellington) [8.39]: I was glad to hear the Minister say last night that work was being pushed on for the completion of the Stirling Dam and that several hundred men were now employed there. I hope the completion of the channels for the irrigation area will be proceeded with as rapidly as possible. I know that the shortage of cement, apart from the

shortage of labour, has held up the work, but this is a job that should be listed as a No. 1 priority. The productivity of irrigated land is very great and the output of dairy products from such areas is bound to increase. Dairy foods are required urgently in almost all parts of the world, particularly in Britain and Europe. When these irrigation works are completed, this area will be able to increase tremendously its output of dairy products. I wish that members who have not seen these irrigation areas could be given an opportunity to visit them. We spend large sums of money on public works and members should know something of the undertakings on which the money is being spent. I have no doubt that if members visited these areas, they would conclude that the money was being wisely spent.

It appears to me that water conservation is the accepted policy throughout the Commonwealth, and we in this State are certainly playing our part. The Minister told us that he is pushing on with the completion of the work on the Stirling Dam; there is the £10,000,000 project for the Mundaring and Wellington Dams; and there is also the Ord River project, although I do not think the Minister referred to that last night in reviewing the activities of his department. It would be a good idea if the Minister obtained a report on every river and every stream of any dimension in the State, so that we could form an opinion of what the future holds in the matter of irrigation schemes. We have an irrigation commission functioning and it is doing good work. Some members of the commission are representatives from irrigation areas. I suggest to the Minister that it would be a wise move to arrange for those members to see some of the irrigation areas in the Eastern States, particularly Victoria and New South Wales, where irrigation is being carried on in a big way. We have still much to learn about this question, and if those lay members of the commission could see what is being done in the Eastern States, the information gleaned would be beneficial to irrigationists generally.

I wish to say something about salinity in rivers. Recently I was informed of a report on salinity by American authorities. It was stated that the salinity difficulty could be overcome to such an extent that the water could be made suitable for irrigation purposes. I do not know anything more than

that, but if this is the case and the difficulty could be overcome in relation to some of our rivers, it would make a tremendous difference to the State.

Some of the rivers in my district particularly have been badly affected by flooding. Despite the fact that the flooding has been caused by two very wet winters, I believe that it will continue with resultant heavy damage. I am wondering whether anything can be done to minimise this damage. At Harvey a river diversion was constructed. Whether a diversion could be applied to the Murray River I do not know, but there might be some means of overcoming this continuous flooding. The position is that more and more land is being cleared and forests are being cut over all the time with the result that greater quantities of water are coming into the river and, in addition, more drainage is being put into it so that the people on the lower reaches are suffering severely. The Minister knows that because he visited portions of the district some time ago and was told about it. I would like to know whether there is any prospect of anything being done to cope with this serious problem.

We still need drainage. Although in my district large sums of money have been spent in this way, more drainage is needed and it will have to be carried out on a scientific basis. Future drainage should be constructed with the idea of an irrigation scheme to follow. I was glad to hear the Minister say that a machine was being used for this class of work. In the past we have spent enormous sums of money on drainage, just to employ labour. It has certainly been wasteful. I do not think that working in that type of country, particularly in the winter, provides a class of work that men should be called upon to perform. There is other work that they can do which has a far greater appeal to them and which they can carry out much more efficiently. Where a machine can be used to advantage it should be employed to the fullest possible extent. The Minister made some reference to main roads, and I want to refer briefly to this matter. I agree with him that the construction of our main roads reflects great credit on those responsible. We went through six years of war with the heaviest traffic on our roads that they have experienced, and they stood it wonderfully well. That is a fine tribute to good engineering and workmanship. I am glad that the Minister in-



icated to us that help will be available, in regard to certain developmental roads, from the Main Roads Department.

I particularly ask that assistance be given in respect of those roads over which school buses travel. Those buses are heavy and many of the roads are only clay and have little in the way of foundations. Before we talk of centralising education and bringing children in by bus, we should see that the roads over which the buses are to operate are such that the children can travel comfortably and safely. Special consideration should be given to these roads. The Minister also referred to the money that his department had spent on hospital improvements. Much more could be spent in this way. The provision of money for extra hospital accommodation is most urgent. I read only the other night of a woman who had to be moved to Northam in order that she might be accommodated in a hospital.

Despite the fact that we have all these other urgent works needing attention, the time has arrived when the Public Works Department should give consideration to the building of at least one or two hospitals in the State to try to catch up with the great leeway in hospital accommodation generally. I hope that the building of hospitals will be undertaken immediately by the Government. I want to thank the member for South Fremantle for assisting to get the roads widened in portion of my electorate. I also agree with him that the conditions under which men are employed on public works should be improved. The Minister told us last session that this matter was receiving the close attention of the Government and that wherever public works, that were likely to continue for any length of time, were being carried out, every effort would be made to render the camps comfortable and to provide amenities for those working there. I think, also, that men who are working within reasonable distance of their homes should be conveyed to and fro of a week-end by motor bus.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie) [8.52]: I have listened this evening to members speaking on roads—main roads and feeder roads—but unfortunately I was not here when the Minister introduced his Estimates and I do not know whether he dealt with the question of bituminising the road from Burracoppin to Coolgardie—the Great

Eastern Highway. We are not asking for something out of our turn when we request that that section of the road be bituminised, because we know that great mileages in other parts of the State, serving smaller populations, have had this improvement. The people on the Goldfields believe they are entitled to have a black road for the whole distance. I remember, in 1938, being at a road board conference at Merredin when the member for Mt. Hawthorn was Minister for Public Works and he assured the conference that in less than two years time a bitumen road would be put through as far as Southern Cross. Had it not been for the intervention of the war there is no doubt that the assurance would have been carried out. In the near future, with the lifting of the petrol rationing, many people on the Goldfields will want to bring their families to the coast for their annual holidays. There is only a distance of something like 180 miles that is not bituminised, because it is a bitumen road from Kalgoorlie to Coolgardie, and at the other end the bitumen ceases just a little on the eastern side of Burracoppin.

The building by the Defence Department of the East-West road offers an inducement to Eastern States tourists to come to this State and it is quite likely that many will come here and use this road. This matter should not be put off indefinitely. I understand that some tar-sanding has taken place on the road between Southern Cross and Merredin, but a tar-sanded road is a different proposition from a bitumen road. Quite a large section of the road not now bituminised provides fairly good travelling for most parts of the year, but some of the loamy sections, even in the summertime when we get the majority of our rain in the way of thunderstorms, become difficult and dangerous to the traveller because of their slippery nature when they get even a little bit wet. I hope that when the Main Roads Department is framing its programme this essential work will not be overlooked.

**MR. ABBOTT** (North Perth) [8.55]: Of late years there has been a considerable improvement in the number of men employed in industrial enterprises within this State. I feel that some of that has been a result of war expenditure and the war effort. It is being continued for the present moment,

to some extent, by the great shortage of consumer-goods. Later on keen competition from the Eastern States will be met by many of these small factories. It is gratifying to realise that we have advanced so far that we can now manufacture engines—the Chapman Pup motor is being manufactured in this State. That is an accomplishment of which we should be proud. I would like to see some effort made to have proper representation in the Eastern States. I hope the Government will forgive me for harping on this matter, but I feel that we should have at least one active representative of the Department of Industries permanently stationed in the Eastern States as a liaison officer. The money spent in establishing a small office over there would be amply repaid.

Mr. Needham: In which State?

Mr. ABBOTT: I am thinking of headquarters at Melbourne, but with a view to the representative acting as liaison officer in Sydney and Melbourne, and Canberra if necessary. Most of the departments dealing with secondary industries are over there. The Secondary Industries Board, if it still exists, and others, are in the Eastern States. There is no doubt that we would get some information and be a little more alert and able to give greater assistance to manufacturers in this State, apart from inducing others to come here, by this means.

It has been a little customary tonight to stray into the areas of other members, and I want to stray into the Premier's electorate. There was a suggestion that water in Western Australia will, in future years, have a limiting effect on the population that the State can support. I have heard people, whose opinions should be taken notice of, state that one of the greatest irrigation schemes for some time to come will be established on the Upper Gascoyne. There is there, I understand, a valley of some considerable extent through which the Gascoyne and Minilya Rivers flow, and it has been suggested that if a dam were placed across this valley—it would be an expensive proposition—a large area of rich alluvial soil would be available for irrigation.

The Premier: Where are you thinking of?

Mr. ABBOTT: I understand that there are two hills, a few miles apart. If a low dam were constructed between those two hills it would impound an enormous quan-

tity of water. The people who informed me of this said that it was a practical scheme. I may be wrong in my information but I understand it is so. Every advantage provided for the outback parts of the State is an advantage to the electors I represent. Next I wish to enter the area of the member for Murray-Wellington. Under the irrigation schemes in operation in the Eastern States, anyone whose property is subject to irrigation can have a certain amount of drainage done on his property and the cost then becomes a charge on that property.

The Minister for Lands: That will not suit the member for Murray-Wellington.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am talking of subsidiary drains.

The Minister for Lands: No matter what sort they may be, that will not suit him.

The Premier: No, not if the settlers have to pay for it.

Mr. ABBOTT: It will be appreciated that a fairly large drainage proposition is beyond the competency of the average dairy farmer to carry out. He has not the equipment and, in many cases, cannot afford the initial outlay, despite the fact that the work would very much increase the productivity of his allotment. The same applies to grading. As in the Eastern States, sooner or later we shall be compelled to measure the water that is provided for each participating settler. The old method of flooding the hills and rises will have to stop. All the equipment that is necessary to grade the land and the skill required will not be available nor will private enterprise be able to meet the situation. The work should be undertaken by a skilled party engaged on the work continuously. That is necessary if the operation is to be carried out at the least possible cost. If such servicing could be furnished, it would be of material advantage not only to the individuals concerned but to the whole State.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [9.3]: I have here a somewhat interesting communication which has been sent by the Department of Public Works in recent weeks to local authorities throughout the country, having reference to the apparent desire of the department that the collection of traffic fees under the Traffic Act should be conducted by a central authority and distributed, after

the costs of administration had been paid, by that centralised authority, presumably part of or allied with the Public Works Department, to the local authorities, apparently in proportion to the license fees collected in their respective districts. In my opinion, there is nothing more calculated to make trouble with local authorities in this State than such a proposition. It appears to have emanated from a deputation which waited on the Minister from the Chamber of Automotive Industries. That deputation suggested that action should be taken to develop a co-ordinated system of licensing of motor vehicles throughout Western Australia.

We have just disposed of a Bill which aimed at obviating the congestion in the Metropolitan Traffic Office and therefore it can hardly be considered possible to collect all licensing fees in the central Traffic Office in those circumstances were that system allowed to come into operation. It is fairly obvious, and, in fact, it is implicit in the circular itself, that the collection would take place in the various districts through some person appointed by the central authority and paid by it. The net result of that could only be that there would be greater expense involved in the collection of traffic fees in the respective districts of local authorities, because it is not to be assumed, I think, that the remuneration of those employed in the offices of most of the local authorities would be reduced, so that no substantial saving could be effected, or at least that the saving effected would not be equivalent, I would argue, to the cost of providing someone to collect those fees.

Mr. Withers: But the police would have to police the traffic still.

Mr. WATTS: That has nothing to do with the collection of licenses to enable the police to police the law with regard to traffic. Sub-section (4) of Section 21 of the Traffic Act states—

It shall be the duty of every police officer to aid and assist inspectors in the exercise and discharge of their powers and duties, and members of the police force may exercise such powers and shall perform such duties of inspectors (except the granting or transfer of licenses or the effecting of registrations) as the Commissioner of Police may by general or special order published in the Gazette think fit for the time being to vest in or impose upon them.

Mr. Withers: They do not do it.

Mr. WATTS: Exactly; they do not do it, and there is no reason why the collection of fees should be taken from local authorities at, in my opinion, considerable cost to those authorities in the net result, although it may be intended to distribute the collections amongst them. Then there is this further reason that once we start nibbling with this sort of thing, the chances are that someone will nibble away a little more in a year or two until inevitably the problems of local authorities will become greater than they are today. Apart from matters of detail, there is a principle involved, which principle unfortunately has not been observed in the other States of the Commonwealth but which principle has stronger arguments to support it in this State than ever, particularly in these days, and that is the principle of decentralisation. For many years the curse of Australia has been centralisation.

We have heard repeatedly in recent years, and have given strong support to it at least verbally, that decentralisation had to be the policy of Governments, and everything had to be done to develop and improve the outer centres of population. Yet in this year of grace we find that because the Chamber of Automotive Industries goes along as a deputation and makes suggestions, the local authorities are to be pestered with these proposals. They are doing something that tends definitely towards centralisation, that will not provide any further revenue to local authorities, that will possibly diminish their present revenue, and will certainly not work for the welfare of anyone, as I see it, because, as far as I can discover, it does not interfere with or hamper in the slightest degree the control of traffic as such. From the circular I find—

It was pointed out by the deputation that 138 local authorities in country districts undertook the independent licensing of motor vehicles within each respective district, but, on the other hand, all tests for motor vehicle drivers' licenses were being carried out by officers of the Police Department. They urged that the system of vehicle licensing is far from satisfactory.

What has the licensing of drivers by the Police Department to do with the alteration of the system which I have already referred to in regard to the collection of fees on motor vehicles, even for local revenue purposes? No-one has suggested that the police should have the right to issue drivers' licenses and to control virtually the life and limb of the

public, taken away from them. It is quite a different proposition from taking license fees in respect of the right to use vehicles upon the roads, away from the authority that is controlling them. Then the circular goes on to say—

With the object of overcoming the existing lack of uniformity of traffic rules and laws and to ensure proper and adequate control and policing of licensing, correctness of fees, accuracy in weight-checking, and servability and condition of vehicles, the establishment of a co-ordinating authority would have a most desirable affect.

We have maintained for some years at a cost proportional to Government and local authorities certain auditors and inspectors of road boards whose duties, among other things, are to see that correct fees are charged in respect of motor vehicles. I am fairly well acquainted with a number of local authorities, and have seen many reports furnished by auditors. I know there are very few cases where there have been errors, at any rate errors that were reported. Most road board officials, if in doubt as to the fee that should be charged in respect of a strange vehicle, make representations to the Local Government Department and are advised accordingly. In any case, so far as the correctness of the fee is concerned, the loser in such cases is the local authority itself. Then reference is made in the circular to inaccuracy in weight checking. What evidence is there of that? None has been offered to indicate that any grave errors have taken place in that direction. I have received a communication from a local authority in my district about the uniformity of traffic rules and regulations, which was one matter raised in the circular. The local authority advises—

There is no lack of uniformity of traffic laws and rules. The whole statutory power to control traffic is contained in the Traffic Act and regulations. Where local authorities make by-laws which are inconsistent with the traffic regulations such bylaws are null and void (see Section 54 of the Traffic Act).

As I like to be certain that I am correctly informed when I receive a letter, I turned to the Traffic Act and found that it says—

When any bylaw or regulation made by any local or other authority or any Minister of the Crown or other person is inconsistent with any regulation made under this Act, the latter shall prevail, and the former shall, to the extent of the inconsistency, be void.

So the whole question of uniformity—

especially when one bears in mind that local by-laws have to be approved before being gazetted by the local governing authority—at least as far as is necessary—is in the hands of the body that exists at the present time, to wit, the Local Government Department of the Public Works Department itself. So on that aspect of the matter there seems to be no justification whatever for this proposition. The circular proceeds—

The proposed co-ordinating authority should have the responsibility of controlling all traffic matters in country districts, including the setting of speed limits and general traffic rules.

I have a comment on that suggestion from the local authority, which states—

The lack of uniformity of traffic regulations does not exist; it is a question of enforcement. Some local authorities take steps to enforce the regulations rigidly; others rely on the good sense of the travelling public. In too many instances city motorists mistake latitude for license and pay little heed to speed limits through townsites and passing schools. The high accident rate attributed to speed justifies the action taken by some country authorities to minimise this danger.

But again I say that if it is necessary for this control to be of a more uniform character, let the Commissioner of Police—although I do not see the need for it—take greater advantage of the power conferred upon him by Subsection (4) of Section 21 of the Act; and do not let that argument be used as one of the reasons—some people might be inclined to give it a different name and say “excuses”—for putting this proposition before the local authorities of the State. The circular concluded with these words—

The proposition is now being submitted to your board (council)—

Presumably it has gone to municipal councils as well.

in common with all local governing bodies in country districts. With a view to assisting in the departmental investigations on this question, I shall be glad to receive as promptly as possible your board's comments on the general proposal.

I say quite distinctly and plainly, as I did at the beginning, that we have already passed legislation to minimise the congestion in this centralised city so far as traffic license fees collected here—because they must be collected here—are concerned. I sincerely hope that neither the Government nor Parliament will take too much notice of the

Chamber of Automotive Industries. I have no guarantee, nor has anyone else, that the approach which the chamber makes to a matter of this kind is aimed at anything else than its own peculiar interests. In any event, the local authorities in this State—a State as vast as this and a State crying out for active development in its outer areas—play by far too important a part in the scheme of affairs to be tinkered about by the Chamber of Automotive Industries or by any other body not directly concerned in local government. I hope that so far as the local authorities are concerned—and I think the majority of them will oppose this proposal strongly—that the last has been heard of it in this circular.

I want to say a word or two on the question of main roads. The Minister, in the course of his remarks last evening, made some reference to the question of assistance to local authorities by the Main Roads Department. At this stage I would like to say to the Minister that I have rarely heard a clearer or more concise statement of the views and the activities of a department—as he sees them—than I heard from him last night. It is not often that I am prepared to express such an opinion and therefore it is perhaps the less useless when I do; but I say that in good faith. It was, although I am not in accord with the subject-matter of all of it, one of the clearest statements made by the hon. gentleman in the last few years. But to get back to where I was. The Minister said that if “solid statements” were presented to the department in asking for assistance with respect to roads, he felt perfectly certain they would receive favourable consideration.

I ask the Minister to give careful consideration to the provision of a sum of money to develop the road between Mt. Barker and Albany via the Porongorups. I think the section between Mt. Barker and the Salt River-Albany-road—some 20 miles only—cost £17,000 a few years ago to improve in gravel. It is one of the most used roads in that part of the State, and it is used very substantially by people who do not live in the district at all. It is essentially, to the extent of at least 60 per cent., a tourist road. The local authority has made attempts to maintain it, but owing to the substantial traffic over it ever since it was improved, the gravel has worn out to such an extent that it is now becoming extremely

difficult to maintain it in anything like good order. We heard last evening, and I quite agree with what was said on the subject, about the development of our tourist services, but the motorist who arrives at this particular stretch of road—particularly in summertime, when a grader does not operate with success—has his journey entirely spoilt by the concluding few miles. It seems to me to be a great pity that the £17,000 already spent should be virtually wasted because nothing can be done to bituminise the road or use some other substance to make it impervious and so do away with the corrugations.

I hope the Minister can see his way to having the present decision of the Main Roads Department reviewed and take some steps to ensure that the road is put into permanent order in the near future. I am not suggesting that it should be made 24 feet wide, or whatever width it is that the Main Roads Department usually requires. That is not necessary and I doubt very much whether the clearing of the extra width would be justified. I do say, however, that unless some action is taken there will be the loss of the work done in the past and, moreover, the road will be a deterrent to people going to that part of the country for tourist purposes. Unquestionably, that part of the State has many attractions for the tourist. It is extremely popular. Even under ordinary conditions, in fact, poor conditions of road transport, we find many people making the journey there of their own volition. The hostels in the district—I refer to the Porongorups—are for a large portion of the year filled with people who thoroughly enjoy a good holiday.

The Minister for Works: Is the whole of this roadway in the Plantagenet Road Board district?

Mr. WATTS: Not by any means. Some 20 or 22 miles are in the Plantagenet district; the remainder is in the Albany district. The road goes to Albany. I am not suggesting that all the work should be done at once because that might be too big a job, but I think the work should be put in hand. I know more about the northern end of the road, as I frequently go there, but I have traversed the whole distance of the road in recent weeks. I leave it at that. I am sure the Minister will be ready at least to have the matter reviewed.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [9.25]: I think the Leader of the Opposition has misunderstood, to quite a serious extent, the case put forward to me by the Chamber of Automotive Industries and that he has in his speech this evening misrepresented the chamber's views. When representatives of the chamber interviewed me they were particularly careful to emphasise that they did not desire to deprive any local government authority of one penny either at the present time or any time in the future. I do not propose to follow what I consider to be the bad example of the Leader of the Opposition and doubt the bona-fides of the men who constitute that chamber. The Leader of the Opposition also said that there was an apparent desire on the part of the Public Works Department to bring this suggested system into operation. I assure him there is no desire, either apparent or otherwise, on the part of the department to do that. What the department thought, after receiving the chamber's representations, was that a fair summary of them should be submitted in writing to each local governing authority in the country so as to enable each such authority seriously to consider the points put forward by the chamber and subsequently favour the department with its views. I think the department has acted reasonably in the matter in taking that action.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition that almost every local authority in the country—probably every one—will reply to the department expressing opposition to the principle suggested by the chamber. If that be so, the department might go a step further and endeavour to arrange a conference at which both representatives of the country local authorities and of the chamber would be present. These could thrash out the points of difference as best they might, and if no agreement were reached—and I think perhaps none would be reached—then, so far as the department is concerned, the matter would be at an end. I hope, therefore, the Leader of the Opposition will not continue to misrepresent the chamber, as I am sure its attitude is prompted by the best of motives.

Mr. Watts: I think "misrepresent" is hardly the word. "Criticise harshly" would be better.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The Leader of the Opposition did reflect upon the bona-fides of the chamber. In addition, he said that what it was seeking to bring about was a centralised system of licensing which, in fact, is not what it is trying to do, and that by doing so the chamber was seeking to deprive local authorities in the country of revenue from the licensing of motor vehicles. I suggest to the Leader of the Opposition, if I may, in all possible friendliness, that he might have a personal discussion himself with representatives of the chamber so as clearly to understand their point of view. If he would be prepared to do that, I would be happy to arrange for him to meet representatives of the chamber or, if he preferred it, for the representatives to meet him in his office at Parliament House. I was very sorry to hear the member for York reflect upon the initiative, the common-sense and the ability of the engineers of the Main Roads Department.

Mr. Perkins: Not on their ability.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** All right; upon their initiative and common-sense, which I think is perhaps even worse than reflecting upon their ability. The member for York said that the Main Roads Department had not done anything worthwhile to increase the supply of plant and equipment of a modern type available to them for the purpose of allowing work on roads done by the department to be carried out under modern conditions.

Mr. Perkins: I did not say that. I said they did not have the necessary equipment there and I wanted to know what steps they were taking to acquire it.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The hon. member also said the department was employing manpower to a far greater extent than it should, and that by the employment of mechanical power in place of manpower roads could be constructed faster and more economically.

Mr. Perkins: That was the position pre-war.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** For the particular benefit of the member for York I would say that the Commissioner of Main Roads has been extremely anxious to acquire up-to-date road-making equipment from whatever source it might be available. He has for several years set lines of inquiry go-

ing in several directions. He has sought to acquire this type of equipment from the American Army authorities, from the Allied Works Council, from the Disposals Commission and also from any source from which new equipment, or even good secondhand equipment of that type, might be obtained. A fair measure of success has been achieved, with the result that the mechanical side of the department's equipment for roadmaking has been built up to some fair extent but not, of course, nearly to the extent which the department would desire and which I am sure every member of this Committee would desire.

So far as manual labour is concerned, the department is not able to obtain nearly the number of workers it requires for road making in the country. I am inclined to think that the member for Mt. Hawthorn, the ex-Minister for Works, must have been spreading one of the important points of his philosophy among returned Servicemen who before the war worked on roads. That important point of the hon. member's philosophy is that he has never had any desire to become the champion navvy of Western Australia. Evidently returned Servicemen who were labourers on roads before the war have no desire to return to that sort of work, and I do not think that any member of this Committee would blame them for not wishing to take on that sort of work again now that they have been demobilised from the Army. I would say for the benefit of all members that the various Government departments could at present place in employment in the country on Government construction works anything from 300 to 500 men, if they were available.

The member for Williams-Narrogin raised quite an important point in connection with the lifting of the retaining wall at the Mundaring Reservoir. He wanted to know why the department was proceeding to raise the wall at that reservoir and was not at the same time proceeding to raise the retaining wall at the Wellington Dam. The explanation is that the Mundaring Reservoir is an essential part of the Goldfields Water Supply Scheme. Even before the war, the quantity of water stored at Mundaring was not sufficient completely to provide all the year round the full needs of all its consumers including people in the various towns, farmers in the

various districts and the goldmining industry on the Eastern Goldfields.

Mr. Doney: Not even with assistance from the Canning Dam?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not even with the assistance that could have been made available by pumping water from the Canning Dam to the Mundaring Reservoir.

Mr. Doney: Has water ever been pumped from the dam?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I am anxious to make a short speech in reply to the general debate, and therefore I think I had better not answer every question the hon. member would desire answered.

Mr. Doney: That would be quite a valuable answer, from my point of view.

The Minister for Lands: The member for Williams-Narrogin was not here last night and he wants to have it all over again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Therefore it would have been necessary for the Government to raise the retaining wall at Mundaring even if no proposals had been developed for the establishment of what is now known as the comprehensive water scheme for agricultural areas. Another important answer could be that the Government has not yet received from Parliament authority or approval to establish the comprehensive scheme. It appears to the Government to be essential to obtain the approval of Parliament for the proposed scheme before any very large expenditure is incurred in raising the Wellington Dam retaining wall as an essential work in connection with the conservation or storage of fresh water to meet the huge demands that will develop when that proposed scheme is established.

Mr. Doney: That means, of course, that your work at Mundaring Weir at present has nothing to do with the general scheme at all.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I would say further that the Government did, some fair time ago, take the precaution of raising the retaining wall at the Wellington Dam by three feet in order that the full requirements of Narrogin and two or three other towns on this side of Narrogin could be met as soon as the large main was laid from the Wellington Dam to a high point

just out of Narrogin, so that the people the hon. member has particularly in mind will not have to wait when the scheme is authorised and the main laid down for the retaining wall at the dam to be raised some 40 or more feet. There will, by the raising of the wall to that extent, be sufficient water stored to enable the needs of the hon. member's people to be met.

The member for West Perth suggested that much more might be done in regard to the town planning section of the department by increasing its personnel. That department is at present and for many years past has been available for the purpose of giving advice to local authorities in regard to town planning, and also to give protection in relation to the subdivision of land so that land is subdivided in such a way as to ensure that the best principles of town planning are adhered to. Town planning is a responsibility of local authorities and in this field some local authorities have been very active and others have not been active at all. I think vested interests enter into this question very deeply, and it may be necessary for Parliament to give even more power in this regard than is available at present. However, I assure members that the officers of the department are anxious at all times to give the benefit of their technical and other advice to local governing authorities and many more authorities have during the last year or so taken advantage of the very valuable services available to them from the town planning section of the department.

I quite agree with the member for West Perth that the best expert advice ought always to be obtained in connection with proposed new industries for the State, especially when they are to be established by the Government. We followed that course in regard to the wood-distillation and charcoal-iron industry now in the process of establishment at Wundowie. We sent a technical man from our department to America some 18 months or two years ago. He spent at least six months there and consulted with the leading experts in America. He visited similar types of industries in that country and fully informed himself on every phase of the work. In addition we obtained valuable advice from experts of the Broken Hill Proprietary

Company at Newcastle in the development of the plans for this industry, and those plans had their entire approval. We also took advantage of the visit to this State of the general manager of the Mysore charcoal-iron industry in India, to obtain his advice. He completely checked over every detail of our plans and designs, and he visited the centre and closely inspected the work already done. He gave it his entire approval. He said that our industry was based very largely on that at Mysore, as indeed it was, and also said that it was naturally incorporating some improvements that had developed subsequent to the establishment of the industry in India.

We were not able, unfortunately, to carry out anything of this kind in connection with the potash industry at Chandler. We were not able to do that because we set to work to establish that industry during wartime and no experts were available to us from any country in which the potash industry operates. Potash supplies were not coming to Australia because of war conditions and consequently it was essential for us to go ahead and do the best we could with our own technicians, and whatever advice we could obtain from whatever sources were available. That procedure was followed under the stress of war. Whether at this stage we should try to bring to Western Australia an expert from Palestine or from Alsace, or some other part of the world to assist us more quickly to improve the quality of our potash to the required level, is worthy of consideration, and I assure members that the suggestion will be closely considered in the near future.

I thank members generally for the manner in which they have received these Estimates, and assure them again, as I did last night, that every section of the Public Works Department is anxious to push ahead as quickly as possible to meet the undoubted demands made on the services which the department provides; more especially because of the large accumulation of arrears of work brought about by war conditions.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Town Planning, £2,940—agreed to.*

*Vote—Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau, £3,260:*

Mr. McLARTY: I understand that the matter of unemployment today comes under



the Federal authorities, who have an office set up to deal with it. Will the Minister tell us exactly what are the functions of his department at present? I see there is an increase in the Vote.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The activities of the department are very small, but odd cases do arise that are not eligible to receive assistance from the Commonwealth social services system. Those are the cases with which the unemployment section of the Public Works Department deals. As the Commonwealth social services scheme becomes more solidly established, I think our liabilities in this direction, small as they are at the moment, will further decrease. At the moment, however, applicants for Commonwealth assistance have to undergo periods of waiting and in some cases it becomes necessary for the unemployment section of our department to render aid. There are also cases of sickness, and various others, to which the department has to render assistance on occasions.

Vote put and passed.

*Vote—Department of Industrial Development, £17,730—agreed to.*

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 9.48 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Thursday, 3rd October, 1946.*

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

## QUESTION.

### COMMONWEALTH YEAR BOOK.

*As to Copies for Members.*

Hon. H. SEDDON asked the Chief Secretary:

1, As the practice of issuing the Commonwealth Year Book to members of Parliament annually, ceased on the commencement of the war, will the Government endeavour to ascertain if this valuable source of statistical information will be again made available to members?

2, Will the Government endeavour to obtain for members copies of the last Year Book, which was issued in November, 1945?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

1, Inquiry will be made from the Commonwealth Government as to when this publication can again be supplied to members of Parliament.

2, Yes.

### BILL—NURSES REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.

*Third Reading.*

**THE HONORARY MINISTER** (Hon. E. H. Gray—West) [4.35]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

On the third reading of this Bill I wish to furnish information to the House in order to clarify the position. There seemed to be some confusion, so I will give the information as to all classes of nurses. The period of training required for nurses to qualify for registration is as follows:—

General nurses: Minimum age 18 years; three years' training in a 40 or more bed hospital. Four years' training in a 20 to 40 bed hospital.

Children's nurses: Three years' training at the Children's Hospital and to qualify as general nurses, a further six months in an adults' training school.

Midwifery nurses: Nine months' further course after qualifying as a general nurse; 18 months if they have had no previous training.

Infant health nurses: Further six months' training at the King Edward Memorial Hospital after undergoing midwifery training.

Total: Five years three months' training to fully qualify for a triple certificate for girls trained in a 20 to 40 bed hospital.

Four years three months' training for girls commencing in a 40 or more bed hospital.