

**Legislative Assembly,***Tuesday, 8th October, 1940.*

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

**QUESTION—RELIEF WORKERS.***Rates of Pay.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Works: In an average main road gang of 20 men which is divided into five categories, (a) What particular work is done by the men in each category? (b) What is the margin for skill, above the basic wage, that is paid in each category?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS replied: (a) There is no discrimination. (b) It depends on the work each man is carrying out, ranging from 3s. to 26s. per week.

**QUESTION—NAVAL DOCK.***As to Site, etc.*

Mr. NORTH asked the Premier: Announcements having been made during the recent Federal election to the effect that Western Australia was to have a naval graving dock similar to that under construction at Sydney, will he inform the House, 1, Whether any site has actually been selected? 2, Whether Cabinet is being consulted in the matter?

The PREMIER replied: 1, No. 2, No.

**ASSENT TO BILL.**

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Petroleum Act Amendment Bill.

**BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.**

- 1, Traffic Act Amendment.
  - 2, Main Roads Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

**BILL—MINE WORKERS' RELIEF ACT AMENDMENT.***Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

**THE MINISTER FOR MINES** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [4.34]: The only question calling for any reply is that raised by the member for Netherlands (Hon. N. Keenan). I agree with him that it would be very fine if we had a fund sufficiently large to cover all the cases indicated by him, but this Bill does not provide for that. As to the question of how the men coming under the provisions of the measure will act, they will have to satisfy the board that they have suffered some disability attributable to working in the mines, and this will be determined in the same way as at present. The medical man in charge of the laboratory, Dr. Moore, will be responsible for the examinations and the men can be examined at the time they leave the mines or within one year of leaving. The doctor's recommendations will then be forwarded to the board.

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—CIVIL DEFENCE (EMERGENCY POWERS).***In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1, 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Civil Defence Council:

Hon. N. KEENAN: In the absence of the member for West Perth, on his behalf, I move an amendment—

That the following words be added to Sub-clause 3, "and at least one member shall be representative of local authorities in the State."

I do not know whether the Minister has discussed the amendment with the hon. member; I have not and am not cognisant of the reasons in support of it. It is obvious that there should be some such representation.

On motion by the Minister for Mines, progress reported and leave given to sit again at a later stage of the sitting.

## **BILL—FEEDING STUFFS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 1st October.

**MR. BOYLE** (Avon) [4.43]: The Bill seeks to control feeding stuffs applied to stock. I wish to thank the Minister for Agriculture for having brought the measure down. The first Act was placed on the statute-book in 1928. It was amended in 1933. However, it is a most inadequate measure, affording little real protection to the user of animal feedstuffs. The 1933 measure, which was intended to amend the Act of 1928, actually made the position more obscure. The Minister's action in introducing the present amending Bill, I am sure, meets with thanks from this side of the Chamber. The 1933 Act has been the subject of correspondence between the Merredin Agricultural Society and myself, and I passed that correspondence on to the Agricultural Department. Excellent efforts were made by the departmental officers to evolve a really workable measure of protection for users of stock feed. The Bill repeals the machinery sections of the 1933 Act, and makes annual registration compulsory upon every importer of feedstuffs or by-products. The Act provided an extremely loose form of registration; once a firm had registered, it apparently did not bother further with its responsibilities in that regard. Under the present Bill, however, firms will have to register annually, and also register the feedstuffs and their constituent chemical parts, under severe penalties. An invoice and a certificate must accompany the goods, and the Minister may appoint any person to be an inspector under the Act.

I shall not delay the House, since the measure, as I said, has taken into full consideration the actions of some business firms which, though reputable, are not above taking ad-

vantage of opportunities to put up animal feed that does not meet with the approval of our stock breeders. This Bill reaches out with full penalties to prevent any lack of commercial morality on the part of firms which descend to such things. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

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

## **BILL—CIVIL DEFENCE (EMERGENCY POWERS).**

### *In Committee.*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting. Mr. Marshall in the Chair, the Minister for Mines in charge of the Bill.

The **CHAIRMAN**: Clause 3 has been partly considered, and an amendment has been moved by the member for Nedlands to add to Subclause 3 "and at least one member shall be representative of local authorities in the State."

**Mr. McDONALD**: I regret that I was detained, and I thank the Minister for his courtesy in allowing consideration of the measure to stand over. The clause as proposed to be amended will provide that the number of members of the council shall be unlimited and may be increased or reduced, as the Governor may think fit, provided that the council shall consist of at least five members and at least one member shall be representative of the local authorities in the State. The reason for the amendment, as members know, is that a considerable financial responsibility is sought to be imposed upon local authorities in order to provide funds for civil precautions and shelters, so much so that the Bill authorises local authorities to borrow against their rates to obtain the money necessary to enable them to carry out such obligations. It seems therefore not unreasonable—in fact, desirable—that local authorities shall be given representation on the council. The Minister may say that in making these appointments the Governor would be sure that local authorities were represented. My amendment will then do no harm, because

it simply makes it an obligation that they shall secure representation.

Mr. NORTH: I support the amendment. I ask the Minister whether he has been in touch with the local authorities interested in the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. I have been continually in touch with them. I agree with the member for West Perth that the amendment will do no great harm; but what I have been trying to avoid, if I possibly can, are applications by all kinds of authorities desiring representation on the council. In my opinion, the council should be composed of five men, or whatever number may eventually be decided upon, who should be the best men obtainable. So long as this amendment is not the forerunner of many others seeking representation of other organisations, I have no objection to it. The member for West Perth is quite right; I give the House my assurance that one of the councillors will be a representative of the local governing authorities. However, I would prefer that the amendment be not passed.

Mr. DONEY: Would not the Minister admit that since the local governing authorities must find the major part of the expenses to be incurred they therefore should have the right to representation.

The Minister for Mines: I agree.

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

Clause 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Allowances and expenses of council:

Hon. N. KEENAN: This clause introduces the principle of payment for these services. We have tens of thousands of people who are only too willing to do work of this kind without payment, simply because they hope by that means to do something to help to win the war. Unfortunately, there is a class of person who sees the chance of securing payment for such services. Those persons are, I am glad to say, in a miserable minority; but we should not encourage them by providing for payment in the Bill. The same work was inaugurated a considerable time ago. In England, very soon after Munich, it started as an entirely voluntary organisation. Then some persons managed to secure payment. The fact that many volunteers were doing more work than the people who were paid created a scandal, which was stopped by an

explosion in the Press. The names of those paid were published; some were getting hundreds of pounds a year. They secured payment by some underhand method. The great majority, however, were working willingly for no payment. In another part of the Bill provision is made for the enrolment of volunteers. The design of the Bill is to secure volunteers and no doubt many will come forward eager and willing to give their services free. I hope the Minister will not insist upon this provision. It opens the door to an undesirable class that will work only for reward.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I agree with the hon. member that there are people doing war work in an honorary capacity, and I shall be very disappointed if the Government is unable to obtain the services of efficient men to carry out the work envisaged by the Bill. But members of the council will probably have to travel to places like Albany, Bunbury, Northam and Geraldton, and it is only reasonable that they should receive allowances.

Hon. N. Keenan: I do not object to expenses being paid.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Committee will agree, I think, that the clause contains sufficient safeguards. The payment of an allowance must be recommended by the Minister and approved by the Treasurer. Knowing the Treasurer, I suggest that a member of the council would have to put up a good case before the allowance would be paid. So far as I know there is at present no intention to pay any salaries, but as I said during my second reading speech, we do not know what is likely to happen. There is so much supposition about the whole matter and adequate provisions must be made. It is possible that some members of the council will have to be given travelling allowances.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That is covered by the word "expenses."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have a desk full of names of very fine men who have already offered their services in an honorary capacity, and I do not think the Committee need worry about the payment of salaries.

Hon. N. Keenan: What does "allowances" mean?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member has had a better education than I.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The recouping of expenses is not an allowance.

Mr. J. Hegney: Members of Parliament receive a Parliamentary allowance.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The word "allowances" leaves the way open for the payment of members of the council. If any member has to go to Bunbury or anywhere else in the discharge of his duties, by all means let his expenses be paid. But why should there be "allowances"? Why should any man be paid for doing what hundreds of citizens in the State are prepared to do willingly for nothing? I hope the Minister will amend the clause.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Any virtue the Bill has lies in the fact that it provides an opportunity for a number of people to render service during this time of war in some simple organisation. Immediately the suggestion is raised of payment being made the value of the Bill is discounted. For the State to accept any liability in this matter is wrong. We are all taxed, and are responsible in other ways for defence expenditure. Our taxes are paid into one common fund which is neither under our control nor subject to our direction. Efforts to interfere with that are quite wrong. I could relate many examples to indicate how we struggled to avoid this difficulty in the last war, but because there was a feeling that some kind of recognised allowance or payment should be made, the whole possibility of the State placing the obligation of expenditure on the shoulders of those whose responsibility the burden is, was discounted. The country has been involved in the expenditure of a million of money in regard to soldiers' settlement, because the initial mistake was made of our accepting a liability we should not have undertaken. I hope the Committee will make this a test question. We should say, "We will pay expenses, but we will not pay salaries or allowances." Members would have to be absolutely blind to-day to avoid seeing the injustices that are occurring in our State. Men are being paid who should never have been put in the positions they occupy. Because of the system of payment for such services individuals have asserted their right to occupy positions equal to those held by others, with the result that we can go into offices and see five

or six men with nothing to do. I want to dissociate the State from that kind of administration. We should declare that purely local activities may be organised on an honorary basis, but that we have no funds and no means of raising funds to finance such operations. Under the Constitution we have accepted no liability or responsibility, but as citizens of Australia and the Empire, we have to play our part. That part, however, must be an honorary one. I move an amendment—

That the words "allowances and" in line 1 be struck out.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I hope the amendment will not be carried. It is conceivable that some very excellent men will be appointed to this council. I assure the Committee that the Government has not given consideration as to who the councillors will be. We have nobody in mind.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: We did not think you had.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Some of the men appointed may be engaged in private employment on wages, and if the amendment were agreed to, though they would receive travelling expenses to any centre they visited on the business of the council, they would lose a certain amount of pay, because we do not propose to ask employers to pay their employees for time spent in the service of the council. Surely such men would be entitled to allowances for the time they were away. If a man were paid a day's wages that would constitute an allowance. To strike out the words suggested would prevent workers from serving on the council.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Workers are not usually selected for paid jobs.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is an extraordinary statement coming from the hon. member; that because a worker who volunteers to do a job is sent out of the city he must lose a day's pay.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It is questionable whether "expenses" does not meet the situation.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am regarding the member for Nedlands as an authority on this matter, and I think it will be agreed that two days' wages would constitute an allowance and not expenses. If I could obtain a guarantee that the position would be met by the word "expenses" I would be willing to strike out the word

"allowances." The Committee should not limit the Government's choice of members of the council.

Mr. McDONALD: There is a certain amount of protection afforded in the fact that the Treasurer is a hard man—though a good-natured one, too—as any Treasurer must be. But there is no limit to the number of members who will constitute the council. There might be 15 or 20. If one man receives an allowance the others may think that they too should receive one. I would be sorry to see the personnel limited in the way suggested by the Minister, but I do not think it would work out like that in practice. It may be inconvenient for one member of the council, employed in a private capacity on wages, to go into the country, but we should remember that there would be several other councillors, many with unlimited time, who would be able to discharge that particular duty. We should offer the public a guarantee that the opportunity will present itself for this work to be done on a voluntary basis, whether the persons involved are in receipt of wages, salaries or are retired on pensions, etc. A sufficient number of persons would be available to carry out the requisite duties, and the Treasurer should be relieved of any financial obligations in respect of them.

Mr. ABBOTT: I support the amendment for the reasons advanced by the member for West Perth. A worker invited to serve on the council would be in an invidious position if he was obliged to say, "I cannot afford to serve on the council because I need the wages I have been receiving." The Minister would then have to inquire whether such a man could afford to lose a day's pay. The result would be that every person called upon to serve in this particular capacity would have to receive remuneration. The lesser of the two evils is to make the work entirely voluntary.

Mr. McLARTY: The Minister is justified in opposing the amendment, and I support him. He can be trusted in a matter of this kind, and will not be likely to pay any allowance unless he finds it necessary to do so. Those who can afford to do the work in an honorary capacity will no doubt be prepared to do it, but not always the most efficient men are so situated. We should ensure that the most efficient persons are engaged on this work.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: The question is one of principle. The Bill is brought down for the purpose of organising civil work in co-operation with the defence authorities. The work to be done is honorary. If provision is made for the payment of an allowance, those who will do the work for pay will be invited to do it. We shall have the minimum amount of honorary service and the maximum amount of paid service.

The Premier: All the work will be honorary unless a state of emergency arises.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: Possibly some expert may have to be called in, and may be paid a special rate. If provision is made for an allowance, one will be asked for by those concerned. No employer would withhold the wages of one of his men who was called upon to do work of this kind.

Mr. McLARTY: He might be engaged on it for weeks.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: If a man was specially qualified, and was called up to work in the interests of the nation, he should give his services. I have yet to meet an employer who would deny such a man his wages during the period involved. We want to see this legislation carried out decently and in a correct manner. It would not be right for people to say, "We are going to assist in carrying out these services because we shall be paid an allowance for so doing." The Bill provides for organisation on a voluntary basis, but if the word "allowance" were included, the services would inevitably be paid for. At one time many people gave voluntary service to the State, but, once that was broken down, everyone required payment.

Mr. SAMPSON: The Bill provides ample protection for the employment of persons in an honorary capacity. We should hesitate before cramping the style of the Minister in this legislation. Members are inclined to make a mountain out of a molehill. The Minister is unlikely to pay unnecessary allowances. Members of Parliament receive an allowance for the work they do.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: What influenced the payment of members?

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The hon. member is not now speaking to the amendment.

Mr. SAMPSON: The principle is the same in both instances.

The CHAIRMAN: I am not concerned about principle, but about relevance.

**Mr. SAMPSON:** They are synonymous terms in this case. If a man cannot afford to serve on the council without payment, he should receive some remuneration. That is one of the reasons why members of Parliament receive an allowance. In these times, many employers wonder how they will find the wages for their men. I submit we are in the safe hands of the Minister, subject as he will be to the discriminating efforts of the Treasurer.

**Mr. BERRY:** I support the Minister. No one would deliberately take on work of this character merely for the wages he received before.

**Mrs. Cardell-Oliver:** He might want more.

**Mr. BERRY:** He could not get more. A working man would not give up his own job to receive exactly the same pay for a temporary job. The Minister has gone thoroughly into the matter, and wishes to have the right to pay allowances when requisite.

**Mr. WITHERS:** This measure is entitled to every consideration at the hands of members. It is an attempt to stand behind the Commonwealth and do something to assist in what may yet prove to be a serious situation. I support the Minister in his remarks. This is a patriotic Bill, and we should do nothing to interfere with its administration. I hope members will not take a niggardly view of it. The power given in the clause is not likely to be misused. There might be occasions for prompt action, and the right to take it must be left in the hands of the Minister. If some financial sacrifice has to be made, we should be prepared to make it.

**Mr. HOLMAN:** The clause provides ample safeguards with respect to allowances and surely the Minister and Treasurer can be trusted to see that the provisions are carried out in a proper manner. If the amendment is agreed to, the State may be deprived of the opportunity of securing the best brains possible for the work to be undertaken. While some employers might be patriotic enough to pay the salaries or wages of their employees who might be chosen to undertake work under the control of the council—the member for Swan, I am pleased, agrees with that principle—we must remember that there are employers—and employers. Even in peace time some employers are not prepared to pay adequate wages, and how could such employers be expected to pay wages to their men who were engaged in war work

under the council? Some employers cannot be expected to countenance the dislocation of their industries and at the same time pay salaries to their employees, possibly key men in their particular avocations, who may be called upon to undertake patriotic duties. If men are brought to the city from the country districts and are put to expense, provision should be made for reimbursing them. I hope the amendment will not be agreed to.

**Mr. FOX:** I support the amendment, which should be considered from a patriotic point of view. If provision for the payment of allowances is agreed to, a welter will be made of it. Plenty of men are rendering patriotic services without any expectation of remuneration. If allowances are to be paid as suggested, dissatisfaction will be bound to arise, and the country will not continue to enjoy the service provided now by many patriotic individuals. In the past many men have undertaken duties for unions at their own expense because their organisations were not financially strong enough to meet the expenditure involved. Similarly, to-day many men will be willing to perform services from patriotic motives, even if no payment is received. In any case, I regard the responsibility for such payment as that of the Federal Government, and the State should not be asked to accept that burden.

**The MINISTER FOR MINES:** I assure members and the member for Guildford-Midland in particular, that I am just as anxious as they are that the council shall work in an honorary capacity. Hundreds of men are to-day devoting their time and ability, not only in the city but elsewhere, and particularly at seaports, in preparation for possible raids on Western Australia. What would those men, who are working in an honorary capacity, think or do if the Government started paying for services, as some members have suggested? I regard as truly remarkable the work that has been done so far. Professor Bayliss has devoted an enormous amount of time and energy to the task, and Mr. Long has been indefatigable in his work of co-ordinating efforts that have languished for want of that essential feature. Do members think that I would contemplate upsetting all that honorary A.R.P. work by paying allowances to the council? The member for Irwin-Moore was right in his contention, and the Government should

have the right to make some payment in certain circumstances. I hope the Committee will not agree to the amendment.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 6—agreed to.

Clause 7—Governor may make regulations:

Mr. NORTH: Sub-paragraph (x) of Sub-clause (1) sets out that regulations may be framed dealing with "the requisitioning of premises and vehicles and of any goods, articles, or things, for civil defence purposes." Does the Minister consider that the sub-paragraph is sufficiently wide to enable the council to increase the fire-fighting plant to the extent that may possibly be necessary? In answer to a question, the Minister for the North-West told me that an attempt was being made to influence the Federal Government to provide £17,000 for the purchase of fire-fighting equipment, and that further equipment was needed to meet war conditions. The Chief Fire Commissioner of the City of London announced recently that London's fire-fighting equipment, both personnel and plant, had been increased twelve times over, in addition to which there were the volunteer fire brigades. While there is not the immediate danger that is being experienced by London, we have reason to prepare for possible shell-ing or bombing in the metropolitan area.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not know that the sub-paragraph quoted can be said to be adequate for the purpose suggested, but I am satisfied the clause provides all the powers necessary to enable the war council to do all that is essential.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The clause provides for power to make regulations dealing with "power to erect shelters and other buildings and to require local authorities, public bodies, corporations and persons . . . to erect shelters and other buildings for use by the public or for private use, as the case may be . . . ." Is it suggested that any public body or corporation should be called upon to spend money to provide shelters for private use? I can erect one in my backyard for shelter against air raids if I feel so inclined. Does this provision mean that if a man is influential enough he can go to the local authority and require a shelter to be erected for the use of himself,

his wife and his cat? Surely it is absurd to make such provision for the erection of shelters for private use. Possibly the Minister has some precedent for such a proposal, but that there can be such a provision is a matter of astonishment to me.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The clause reads, "In the event of air raids and other hostile attacks." I suggest to the hon. member in all seriousness that in the event of an air raid he will not be worrying about anything else excepting to get under shelter. The clause deals with nothing except "in the event of air raids." Then we will all be in it.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is not the meaning of it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is what it says.

Hon. N. Keenan: It is not what it says.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is very definite, "in the event of air raids or other hostile attacks."

Hon. N. KEENAN: Who is going to build the shelters while the air raid is in progress?

The Minister for Mines: There are 10,000 volunteers in London doing so every day and every night.

Hon. N. KEENAN: This gives power to erect shelters and they are to be erected by local authorities or corporations. They are to be used as shelters in the event of air raids. Those words, "in the event of air raids" mean that it is work that will have to be carried out long before the commencement of the air raid, and the shelters are to be used when the air raid does take place. They are not for private use.

Mr. Fox: The Bill provides that persons may be obliged to erect shelters.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The clause means that corporations or public bodies or persons would be called upon to erect shelters for private or public use. As I have pointed out any man will be able to erect a shelter for himself at any time. He will not require any authority to do that and he will be able to say, "That is for my use; it is not for every Tom, Dick or Harry; they will have no right to it."

Mr. FOX: The hon. member has not the right angle. Under the Bill, public bodies or corporations and persons may be called upon to provide shelters. A man who is in a strong financial position may also be called

upon to provide a shelter and if he does not do so he will not have any right to go into a public shelter.

Mr. BERRY: To me it appears that the clause will give the Minister power to carry out this job publicly or privately. In those circumstances there is nothing wrong with it. The difficulty would be overcome by inserting the word "either" to make the sentence read, "To erect shelters and other buildings for use either by the public or for private use." The Minister could then make the shelter either a private or a public one.

Mr. WATTS: I agree to some extent with the member for Nedlands, although I fear the clause is intended to do what the Minister says it does not do. Local authorities can be required to build shelters for private use and persons may be required to build shelters for public use. I thought what was intended was that local authorities could build shelters for private use and private persons could be compelled to build them for public use. The Minister should agree to have the paragraph looked into so that we might get a more accurate definition of what is intended.

The Minister for Mines: We can make regulations.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: If shells were falling around us it would not be necessary to have this paragraph in the clause because the Commonwealth Government already has all the authority that is required under the National Security Regulations. Under that authority people must do just as they are bid. If there is an invasion or air attack there will have to be authority to say "you are to do this, that or the other." Therefore it is beside the point to argue whether the paragraph means this, that or something else.

Mr. HOLMAN: The clause appears to me to be badly drafted because it seems to have two meanings. It does mean that the local authority would have power to erect shelters at any time in the event of an air raid. Between the words "power to erect shelters" and "in the event of air raids" we have the intervening words "for use by the public." The various authorities and people who might be required to build shelters are mixed up, and any authority could be compelled to build a shelter for a private person. An influential man might have sufficient pull with the local council to get a shelter built for himself. In the event of an air raid, I should

like to see the man who could keep me from getting to a shelter. I do not think the Minister can approve of the clause in its present state of ambiguity.

Mr. DONEY: I think members generally agree that the intention is that a person might be compelled to build a shelter for private use, but could big firms like Foy's and Bean's be compelled to erect shelters for the use of their employees?

The Minister for Mines: They are not privately owned.

Mr. DONEY: Would the responsibility of private individuals apply to employers?

The Minister for Mines: No.

Mr. DONEY: Very well.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The point raised will be referred to the Crown Law officers and, if clarification is necessary, an amendment can be moved in the Council.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Paragraph xxvi provides for the payment of compensation in the event of personal injury to air-raid wardens and other officers and persons appointed and acting under authority of the measure or the regulations.

The Minister for Mines: When engaged in civil defence activities.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Doubtless this provision is intended to attract persons to become air wardens, and they will run some risk in the discharge of their duties. From that point of view the provision is desirable, but members of the community will run infinitely greater risks. I might instance the employees of the East Perth Power House.

The Minister for Mines: They will come under workers' compensation.

Hon. N. KEENAN: No.

The Minister for Mines: Why not?

Hon. N. KEENAN: Workers' compensation will not apply to air-raid damage.

The Premier: That is a very moot point.

Hon. N. KEENAN: But people living in the vicinity of those works might be injured during an attack. Those engaged in the Midland Junction Workshops and people living in close proximity will be running infinitely greater risks than will any air warden. The same remark applies to people living near the oil depots and to men working on the wharves and ships at Fremantle. All those persons have as strong a claim to consideration as has any air warden. I do not deprecate the idea of attracting people to serve as air wardens, but the regulations

might go further. We should provide insurance not only for the workman who might be able to claim under workers' compensation on the ground that the injury was one arising out of his employment—

Mr. Withers: It would have arisen in the course of his employment.

Hon. N. KEENAN: One principle underlying the law is that all contracts become void against action by an enemy because he is the common enemy of everyone and there is no obligation to compensate somebody for damage sustained at the hands of an enemy. Is not there some duty to provide for those people, apart from actual workers, living in dangerous places? Bombs would hardly be likely to be dropped at Nedlands, except by accident.

The Minister for Mines: That is the trouble.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The places that would be attacked are the Midland Junction Workshops, the East Perth Power House, the oil tanks and the harbour works; and the people living in those districts will be taking risks far greater than will the air wardens in Mt. Lawley, Leederville or Nedlands. Residential areas might be accidentally bombed, but the other places would be intentionally bombed. The regulations should be wide enough to provide compensation for citizens who in their daily engagements have to accept risks greater than those of air wardens.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: While I might agree with much of what the hon. member has said, this Bill is not designed to insure people. Its object is to co-ordinate efforts to the end that we might protect people and property. When an air-raid alarm was sounded, the men working in a place like the East Perth Power House would get out of the way, and probably people living in the vicinity would have a shelter to which they could go. But air-raid wardens would be servants of the councils and would be instructed where to go and what to do. They would be on duty and exposed to the effects of the raid. They could not go to a shelter; they would be outside doing their job just as a soldier has to do it. In the circumstances, these wardens doing work for the rest of the people are entitled to some protection, and the only way to protect them is as provided in this paragraph. Further, air wardens will be working in an honorary capacity.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 8, 9—agreed to.

Clause 10—Powers of local authorities with respect to civil defence:

Mr. NEEDHAM: I move an amendment—

That Subclause (2) be struck out.

Subclause (1) provides that every local authority shall have power to make provision for taking precautions for the protection of persons and property within its district against injury or damage in the event of air raids or other hostile attack, and for civil defence during the present state of war. If Subclause (2), which provides for the costs, charges and expenses so incurred being borne by the local authority, is deleted, the whole object will have been achieved. That object is the co-ordination of the efforts of local authorities and of the State Government, assisting the Commonwealth, for protection in the event of enemy attack. My amendment will not hamper that co-ordination, but will prevent the cost being placed on the local governing body.

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

Mr. NEEDHAM: It may be in the minds of members that if the subclause is deleted, local governing bodies will not then be able to do anything in the way of taking precautions against eventualities; but that is not so. Even if the subclause is struck out, adequate provisions remain in the Bill for any possible contingencies. We all cherish the fervent hope that the day will never arrive when this fair land of ours will be subjected to the horrors of war: but events of the past few days suggest that Australia may be subjected to them, and therefore every possible precaution should be taken. It is no use beginning to provide air-raid shelters when bombs are falling. We must do what other countries have been compelled to do in order to be prepared. I take exception only to the placing of the financial burden on local authorities. This is a national matter, and therefore the duty of the Commonwealth. Men and women engaged in repelling an invader at Cottesloe would be as much engaged in the war as our soldiers in Palestine. The Minister informed us that arrangements had been made by a Premiers'

Conference for the enactment of such legislation as this. I do not know that any other State has enacted it.

The Minister for Mines: Yes; Victoria.

Mr. NEEDHAM: I understand that Victoria has not done what is here proposed. But if every other State of the Commonwealth were doing it, that is no reason why we should do it. It is the duty of the Commonwealth to provide for the defence of Australia. I understand that the estimated cost of the war to the Commonwealth during the current financial year will be about £180,000,000. It may cost more if the struggle lasts longer. Local governing bodies will be called upon to face heavy expenditure in the construction of air-raid shelters. I have no doubt that the Commonwealth Government will immediately get to work and see that the necessary precautions are taken. The subclause further provides that if local governing bodies have not the necessary funds, they must borrow.

The Minister for Mines: The clause empowers them to do so.

Mr. NEEDHAM: If they do not do it, the military authorities will do it. Even if the local authority does not feel inclined to borrow, it can be compelled to do so, and the usual procedure in relation to loans is to be suspended. My objection is that this is not the business of either local authorities or State Governments. There is absolute need for co-ordination of effort in every avenue of defence—co-ordination between local authorities, State Governments, and the Commonwealth.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: In indicating my support of the clause as it stands, I wish to point out that this legislation is essentially of an experimental nature, and that no doubt before the measure was drafted conferences were held between State Premiers and Federal Ministers to consider the advisableness of introducing legislation dealing with certain aspects of civil defence. If times were normal, no doubt the arguments of the member for Perth would be considered sound. The question where Federal responsibility ends and State responsibility begins is a difficult one. On it we must almost agree to disagree. I do not for a moment believe that the clause will require local authorities to do the im-

possible, or anything beyond their capacity. As regards imposition of further taxation, whether the taxing authority is the local governing body or the State Government or the Commonwealth Government, the taxpayers are practically the same in each instance. This legislation can if necessary be amended. It is of a non-party character. If amendments are found to be necessary, they can be effected next session. Whether the responsibility is regarded as one of the Federal Government or not, the Federal Government has deputed the State Governments to introduce such legislation. The subclause in question is really the kernel of the Bill and if it is deleted the whole measure will become completely innocuous. I hope the Committee will demonstrate the urgency of placing legislation of this character on the statute-book. Even though there may be room for argument as to whether the responsibility is that of the Federal Government or the State Government, that matter can be dealt with when the Bill is passed. In the meantime, we will have laid down the basis of organisation for the civil defence of the State.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I, too, hope that the Committee will not agree to the deletion of the subclause. The whole trend of the argument of the member for Perth is that the Commonwealth Government is responsible for all defence matters; but it is hard to draw a line of demarcation in time of war. I venture to say that the civil population would expect me, as Minister for Health, to make some preparation for hospital services in anticipation of a hostile attack. The hon. member said he knew of no other legislation of this kind. In 1939 the Victorian Parliament passed an Act to make provision with respect to the security and protection of the people of Victoria. The Act is entitled the National Security (Emergency Powers) Act; and Subsection 4 of Section 3 reads as follows:—

If any funds or revenues of any municipality or of any statutory corporation are not or if any doubt arises as to whether the same are available for the purposes of carrying into effect any powers or duties conferred or imposed upon such municipality or corporation by any regulations under this Act, the Governor in Council may by Order published in the Government Gazette direct that such funds or revenues shall be available for such purpose and thereupon such funds or revenues shall notwithstanding anything in any Act be available accordingly.

The Tasmanian legislation does not go quite so far. Section 8 of the Civil Defence (Emergency Powers) Act of that State provides:—

Every local authority shall, subject to the regulations, be deemed to have power to make provision for the taking of precautions for the protection of persons and property in the event of hostile attack, and for civil defence during the present state of war, and, subject to the regulations, any expenditure of any local authority for that purpose shall be deemed to be, and to have been, lawful.

Those two States have already done what we are endeavouring to do, that is, give the local authorities power to do certain things. The member for Perth is not quite right; the subclause says that any regulations under this Act may be made so as to apply to or have operation throughout the whole or any part of the State. The provision that the ratepayers will not have authority to ask for a referendum I suggest is merely to meet an emergency. Suppose the Premier, through the Prime Minister, got word of a raid on the coast, and there was a possibility of a few shells being dropped on Cottesloe or on Perth, it would be no use holding a referendum to decide whether sufficient money should be borrowed to protect the residents from the attack. Another amendment on the notice paper to a large extent covers that point. We should not at this stage debate whether the responsibility rests upon the Federal Government or upon the State; that point might reasonably have been argued on the second reading debate. At a meeting of the State Premiers and the Prime Minister an endeavour was made to draw a line of demarcation; whatever the Premiers might have thought about the matter they at least were prepared to accept their share of responsibility.

Mr. Doney: Were all the States in agreement then?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Yes. The States have brought down legislation dealing with the matter. Our legislation is similar to that of Victoria and Tasmania. In Tasmania authority will be vested in a civil legion; in Victoria it will be vested in a council or organisation, and, as members are aware, our measure provides for a council. Queensland has not brought down legislation as comprehensive as the measure now before us. Under that State's legislation the Commissioner of Police has power to appoint and control air wardens.

Mr. Needham: Does the Queensland legislation provide for the expense?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There must be expense. Surely no member of the Committee honestly believes that the Government is likely to allow any council to order a local governing authority to spend tens of thousands of pounds on air raid shelters! This Government must accept some responsibility to Parliament and the people of the State. I hope the amendment will not be carried.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The real point raised by the amendment is whether we should pass a measure giving power to the Government to compel local authorities to raise money for the purpose of paying for all the services that this Bill may lead to. It is no reply to say that the Government feels it has a responsibility to discharge; it is proposing to discharge that responsibility in a simple way by passing it on to the local authorities. That is really the matter that the Committee ought to determine, and it is a matter of great importance. It is not correct to say that because the Premiers at a conference at Canberra agreed to accept the expense of any defence measures—

The Premier: So far as the civil population is concerned.

Hon. N. KEENAN: So far as the population is concerned, the whole duty of defence rests with the Commonwealth under Section 51 of the Constitution. That section has been the subject of High Court decisions. Under it the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth is accepted by the Commonwealth. That was held by the High Court to be exclusive; it was not to be modified by any qualification of any kind or description. I am referring to the case of *Joseph v. Colonial Treasurer of New South Wales* (38 Commonwealth Law Reports). The decision was a unanimous one. Matters of defence cannot be divided into sections, such as civil defence, quasi-civil defence, military defence and naval defence. The whole duty of defence rests on the Commonwealth. Assuming for a moment—although I do not—that the Premier had power when at Canberra to bind this Parliament, without having authority to bind it, what he and the other Premiers agreed upon was fully explained by the Minister when moving the second reading. It was that the Governments and the States—

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member is not in order in reading any paper.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I would ask you, Sir, whether I am not in order in refreshing my memory as to what was said by the Minister? The Committee will agree that I ought to be correct.

The CHAIRMAN: The hon. member must not read from any paper.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I propose to refresh my memory. What was said at the conference was that the States would make preparations or would submit plans for civil defence. Not a word was said about the States accepting the responsibility for the expense of carrying out such defence proposals. With regard to the civil population, however, it was agreed that the plans for civil defence should be more effective. To my mind, nothing condemns this measure so much as the power to which I have referred; because it is not a case of saying that the local authorities may incur this expenditure—as was emphasised by the Minister. That is not so at all. True, in the first instance they may do so; but if they do not then another section following this section compels them to do so. What is the reason? Is it because the State has affluent resources and so can undertake expenditure that clearly, under the Constitution, should be borne by the Commonwealth Government, or is it because Tasmania and Victoria, to some qualified extent, have passed legislation of this character? What the expenditure may be I personally do not know. I have not read the statutes passed by the other States mentioned by the Minister; but I am not prepared, as a representative of Western Australian taxpayers, to agree to the placing of this expenditure on their shoulders when it should be borne by the Commonwealth.

Mr. HOLMAN: I fail to see why, because certain words are included in the subclause the whole subclause should be condemned. Local governing bodies are spending money they are not entitled to spend and they are asking for legislation that will allow them to incur such expenditure. The member for Nedlands based most of his argument against the subclause on the fact that portion of it is mandatory, giving the Government power to compel the local authorities to spend money if necessary. If that is all that is wrong with the subclause the proper course would be to amend it by deleting the man-

datory portion. It is ridiculous to suggest that the Government will force local governing bodies to borrow large sums because if matters become so serious and a crisis is so near, no local authority will have an opportunity to borrow large sums. The Commonwealth Government would require all the money to manage the defences of the country. The Committee previously agreed to the council being empowered to compel a local governing body to erect shelters and do other work. That being so, how does the Committee expect the local authorities to undertake such work if it has not the money? The subclause gives the local authorities power to borrow if necessary and to expend money on work required.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have no desire to labour the question, but I would like to point out that the Premier did not commit this Parliament to anything. The Premiers of the various States undertook to introduce into Parliament a Bill to implement the desires of the Federal Government. It is not that we wanted to follow any particular State.

Mr. McDONALD: In the clause which the Committee passed a little earlier and which was referred to by the member for Forest, the power to require local authorities to expend money obtains only when the local authorities have the necessary finances available or obtainable. That is expressly set out in the clause dealing with regulations imposing obligations on local authorities. I am not so much concerned whether the Commonwealth Parliament or the State Parliament finds the money. It is rather refreshing to observe the State undertaking some obligations. The tendency is generally to call on the Commonwealth Government to do everything.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: You cannot spend much out of a deficiency.

Mr. McDONALD: What I am concerned about is the position of the local authorities. When speaking on the second reading I mentioned that in the corresponding English statute the obligations as between the Government and the local authorities are very clearly expressed. The Government undertakes to find from 60 to 80 per cent. of any expenditure and fixes a liability on the local authorities of only from 20 to 40 per cent. Moreover, the English statute provides that the local authorities shall not

be required to expend money which may raise their rates beyond a certain amount—I think it is a penny. I do not know whether the Minister proposes to accept the amendment on the notice paper under the name of the member for Williams-Narrogin.

The Minister for Mines: I am quite prepared to accept it.

Mr. McDONALD: That affords some protection to local authorities. I should however like to see the Minister re-draft this clause in such a way as to set out a more specific limit to the duties or obligations imposed on the local authorities either by an amount of rate in the pound beyond which they are not required to spend money or raise money or something of that description. I do not know whether the Minister, while prepared to accept the amendment of the member for Williams-Narrogin, will be prepared also to accept the amendment I propose later which will give just the guarantee the local authorities and the public want against any unfair imposition or liability.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee had better confine itself to the amendment before the Chair.

Mr. McDONALD: I am so far in sympathy with the hon. member who moved the amendment that I feel reluctant to accept the clause unless we have some further guarantee that no unfair or intolerable burden will be placed on the local authorities.

Mr. NEEDHAM: The Minister mentioned that the Government made no promise. I agree, but I would point out that the words in this clause are very specific. Though it has been suggested by hon. members that the local governing bodies are not to be called upon to bear expense, nothing can be more definite in the English language than the words of the subclause. The responsibility is placed upon the local governing authorities of meeting all the cost. The member for Pilbara stated that there was some doubt where the responsibility of the State ended and that of the Commonwealth began in defence matters. Not only is the Commonwealth Constitution very definite on the matter, as was pointed out by the member for Nedlands, but Quick and Garran, the noted constitutional authorities, are very explicit. On page 565 of "The

Annotated Constitution of the Australian Commonwealth" it is stated—

As to the duty of the Federal Government to protect every State against invasion, and on the application of the Executive Government of the State, against domestic violence, etc.

And on page 64 appears the following—

Under the constitution the Federal Parliament, like the American Congress, has power to raise and maintain an army and a navy; it is charged to take over from the States their naval and military departments, their forces, their fortifications and defence works and buildings, their ships of war, their war materials and armaments; it may acquire from the States or from private persons landed and other property necessary for naval and military purposes.

Hon. members will perceive that there is no doubt at all who is responsible in all ways for the defence of this nation. The Minister wanted to know what would happen if the civil population of Perth were attacked. Would the State Government remain idle? Not at all. The State Government would, for the time being, be agent for the Commonwealth Government, until the latter had come to its aid with either army or navy. Naturally the State would do all that was possible to protect the civil population, but the Commonwealth Government should pay the cost thereof. The Bill proposes that all necessary precautions should be taken, but the State Government and local authorities should not be called upon to pay the costs. If Parliament agreed to that the day would not be far distant when it would be sorry it had done so. Western Australia has enough to do to maintain its financial solvency without going further into debt, when it is well known that all defence matters are a charge upon the Commonwealth Government.

Mr. ABBOTT: It would be foolish to charge Fremantle for the protection of its civil population in the event of an invasion, whilst Kalgoorlie would pay nothing because it was not in need of protection. If the Commonwealth did not meet the expenditure and spread it over the whole State, the duty of the State Government would be to make such a distribution. I want to see that the expenditure is distributed over the whole State, and not foisted upon any individual district. For that reason, I support the amendment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I cannot understand how any member could think that this clause makes it mandatory upon local authorities to find the money. It

merely says, "if so required by the Governor." Apparently members do not trust the Government to do the right thing. The arguments advanced are ridiculous. No Government would charge the district of Fremantle for the cost of an invasion of that port. How could it possibly find the money in the first place, and how could any Government do such a thing in the second place? The nation as a whole would bear the cost.

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

Ayes	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	18
Majority for	..	..	2

AYES.		
Mr. Abbott	Mr. Needham	(Teller.)
Mr. Berry	Mr. North	
Mr. Boyle	Mr. Seward	
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Shearn	
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. F. C. L. Smith	
Mr. Johnson	Mr. J. H. Smith	
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Tonkin	
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Watts	
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Willmott	
Mr. McLarty	Mr. Sampson	

NOES.		
Mr. Cross	Mr. Patrick	(Teller.)
Mr. Doney	Mr. Rodoreda	
Mr. Fox	Mr. Scyants	
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Triat	
Mr. Holman	Mr. Warner	
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willcock	
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise	
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Withers	
Mr. Pantou	Mr. Wilson	

Amendment thus passed.

Clause as previously amended, put and passed.

Clause 11—Provision in case of default by local authority;

Mr. DONEY: I move an amendment—

That the following proviso be added to Subclause (2):—"Provided that such court shall not give judgment for the Minister in excess of the amount which in the opinion of the court was sufficient to carry out in a reasonably efficient manner such duty or obligation."

The amendment strikes me as eminently fair. We desire only that the work shall be carried out in a reasonably efficient manner. Expensive finish or polish such as one associates with work done under Government supervision is not needed. The clause visualises the position likely to arise if there is default by the local authority in the form of a refusal by it to borrow money to meet civil defence undertakings. That position is likely to arise only in the event of the local authority on the one side and the civil defence authority on the other being in dis-

agreement as to whether certain work should be done, or whether it should be done this way or done that way. The local authority's view, with its naturally intimate knowledge of local conditions, might make its proposal the wiser one; and therefore its refusal to fall in with the requirements of the civil defence authority might be perfectly proper and reasonable. The operations of a body from, say, Perth doing a job in a country town are likely to be inordinately expensive if there is no such restriction as that outlined in the amendment. As a general rule the work would be done more economically by a local authority charged with the responsibility of meeting the cost, as is the position under Clause 9.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I should like a ruling from you, Mr. Chairman, as to whether the result of the last division does not involve the consequence of the deletion of Clause 11, or at least considerable re-drafting. Under Clause 9, to which the member for Perth moved an amendment, the first paragraph is left in; but the second paragraph, which was the whole gist of the clause, giving power to local authorities to borrow and giving power to the Governor-in-Council to compel them to borrow, was struck out. Clause 11 as a whole is really consequential on Clause 10, because it is meant to provide that if the local authority does not act in compliance with the requirements of the Governor, which we struck out, then the Governor can proceed to carry out the work and charge the local authority with the cost of it. Clause 11 is consequential to the power, which we have taken from the Bill, of the Governor to require a local authority to borrow in order to discharge certain works. It now remains entirely optional with the local authority, though the local authority gets the power if it likes to exercise it. Should the local authority instructed by the Governor to borrow not do so, the Governor has power to do the work and compel the local authority to pay the cost. We shall have an extraordinary jumble if we strike out, as we have done, the operative part of Clause 10 and then leave in Clause 11.

The CHAIRMAN: In view of its being highly difficult for the Chairman to know what can be done in the way of regulations, and in view of Subclause 1 of Clause 11, I respectfully suggest, and rule accordingly, that the amendment is in order.

Progress reported.

# **BILL—McNESS HOUSING TRUST ACT AMENDMENT.**

## *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 10th September.

**MR. WARNER** (Mt. Marshall) [8.33]: The Bill proposes two short amendments which are desired by the Premier. I have studied the Act, and have listened carefully to the Premier's speech, which fully explained the amendments; and therefore it is not necessary for me to detail what they propose. They appear perfectly reasonable, and necessary for carrying on the good work of the McNess Housing Trust. I am indeed pleased that the cheaper class of house previously built by the trust is to be discontinued, and a better class of house substituted. The cottages now being erected are very nice little places, not the cheap style of house we have known in connection with the trust. To the man who has not a large family, the new class of house affords a reasonable home. I have visited some of these houses, and the last two I saw struck me as being of an extremely nice class. It will be a pity if we cannot get hundreds of this class erected for those members of our community who find it hard to pay rent. The houses look very comfortable and represent a departure from the stock type erected previously. The present class of house will do away with much of the criticism that was formerly voiced by people living in better-class homes in the vicinity of the McNess dwellings. I suggest for the consideration of the Premier that these homes should not be built in colonies which, in addition to being somewhat invidious, would have a tendency to depreciate the value of adjoining properties. Many of those who will occupy McNess homes were of good standing in their younger days. Many were pioneers and others prospectors. If the homes are erected in the form of colonies, such people will be isolated and will feel the absence of contact with those residing in better-class dwellings in their neighbourhood. Instead of having groups of these buildings, I suggest that not more than two or three should be erected in any one street, and that the buildings should be erected in different parts of the suburban areas so that they would, so to speak, be absorbed into the general community. This would engender a better spirit. I think the tenants would prefer to live in houses under the conditions I suggest rather than that they, as occupants of McNess

homes, should be segregated into groups. If the buildings were scattered instead of being grouped, the tendency for other residents to seek a reduction in their rates would be avoided.

I would like to see hundreds of the present type of McNess home erected in various parts of the metropolitan-suburban area. Many a worker would like to have such a home. In fact, it would be a fine thing if the Workers' Homes Board were to build homes similar to those erected lately by the McNess Housing Trust. In my opinion, a weatherboard house valued at £450, if kept in good condition and looked after well, is quite equal to a brick building costing £900, from the standpoint of relative values. I do not agree with the principle of creating brick areas, but we could have what I might describe as value areas. Under the latter conditions, a well-kept weatherboard house would compare in appearance with a brick house, the erection of which would probably cost twice as much. Naturally the upkeep on the wooden house would be more than on the brick dwelling, but from the standpoint of the State we should encourage the erection of weatherboard houses. I trust the Premier will take note of the point I have raised regarding the erection of homes so that they will not be set up in colonies. Ample land is available in the various suburbs for the erection of such homes. I support the second reading of the Bill, which I regard as essential so that the work of the McNess Housing Trust may be continued with advantage.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [8.40]: I support the second reading of the Bill. I do not know that the Government should not go further and make more money available to enable the trust to extend its operations. Already there are hundreds of applicants for McNess homes. Many people in the metropolitan area are unable to pay the high rentals usually demanded, and these include those who, through no fault of their own, are compelled to accept financial assistance from the State and old age pensioners as well. Much more should be done to meet the requirements of those who need cheaper homes. In the last fortnight eight or nine people have approached me with that object in view and I have seen Mr. Jarman, the secretary of the Workers' Homes Board, who informed me that there are hundreds of applicants who deserve

homes but that the trust has not the money with which to make the homes available. He added that a few more houses were being erected but not nearly enough to meet the requirements of the applicants. I hope the Premier will make more funds available to the trust.

I was sorry that the Legislative Council last session rejected a Bill the object of which was to enable cheap houses to be provided and let on weekly tenancies. Shortly the Premier will be approached by a deputation from the Canning electorate with the object of urging him to enable more workers' homes to be erected in that district. The homes are required for people who cannot afford to pay the ordinary high rentals. These include part-time men in receipt of lower wage units who have to suffer standing-down periods, and also "C" class men. Such people who receive 7s. per unit per week on the "stand down," cannot afford to pay rent, and something must be done for them. Perhaps the provision could be made through the McNess Housing Trust. I have in mind one instance of a man and his wife who cannot afford to pay £1 a week rent. The man has had only three months' work this year, and during the rest of the time has had to keep himself and his wife on 14s. a week. Members will understand how impossible it is for such a man to pay a rental of £1 a week, and the duty devolves upon the community to make some provision for such people. I hope the Premier will do what he can to make additional funds available, so that the people to whom I have referred can secure homes at a price which they can afford to pay.

**HON. W. D. JOHNSON** (Guildford-Midland) [8.45]: I congratulate the Government upon introducing this measure. In my opinion, it will faithfully implement the desires of the late Sir Charles McNess, who devoted so much of his wealth to helping the poorer people in such a way that they would receive the maximum amount of assistance. I like the idea of the proposed duplex buildings. The danger in this respect pointed out by the member for Mount Marshall (Mr. Warner) can be overcome. Semi-detached cottages can be made presentable and at the same time two nice homes will be provided for elderly people. I have inspected the

designs of the buildings; the two semi-detached cottages appear to be one large building, but they are so designed that two families are divided from each other. They have their own block of land and their own home. These cottages have a better appearance than a small single cottage, and they are exactly what we have been asking for. For years past members have been anxious that homes should be provided for aged people and others not in the position to provide for themselves. These people want a small home only, because their families have either married or have left home to reside elsewhere. It is highly desirable that they should be provided with a home where they can spend their time together. I thank the Government for introducing the measure.

**MR. TONKIN** (North-East Fremantle) [8.47]: I, too, desire to congratulate the Government upon introducing this Bill. The crying need for a large section of the community is cheaper houses. Old age pensioners particularly find it difficult to obtain accommodation, as they cannot afford to pay more than 5s. or 6s. a week for rent out of their meagre income. To such people as have obtained them the McNess homes have been a boon. Unfortunately, the number of these homes is limited. Many people desiring to secure one are obliged to go without. This legislation will make possible the erection of additional homes because of the saving that will be effected in building the duplex type of home. Furthermore, the trust will now be under no obligation to refund principal moneys and therefore such moneys will be available for the building of additional homes. A saving will thus be effected in two directions; the funds will be considerably augmented and so additional houses may be erected. Hon. members will readily understand what that means to people seeking to obtain one of these residences in order to spend their declining days in comfort. In the present state of affairs, it is difficult for them to maintain themselves. I hope the Bill will have a speedy passage. I shall always be prepared to support legislation of a similar character, which does confer a definite benefit upon a section of the people most in need of it.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [8.50]: Every one realises the wonderful boon the late Sir Charles McNess conferred upon our

poor when he made provision for the building of a number of homes.

The Minister for Lands: It will be a good thing when other wealthy people die.

Mr. SAMPSON: And when other people not so wealthy know when to keep quiet. Now that the Minister for Lands has made a contribution to the debate—the first time he has spoken to-night—may I be permitted to say that the difficulty in regard to this trust is that so many assets of the estate of the late Sir Charles McNess, in the way of loans to municipal councils and other authorities, cannot be turned into money until they mature? Therefore the full usefulness of the proposal before the House cannot immediately be taken advantage of. I am wondering whether it would not be possible to place some of the securities on the market and dispose of them at a small discount. They are gilt-edged securities. If that were done money urgently required by the Housing Trust would be provided and it could be used at once for the provision of homes to which members have made reference.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [8.52]: I also would like to pay a tribute to the generosity of the late Sir Charles McNess in making this fund available. I hope that the precedent set by him will be followed by some of the wealthier members of this House who have more money than they reasonably know what to do with. I regret I have not any money to give away myself. There may be some members, however, who can do something during their lifetime and thus raise monuments to themselves that will stand to their credit when they have passed away. The trouble about this housing scheme is that the trust appears to be able to provide homes only for those greatly in need. Hundreds of people are in need, but the trust has been giving consideration principally to widows with four or five children. I have filled in many applications for homes during the last 12 or 18 months, yet only in one case has the application been proceeded with. I understand tenders are being invited for the erection of a house the application for which I filled in. Numbers of pensioners and old people who have not been able to procure a home during their lifetime are forced to pay rent; in the case of the pen-

sioners, the rent has to be found out of the sum of £2 a week allowed for the husband and wife. That is altogether insufficient. The State should do something to help these people, who have been an asset to the State during their lifetime. It would not be asking too much to request the Government to subsidise this housing trust. Recently I was speaking to the mayor of Fremantle, who said the Fremantle Council was quite willing to make a grant of land to the McNess Housing Trust sufficient for a dozen or two dozen homes. The Fremantle Council made a grant of land to the Workers' Homes Board when similar legislation was put through Parliament by the Minister for Lands last session, but no homes have yet been erected on it. As the council was generous enough to present the land to the Workers' Homes Board, the board might at least have made a start to build houses on it. I believe that the cost of building is increasing and I do not agree with the member for North-East Fremantle (Mr. Tonkin) that more houses are likely to be built without more money being made available to the trust. Therefore I hope the Government will give consideration to the need for making a substantial grant to the trust, thus enabling it to supply more of the homes that are urgently needed.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

#### **BILLS (2)—RETURNED.**

- 1, Income Tax (Rates for Deduction) Act Amendment.
  - 2, Metropolitan Market Trust (Land Revestment).
- Without amendment.

#### **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1940-41.**

##### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 12th September; Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

*Vote—Public Works and Buildings, £95,065:*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. H. Millington—Mt. Hawthorn) [9 p.m.] : It is usual when introducing the Estimates of the Public Works Department to give a brief resume of the activities of the department during the preceding year. The expenditure last year was as follows:—

From Revenue: Ordinary public works and buildings ..	97,562
From Revenue Votes: (For maintenance and other charges, including interest and sinking fund:—	
Goldfields Water Supply ..	130,054
Other Hydraulic Undertakings ..	65,814
	195,868
From Loan Funds: (Including expenditure from Loan Suspense Account, 1939-40) ..	819,271
From Suspense Accounts: (Funds appropriated from General Loan Fund, year 1938-39) ..	83,240
	<u>£1,195,941</u>

In addition, an amount of £205,421 was expended by the department in connection with works not provided for on the Estimates under my control, as follows:—

Commonwealth Defence Works, etc. ..	73,440
Hospital Fund buildings, and other departments generally	114,912
Harbour Works generally, dredging, etc. ..	17,069
	<u>£205,421</u>

A comparison between the total expenditure for the year 1939-40 of £1,401,362, and the total expenditure for the previous year of £1,273,398, shows an increase of £127,964. The dissection of the total expenditure referred to, £1,401,362, plus expenditure on town planning, £1,725, is as under:

Salaries and incidentals ..	103,720
Harbours and Rivers ..	84,567
Water Supplies, Drainage and Irrigation ..	609,268
Roads and Bridges ..	210,984
Public Buildings ..	300,173
Commonwealth Defence Works, etc. ..	73,440
Bulk Handling of Wheat Facilities—Bunbury and Fremantle ..	811
Miscellaneous ..	20,124
	<u>£1,403,087</u>

The principal works undertaken by the department last year were—

	£
Port Hedland foreshore (storm damage) ..	4,651
Fremantle Harbour Works ..	14,272
Mandurah Bar (construction of wall) ..	1,188
Swan River improvements ..	24,229
Water supplies for towns: Geraldton water supply ..	10,335
Serpentine town water supply ..	2,589

Mr. Doney: How much more work is to be done on the Swan River improvements?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is a continuous job.

The Premier: It is like Tennyson's "Brook."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That amount has been supplemented by the local authorities. South Perth has done particularly well in that respect. That is where the work is at present being carried out. The amounts involved for the goldfields water supply were as follows:—

	£
Further progress in renewing main conduit, and steel and wood pipes ..	124,625
Cement lining reticulation pipes, Kalgoorlie ..	26,751
Goodmalling service tank ..	2,293
Improvements mines trust main ..	3,965
Purchase of meters ..	7,342
York-Beverley service tank ..	2,888
Darlington reticulation extension ..	1,515
Cunderdin service reservoir ..	17,715
Kellerberrin summit tank ..	3,834

The following amounts were expended on water supplies in agricultural areas and on irrigation and drainage:—

	£
Irrigation and Drainage:	
Colliie district irrigation and drainage ..	10,515
Coolup drainage ..	4,985
Harvey district irrigation and drainage (including Stirling reservoir, £50,857) ..	75,076
Kent-street weir ..	2,501
Waroona irrigation and drainage (including Samson's Brook reservoir, £69,002) ..	73,552
Country Tanks:	£
Cowcowing East ..	1,921
Dalwallinu ..	1,831
Dempster Rock ..	2,641
Karlgarin ..	3,237
Korrellocking North ..	1,861
Kularin ..	2,431

Lake Grace .. .. .	1,639
Moondon North (two tanks) ..	7,285
Nalkain West .. .. .	1,812
Narkal .. .. .	3,673
Pingrup area (two tanks) ..	5,884
Wallambine .. .. .	4,275

On the Youanmi reticulation, the expenditure was £3,011. Under the heading "Abattoirs" we spent £2,242 on additions to the South Fremantle saleyards. The continuation of the road programme under the heading of "Roads and Bridges" accounted for an expenditure of £210,985. The expenditure on public buildings was as follows:—

New schools and quarters (including new Perth Technical College, £41,491) ..	84,191
Hospitals and institutions (including Perth Hospital additions, £41,791) ..	77,423
Police stations, gaols, court houses and quarters ..	4,499
Taxation Department, remodeling D. & W. Murray's building .. .. .	18,153

Although £18,153 was spent on re-modelling that building, the Commonwealth Government will bear half the cost. Work for the military authorities included hutments, etc. at the Northam military camp, excluding work done by the Main Roads Department, to a value of £42,249.

The estimated revenue from all sources for the year 1939-40 was £386,060. The actual revenue received totalled £401,331, a surplus of £15,271 on the estimate. The estimated revenue for the year 1940-41 is contrasted with the actual collections last year as follows:—

	Estimated 1940-41 £	Actual 1939-40. £
Public works ..	30,000	29,250
Town planning ..	50	50
Goldfields Water Supply ..	310,000	310,723
Other hydraulic Undertakings ..	62,000	61,308
	<b>£402,050</b>	<b>£401,331</b>

These figures show an increase for the year 1940-41 of £719 on the actual amount received last year. As members are aware, the activities of the Works Department are financed by loan funds and can be discussed under the Loan Estimates. I have spoken of the work for the year, which includes loan expenditure, and if details are

required they can be supplied when the items are being discussed. The war has affected the staffing of the Employment Department. In common with other departments arrangements have been made to carry on the work during the absence of officers in militia camps and instructional schools. The staff has been reduced by enlistments in the A.I.F. A senior officer has been made available as secretary to the Soldiers' Dependents Appeal Committee, which was recently appointed. Another officer from the Employment Department has been transferred for duty with the Adult Employment Research Committee. The salaries of both officers are being paid by the Employment Department. For unemployment relief £50,000 has been provided, which is a decrease of £3,581 on the actual expenditure for last year. The sustenance rates, based on the unit of 7s. per week for each member of the family to a maximum of 49s., have been maintained. Extra assistance for expectant mothers is provided and firewood is supplied to sustenance families during the winter months. For the Labour Bureau, the incidentals amount to £5,500 and the expenditure last year was £5,511.

The services of the men's and women's sections of the State Labour Bureau are available to employers and employees without charge. Repayable fares at a cost of £5,336 were given to enable 3,793 persons to proceed to private employment, and repayment to the extent of £5,123 was received, representing a recovery of 96 per cent., a very satisfactory result. In respect of revenue for 1939-40, for unemployment relief the amount last year was £768, and the estimate for this year is £960. The revenue of the State Labour Bureau last year was £5,125, and the estimate for this year is £5,000. The total revenue for last year was therefore £5,893 and this year the estimate is £5,960. The revenue in respect of unemployment relief was chiefly derived from the repayment of sustenance advanced to men pending settlement of claims for compensation. The revenue of the Labour Bureau is obtained by the recovery of rail fares advanced to workers proceeding to private employment. In respect of rates of pay, and work supplied to the various classes of men, the categories are as follows:—Single men have had work provided for four weeks out of ten, or its equivalent. Married men, that is the 14s. man with a wife, received six

weeks employment out of eight. Those on 21s., married men with one dependant, received seven weeks employment out of nine. Those on 28s., with a wife and two children, received seven weeks employment out of eight, and others with three in a family or more, on 35s. to 49s., have received full-time employment for the duration of the job on which they were employed. Those conditions have been maintained throughout the year and will, we hope, be continued. To enable families to make provision for Christmas, full-time work was granted to married men from October until the Christmas closure of relief works. Single men also received additional work. Families in receipt of sustenance over the Christmas period received a cash payment of 30s. as Christmas cheer, and single men in receipt of sustenance received 10s. each by way of Christmas cheer. Throughout the year the Government closely watched the employment position. Since July, 1939, the number of men in receipt of sustenance or relief work has considerably decreased. The figures are as follow:

	Sustenance.	Relief work	Total
1939:			
July	.. 760	6,247	7,007
August	.. 882	6,289	7,171
September	.. 1,055	5,725	6,780
October	.. 1,035	5,623	6,658
November	.. 779	5,914	6,693
December	.. 456	6,134	6,630
1940:			
January	.. 612	6,040	6,652
February	.. 571	6,138	6,709
March	.. 429	6,122	6,551
April	.. 568	5,987	6,555
May	.. 440	5,841	6,281
June	.. 601	5,666	6,267
July	.. 739	5,300	6,039
August	.. 741	5,031	5,792
September	.. 656	4,857	5,513

Mr. North: Excluding single men?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Including the lot. It will be seen that from the outbreak of war until December, 1940, the numbers were reduced by 1,267. There was little appreciable difference until March, but from that month until September the numbers were reduced by over 1,000. That is where we got the advantage. New cases that have never previously sought sustenance were admitted to the books, as follows:—Metropolitan area 283, country 156, a total of 439. Although since the beginning of the war 14,000 men have entered

the fighting forces, the reduction in employment figures has been only 1,257. It is therefore evident that industry has not taken steps to replace men who have left private employment in order to serve their country. The Government has not paid off men who have obtained employment on relief work. On the 1st October, 1940, departments undertaking relief works were providing employment as I stated recently in answer to a question. These men at present comprise 4,311 married men and 546 single men, a total of 4,857. They are distributed among departments thus: Goldfields Water Supply, 389 married men and 22 single men; Harbours and Rivers, 162 married men; Hydraulic Engineering, 221 married men, one single man; Forestry, 277 married men, 36 single men; Railways, 220 married men. It has been suggested that the Main Roads Board employed nearly all these men, but in fact it employed only 1,886 married men and 10 single men, a total of 1,896. The Lands Department employed 256 married men and single men to the number of 471.

Mr. Doney: On what does the Lands Department employ the single men?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Clearing and reconditioning. That department employs single men in camps.

Mr. Doney: What qualifications have those men? The country districts are short of single men.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They apply.

Mr. Doney: Mere application is sufficient. That is my experience, and theirs.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understood that the complaint in the country was that the sustenance work was more attractive than the other work in the country.

Mr. Doney: You are misinformed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The complaint was also that in the country single men could not be got.

Mr. Doney: You are certainly misinformed.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Even the men in the camps are encouraged to take work in the district if they can get it, in addition to the work the Government gives them. When they are employed in the district, they are supposed to leave the camps. That happens. The arrangement still continues allowing those men to accumulate an

amount of £9, so that those who are ambitious can go and look for work. There is a general impression that these men are young men, but the great majority are not. The majority are men who state that they cannot go out and compete. I have questioned them myself, and their reply was that they would sooner have this work than take a pension. They can manage the two day's work. They have a camp, and their requirements, and a fairly comfortable living. Therefore the offer which the Government makes to single men to earn the extra £9 so that they may go out and look for work is not availed of very much. Metropolitan Water Supply employs 451 of these men. I think that number has been reduced during the last week, because though at one time the department employed 2,000 sustenance men it is now down to about 260 in the whole of the metropolitan area, the Canning Dam having been completed. The Stirling and Samson's Brook dams employ 449 married men and six single men. That is the two combined. The figures include "C" class men who have been provided with work specially designed for them. It is employment which has raised them and their families from a sustenance to a wage standard, and has given the men a new outlook on life. In allotting relief work, consideration is given to men who, in the opinion of the district medical officer, should be given certain classes of employment. This is done to avoid sending men to jobs which they are incapable of performing, to avoid compensation risks, and also to ensure that employing departments obtain men who are able to perform the class of work required. During the year 579 men were examined by the district medical officer and classified for work which he considered they were temporarily or permanently able to perform. The examination resulted in 21 of the 579 being "A" class, 267 "B" class, and 291 "C" class. When the medical examination revealed that a man was permanently unfit for work, he was transferred to the Child Welfare Department and advised to apply for a pension.

As to what these men earn in the aggregate—and that is what counts—those who suggest that we condemn the men to live on a 7s. per week per unit basis are in error. The department assures me that a recent survey of the earnings of relief workers indicates that the earnings of the majority do not fall below £160 per year, that many of

the men earn more, and that sustenance received between jobs adds to the earnings. When considering undertakings on which the men should be placed in the programme of relief works, the Government has been compelled to restrict itself to jobs giving the greatest percentage of labour to total cost. The average sum per man per week over all relief workers from July to August, 1940, was £4 0s. 6d. for wages and £2 6s. 3d. for other expenses, materials and so forth. Thus employing a man cost on the average £6 6s. 9d. per week. These are Treasury figures. The Government has given consideration to employment during the war. Defence and war expenditure are the determining factors in the provision of employment during the war period. The effect upon employment varies not only with changes in the amount of the expenditure but also according to the nature of the war effort. Further, to assist the Commonwealth Government in its consideration of defence works, the State took a census of the capabilities of men employed on relief works, and especially to ascertain the type of work that the men were capable of performing. The State is also co-operating with Commonwealth efforts in the production of munitions and defence materials. State departments have undertaken defence work on behalf of the Commonwealth. The services of officers have been made to regulate labour, and facilities have been provided to enable men to be trained for munitions production and the trade requirements of the armed forces. The State is assisting the Commonwealth in every way possible in endeavouring to forward the war effort.

As regards youth employment, I have to give certain information which is similar to a reply I gave the member for Swan recently. The information is worth repeating, because it is highly important. A committee of departmental officers and a full-time research worker were appointed early this year to conduct investigations into problems of employment and unemployment, but especially unemployment of young persons. The committee has been actively pursuing its enquiries, and is collaborating with similar organisations in the other States, as well as with research officers appointed by the Commonwealth Government. The committee in this State is about to commence a survey of children leaving school to enter employment. The activities of the research organisations

in this and the other States would provide a basis for uniform procedure in planning the future employment policy of Australia as a whole.

That briefly is the position in respect of the Employment Department. Since the particulars I have quoted were compiled, there has been a slight reduction and since the Co-ordinator General, Sir Harry Brown, was appointed, together with co-ordinators in each State—in Western Australia the Director of Public Works (Mr. Tindale) is the co-ordinator—an arrangement has been arrived at whereby the State and the Commonwealth can co-operate. At present we are doing work for the Commonwealth in connection with the landing ground at Albany and at Cunderdin and Southern Cross. The work at the last-mentioned centre has not yet started. By means of this co-operation we can supply men through our department, whereas if that work had been done by the Commonwealth no arrangement would have existed for employing men in an orderly way, as is now possible through our Employment Department. We have a complete record of the unemployed in this State, which the Commonwealth Government would not possess, and that certainly assists with regard to the funds at the disposal of the State, particularly if we can in this way co-operate with the Commonwealth in carrying out useful work, especially that associated with defence. That is being done under an arrangement that is suitable to the Commonwealth and to the State alike. I hope that with the work provided by the Commonwealth and the money we have available, the arrangement will prove effective. Of course, it is anticipated that the funds available will be less—decidedly the money provided under the Federal aid roads grant will be less—with the result that fewer men will be employed than in the past. Last year the amount received was £840,000. If the Commonwealth provides work for defence purposes, the effect will be to assist materially regarding the depleted revenue from that particular source. With regard to State works, as I remarked formerly, the determining consideration in the past has been the wage factor. That should not be so. Members will appreciate the fact that the Government is desperately short of money, but nevertheless, the desire is to employ men to the utmost extent possible and to keep faith with them by maintaining the

standard that I outlined for those with varying family obligations. With the number of men who will be absorbed by the Commonwealth in various works, and having regard to the fact that the number of the unemployed has decreased by over 1,000, I hope we shall be able to carry out work that we desire to undertake, work that will be of a useful character. If that should be so, then some of the undertakings we have been unable to carry out in the past will now be placed higher up on the list. Naturally, all such works have to be submitted to the Co-ordinator General, who gives preference to work having a defence value or, alternatively, to work that will be revenue-producing. I hope that the undertakings we shall carry out will be even more useful than in the past, from the State's point of view. I include in that category works such as the provision of water supplies which, although not revenue-producing, will be of more value to the State than the expenditure of the same amount of money on roads.

Mr. Seward: That sounds promising.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We are well ahead with our programme of road construction in Western Australia, and I would like to see loan money diverted from that class of expenditure to what I regard as more urgent works. We shall see as time goes on, the effect that the Commonwealth work for defence purposes will have on the unemployment problem. If it has the effect we expect, the Government will certainly be able to put in hand undertakings of a more useful description, and will not require to have regard so much for the wage factor as in the past. I may quote as an instance the experience with the Canning Dam. The wage factor regarding that undertaking represented about one-third of the expenditure, the other two-thirds being spent on material. That means that every man employed on the Canning Dam cost about £12 per week.

Mr. Patrick: But the expenditure on materials provided wages for other workers.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That is quite true, but that did not reduce the unemployment position.

Mr. Doney: Without that expenditure, more unemployed workers would have been on your hands.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: When work on the Canning Dam ceased for the

time being, as it did on one or two occasions, the cement works and the pipe works were in a bad way and had to reduce hands. If the money spent represented as much on material as in wages, it would mean that extra money would be circulated amongst the community and provide increased work for the private employers. Now operations on the Canning Dam have ceased. That undertaking used to absorb nearly half the output of the cement works, and the pipe manufacturers will certainly feel the pinch as well. At any rate I am hopeful that in the future we shall be able to undertake work that we desire to carry out, work for which we would ordinarily borrow money, work entirely justifiable from the point of view of the development of the State.

**MR. DONEY** (Williams-Narrogin) [9.43]:

It will be necessary, of course, to await the submission of the Loan Estimates before Opposition members can adequately reply to the Minister respecting most of the points he has dealt with. We are certainly obliged to the Minister for the clear and interesting statement he has made regarding public works activities during the year. He has made use of loan expenditure figures as well as revenue expenditure figures, and members generally will realise that had he not done so, he could not have given us the account of his stewardship we have had. With regard to unemployment, it is plain that the anticipated reduction in unemployment figures due to enlistments and new work created by war conditions has not materialised. The work I refer to is that in connection with munitions and with what the Minister described as the trade requirements of the military forces. The Minister himself did not seem in any way concerned about the unemployment position, but personally I regard it as undeniably very unsatisfactory indeed. We are left with this knowledge, that despite the fact that considerably over 13,000 men have now enlisted, we still have about 6,000 men unemployed, as we had in 1938, so that by comparison with that year the improvement has been practically nil. That figure includes an astonishingly large number of returned soldiers. At the Returned Soldiers' Congress two days ago this question was brought up and the fact I have just mentioned was commented upon and naturally deplored. There is this fact that

cannot be gainsaid, that 13,000 vacancies have been created. That is a fair deduction to draw from the fact that 13,000 men have enlisted for war service. Yet it would appear that that has had no substantial effect upon the provision of work for the 6,000 men seeking it. It is difficult indeed to understand the position. I wish the Minister had gone to some trouble to explain the reason why the number has not been more materially reduced. It is particularly hard to understand when one reflects on the large number of men who have gone straight from the ranks of the unemployed into our garrison battalions. I presume we can fairly take it that those men were responsible for reducing the total of 6,000 unemployed a few months ago to 5,792 in August and 5,513 in September. If we take the other number I mentioned, 13,000—probably 14,000 by now—and multiply it by an average of £5 a week, which would be the fair average earnings of the men, that means private employers will be paying out for the year 1940-41 roughly £3,000,000 less in wages than in 1938-39. I am not pretending that all that money is lost to circulation; it certainly is not, because the amounts paid to soldiers for wages are naturally a substantial off-setting factor. At all events, the position is surely bad enough. All this, too, despite the fact that the committee set up by the Minister for Industrial Development was so set up for the express purpose of increasing factory employment. Then there is the further fact that prospecting is still able to absorb all our single unskilled workers, thereby drawing off a large number of men who otherwise would be competing for available unskilled jobs in other areas of the State. Of course, we are not saying that the Minister is personally responsible for all this. We know very well he is not. Owing to pressure of work on him, he has delegated his responsibilities with regard to unemployment to the Honorary Minister, Mr. Gray. That gentleman, when giving a resume of the unemployment position in another place about a month ago, appeared not to be disturbed at all by the prospects. The Minister for Works exhibited a similar attitude towards this problem. The Honorary Minister expressed no hope whatever for the future; as far as I can gather, he outlined no plans for the future and neither did the Minister for Works.

The Honorary Minister gave the impression that the Employment Department, having been given an impetus by the Government, needs nothing more now than its own momentum to keep it moving satisfactorily. I do not share that opinion, nor do I think many other members do. It seems to me that the unemployment position needs constant and careful oversight. I ask the Minister for Works whether such oversight is possible, bearing in mind the fact that the Minister in charge of this department, instead of having his office where the work is done, carries out his duties in splendid isolation, as it were, in far away James-street. I cannot understand that at all. The Minister may remember I asked him last year why the Honorary Minister did not do his office work in Marquis-street. If I remember rightly, it was then stated that the offices there were far too dingy for the Minister. That excuse was not proffered by any of the members on the front Government bench, but by someone else. The Minister will probably say that the officers do good work in the Marquis-street office; if it is good enough for them, by the same token it should be suitable for the Honorary Minister. If the Honorary Minister had his office in Marquis-street, the work of the department would be facilitated and much time would be saved. There would be increased convenience and far less expense, besides stricter and more intense control. I hope the Minister when he replies will make a remark or two upon that subject. I know it is very difficult indeed to draw any return fire from him, but perhaps on this occasion he will make an exception of this one point.

The Minister for Mines: You do not expect employment to improve while the bad seasons continue.

Mr. DONEY: There has as yet been no time whatever for the position in the country areas to have a bearing one way or another on employment figures. We are not dealing at the moment with the figures for the past month, but for the past year.

The Minister for Works interjected.

Mr. DONEY: I did not draw that deduction from the figures supplied by the Minister. It would show that, despite the position in the country, where very little labour is required, the figures have nevertheless reduced themselves somewhat. There is one other point, and only one, with re-

gard to employment upon which I desire to touch. The Minister referred to it. There seems to be always a breakdown in the machinery of the Employment Department during the month of October. It was like that last year, also the year before, and the year before that again. It would appear that in early October arrangements are made for additional work for the relief workers during the few months before Christmas. That is the point I desire to stress, that promises are made to give the men additional work in order to enable their wives and children to have a few extra pounds to spend during the Christmas holidays. As from a certain date in October, there is promised full-time employment for all these men. If that is true, it would be a comfort, provided that the term "full-time" meant continuous employment.

[Mr. Withers took the Chair.]

If it meant that—and I suppose 99 out of a hundred people would so interpret it—we would have no grievance in respect of this matter.

The Minister for Works: That would mean that all those who had a job would remain there until Christmas.

Mr. DONEY: I know what it means; but it does not mean full-time employment. Anybody asked for an interpretation would say that the natural meaning of the term was continuous employment. But the departmental interpretation is full-time if work is available. There is therefore an element of deception about the advice given. I will not say that the deception is intentional, but the unemployed are deceived. I was deceived for a long time until I received from the Minister his version of the meaning. My complaint is that October to December comprises a series of short jobs, and therefore long waiting periods in between. That results of course in less instead of more money at Christmas time. I admit that that does not apply to all relief workers. Many are fortunate enough to obtain a job in October that extends unbroken until the end of December. There are far too many, however, who are made subject to these long waits in between short jobs so that instead of the period I refer to being the best during the year, it turns out to be the worst. I refer to this matter so that the Minister may make a note of it and

perhaps take such action as will result in obviating the occurrence. I had intended to make some remarks upon boring and other aspects of country water supply activities, but I take it that your ruling, Mr. Chairman, would be that that matter should be discussed at a later stage of the Estimates.

**MR. SAMPSON** (Swan) [9.56]: I congratulate the Minister on the great work completed during the period in which he has been Minister for Works. I refer to the Canning Dam. It is no doubt something of which the Minister has cause to be proud, and the successful labour-saving efforts made on the job render it more satisfactory than ever. I recall hearing at the official opening that the actual cost of moving or construction of a yard of material was actually less in terms of money of to-day than was the case 20 years ago. That economic result has been effected by the use of machinery especially prepared for the work. I am pleased to know it has been decided by the Government to connect Canning Dam with the Mundaring Reservoir. There is no doubt that the undertaking is urgently needed, because the increasing calls upon the Mundaring Reservoir must be causing grave concern, not only to the Minister but to all who take an interest in the affairs of the State. Although there might be plenty of water in the Canning Dam, the Mundaring Reservoir could be depleted, and a lot of people, in the agricultural districts particularly, would be brought to a difficult state indeed.

One matter in connection with unemployment to which I would refer is the survey which the Minister made. There are men who are anxious to work but who are physically unfit, and it is futile to send them to do work such as is involved in the construction and repair of roads. We know that all men are not qualified to do that kind of work, but their needs are equally great. The survey the Minister made must prove very helpful in enabling a decision to be arrived at as to the class of work to which such men can be put. It should also lead to the withdrawal of those absolutely unsuited for heavy physical effort and their care by the Child Welfare Department or the Pensions Department.

Different local authorities have benefited during the past 12 months in respect of the construction of roads made possible by the

provision of workers by the department, the local authorities providing tools, tents and out of pocket expenses. The decision to provide these men has materially helped a number of local authorities, and I can acknowledge what an advantage it has been in certain districts. The work has been well done and roads have been constructed which, without the assistance rendered by the department, would not have been made. I intended to offer some remarks regarding inadequate water supplies, but that must stand over until a later stage. I particularly wanted to refer to the provision of water for Kalamunda. That is a very grave problem, but I intend to discuss it with the Minister privately, as I consider a better result will be achieved in that way than by occupying the time of the House at this stage.

**MR. McLARTY** (Murray-Wellington) [10.3]: I always find this particular vote an interesting one. I have heard it said that the vote is an indication of the State's progress but I think that in the last few years it has rather been an indication of how we should employ men who are wanting work. I wish the Minister had indicated what future works are contemplated. He told us a Federal co-ordinator had been appointed, and he was looking for works of value from a defence and reproductive point of view.

The Minister for Works: We might be able to tell you more during the discussion on the Loan Estimates.

**Mr. McLARTY**: I know that is the time the Minister tells us a good deal more about loan money. It is necessary that we should plan ahead. I say that, after having had considerable experience in regard to public works. I know that if we had planned ahead in the past we would have saved great sums of money which could have been spent in other directions. The Grants Commission tells us we should look for reproductive works. The money which is spent on public works to-day is being spent wisely, and the works will prove reproductive. To find works that are immediately reproductive is exceedingly difficult. I suggest that the Minister adopt the proposal made in this Chamber on previous occasions that a public works committee be appointed representative of both Houses with a view to its recommending which public works should be put in hand.

Mr. Marshall: Why both Houses?

Mr. McLARTY: Because both Houses are responsible for the government of the State, but if there is any objection to the other House being represented, it would be a step forward if we had a committee representative of all parties in this Chamber to examine suggestions for public works.

I wish to refer to the imposition of drainage rates in agricultural areas, particularly in the irrigation areas. The Minister knows that this question is a very live one in the South-West. He has appointed a drainage committee, which consists entirely of Government officials. They enter a farmer's property and assess his rates. If the farmer is dissatisfied, he may appeal, but he appeals to the gentlemen who have already decided what his rates shall be. He then has a further appeal to a magistrate. At that appeal the officials give evidence, and so the farmer has arrayed against him the Government officials who have already assessed his rates, and the Minister is represented by the Crown Solicitor. Thus the farmer does not get much of an opportunity. The average farmer is not too happy when facing a court and he is particularly unhappy when placed in this position. True, he can obtain legal assistance if he so desires.

Member: And if he can afford it.

Mr. McLARTY: Yes, provided he can afford to pay for it. I object also to the magistrate's having the last say. I have known of a magistrate's inspecting a farmer's property in order to make himself conversant with the drainage facilities, but what knowledge has the ordinary magistrate of drainage matters? He has never had practical experience, and I think I am fair in saying that in the main he is guided almost entirely by the Minister's expert officers. From the magistrate's decision the farmer has no appeal, unless the magistrate decides to state a case to the Supreme Court. I ask the Minister whether he will give the farmers representation on the drainage committee. This would not mean their deciding what the rates would be, but I think such representation would save a great deal of trouble in future. Some years ago I advocated in this House that the farmers should be given representation on the Irrigation Commission, and the then Minister, the late Mr. McCallum, eventually agreed to appoint a representative of the settlers in the three irrigation

districts concerned. I feel sure that as a result of the concession, irrigation matters have proceeded much more smoothly and the Minister and his advisers have been greatly helped. If such representation is helpful in irrigation matters, I feel sure it would work equally well in regard to drainage.

I would also bring under the notice of the Minister at this stage the advisableness of proclaiming the Waroona-Hamel district as a drainage area. I have had some correspondence with the Minister, and I ask him to give further consideration to the proposal before he definitely decides to impose rates in that district. I know that the settlers in the Waroona-Hamel district are in much the same position regarding the payment of rates as are the farmers in other irrigation areas, but they claim that a promise was made in days gone by that they would not be levied for drainage rates, and a number of them claim that the former Under Secretary for Works, who was representing the Government, also promised that a drainage rate would not be levied in that irrigation area. I ask the Minister to investigate the matter further and ascertain whether those promises were made. If they were made, I cannot see how he can impose the rate. If they were not made, experts should meet the settlers and explain the position to them.

The Minister spoke of the work at Stirling Dam and Samson's Brook Dam. I should like to know whether there is any prospect of hastening the completion of the Stirling Dam. There is a definite shortage of water in the Harvey irrigation area and, as a result, production in that area has been seriously retarded. This season, owing to the shortage of water, the position will be more acute than it has been previously; thus there is good reason for hastening the completion of the work. We are told that the British Government is urgently in need of dairy foodstuffs of all kinds. There is no question that if the people in the district can get the water, the production of all dairy foodstuffs will be increased enormously.

Mr. Cross: It would be worth building ships to take the produce to Britain.

Mr. McLARTY: I agree with the hon. member, but if we can produce the foodstuffs that are so urgently required by Britain, ships will be provided to transport them overseas. The Minister also referred to the main roads programme. He hoped

less loan money would be spent on main roads than has been the case in the past, and that it would be put into other works that were urgently needed and were likely to prove reproductive. The expenditure on roads will still be very important. It is difficult to find work that will employ labour only, and keep down the costs per man. Strategic roads will probably be required, and I hoped the Minister would be able to indicate where these were likely to be built. I know that great numbers of men have gone into camp, and I, too, thought that the unemployment position would thereby have been considerably improved. Apparently not only does war create work in certain directions but reduces it in others. We are likely to have unemployment because of the position in the farming areas. Many producers will not be able to employ the farm hands they previously kept at work. If that is so, it will not be in the interests either of the industry or of the State. The Government would be well advised to consider re-introducing the subsidy scheme that was applied to the farming industry some years ago. That would help to keep men on the land and maintain production, as well as assist the Government generally.

**MRS. CARDELL-OLIVER** (Subiaco) [10.19]: I wish to compliment the department on having loaned a particularly efficient officer to the Soldier Dependents' Committee. The fact that he has been with the Employment Department has made him particularly valuable in the position he now holds, that of investigation officer. I do not know whether the Minister has lately travelled over the Axon-street bridge. It is in a very dangerous condition and all the people in the neighbourhood are complaining about it. There is a school on one side and a football ground on the other, and it is necessary that the bridge should be in good order. I am not aware that any accidents have occurred on it, but I do know that people who use it have to be very careful when doing so because large bolts are protruding from the wood flooring. An accident might easily occur with the bridge in its present condition. Lately I received a petition from unemployed men at Subiaco. The preamble to the petition sets out that in view of the vastly increased cost of living, the unemployed at present living in the Subiaco district asked me to support any move made in

Parliament to provide full-time work for all the men and to raise the ration rate to at least 15s. for adults and 9s. for children. A long letter was attached to the petition. I know of many families who have been living in tents for three, four, five and six years. They are far removed from schools. In some cases there are six or seven children under 10 years of age in a family. The men have applied time and again for employment in or near the city, but have been unable to get it. It is unfair that they should be compelled to remain so long in the country. Is there not some way by which the Minister can arrange for rations to be given in those cases where there are more than five children in the family? I know of cases where there are many children under the age of 10. It is unfair that a rate of only 7s. per week should be allowed up to a maximum of five children. If the Minister cannot give more than that sum for the five children, surely he can do something for the remaining children who are over five in family. I know how difficult it is for the department to find the necessary funds and do all that it would like to do, as I frequently come in contact with it. I also know the enormous difficulties experienced by the men and women who have to live on that particular rate. The Minister referred to men being employed for seven weeks out of nine, and it seemed that that meant continuous employment for them. I know of men, however, who have had seven weeks' work but that is all they have had for most months of this year. In one instance a man, until a few weeks ago, had received only seven weeks' work since last January. It is impossible for such men, who have three in their family to live on a guinea a week. That is the amount of their rations. I hope the Minister will be able to have the Axon-street bridge repaired, and give additional rations to people on sustenance.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [10.22]: I support the Minister's remarks. It is curious that we should have this opposite viewpoint on the question of the unemployed men being regarded as a burden. Surely when the war has switched round the way it has, we should thank God that some thousands of men, now engaged on public works, should be available to be drawn upon urgently if necessary. I was listening to Senator Collett when he was addressing a

campaign meeting during the last Federal election. He told the audience that Western Australia was to have the second graving dock, the first being now built in Sydney. I understand that the dock in Sydney is being built by the Public Works Department. I hope that is the case, for it points to the opportunity for Western Australia to employ those men who are available in particularly useful work. No matter what Government is in office in the Federal arena, I am sure its Leader, whether it be Mr. Menzies or Mr. Curtin, will follow up that idea, and I hope the result will be that the second graving dock will soon be started in this State. Work of that description must be gone on with at this juncture. I do not see eye to eye with members who still regard as a burden the thousands of men who are now available for public works in this State. When the world is faced with such a menace, and Australia itself may be in danger, a body of men such as we have becomes an asset. In the past difficulty has been experienced in finding work for all these people. We should be particularly glad, just now, that we have a large body of workers who have not been snapped up by industry because of the absorption of other men by the army. Another highly interesting aspect of public works is that the Minister last year was able to inform us that the cost of constructing the Canning dam was a great deal less than that of constructing the Mundaring Weir many years ago, in spite of present-day wages being much higher. This gives great hope for improvement in future engineering here. It seems to me that that condition will continue. It is becoming an engineering problem, and not merely a handling of picks and shovels. That is why I am so interested in the fact that the war position forces, as time goes on, the utmost use of brains and mechanical devices instead of labour. We have been following a wrong course in using as much labour as possible and as little as possible of material. I hope that when the war is over and victory has been achieved, we shall not go back to the old system of employing as many men as possible on a given work. I was glad to hear the remarks of the member for Murray-Wellington, earlier in the session, when he definitely proclaimed himself as one who believes in mechanical construction of road work, so that the men available could

be used more and more in other directions instead of being employed on half wages. The Minister also said the Federal Government was collaborating with him in seeking works that would be of greater practical use than had been the case in the past. The question of the amount of work given in the past as stated by the Minister was highly satisfactory. Some men I have come in contact with have been out of work for months, but there has been good reason for it. The Minister has said to-night, as an official statement, that a married man has seven weeks' work out of eight, and there can in the circumstances be no ground for complaint.

**MR. BERRY** (Irwin-Moore) [10.28]: I shall be particularly brief, as I too am tired. I join in the congratulations offered to the Minister for Works, and I take this public occasion to assure the hon. gentleman that the Public Works Department's attitude to me on all occasions has been one which has made my lot particularly easy. I do very much appreciate that. My only growl is that while the Minister was especially good to the Dalwallinu section of my electorate in providing that section with a very nice dam indeed, the finish of the work has been rather slurred over. I took the matter up with the department, which was good enough to obtain confirmation of my report. I understand that a sum of £500 is required to complete the dam and make it one of the most efficient of its class in Western Australia. The Minister stated tonight that all pecuniary questions had to go across Australia to a co-ordinator. I suppose the co-ordinator is a good gentleman who says yes or no. I trust that in this case the moneys will be made available by the co-ordinator saying yes, because it is a fact that the completion of the dam is not up to the general standard. I hope the rest of the work will be put in hand speedily, and at least completed before the rains come. If I can receive from the Minister an assurance that this particular work will be attended to, I shall be happy in my electorate.

The Minister for Works: It was approved today.

**MR. BERRY:** Very many thanks. If the Minister had told me that earlier, I would not have taken up even the time I have occupied.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [10.30]: From the viewpoint of a Labour member, this is one of the most important of the State departments, because work is involved, and work is of paramount importance, especially in war time, when we have still a number of unemployed and it is evident that many business interests have retrenched. I suggest to the Minister that one of the most useful works, and one of the most worth-while, he could undertake, is something of vital importance to the State. I refer to the immediate construction of another bridge over the Swan to give further facilities on the south side. Quite apart from the present Causeway being the main outlet to the southern portion of the State, it was built a great many years ago, and patched up about 15 years ago with another bit tacked on to it. However, it is common knowledge that if the Causeway is not actually dangerous, it is unsafe because some of the piles on one side of the bridge have been down for 90 years and are in pretty bad condition. I took the trouble to go under the bridge and have a look myself. In my opinion something should be done in that direction, and the matter is one that bears not only on the interests of the State but also on defence interests. Another bridge certainly should be provided. If anything were to happen and it was necessary to move heavy military equipment, I do not know that the present Causeway could carry it.

Thus the Minister for Works has a strong case with which to approach the Federal Treasurer and seek another 1d. per gallon from the petrol tax of 1s. 2d. There is a good case for getting that other 1d. from the Federal Treasurer to enable us to build an up-to-date structure which will stand the State in good stead for the next 50 or 60 years. Western Australia gets only about 3½d. out of the 1s. 2d. tax per gallon. The remaining 1s. 2d. pays for the petrol and the cost of handling it. Thus motorists have to bear fairly heavy taxation. We know that most of the main roads of Western Australia have been considerably improved. Enormous amounts of work have been done, and the department is to be congratulated. Motorists and business people from all parts of the State use the Causeway. Not only are there more people using the Causeway than any other outlet from the city, but nearly half the people leaving the city leave per medium of the Causeway. At peak periods, es-

pecially during the last few months, it is common to see traffic banked up from the east end of the Causeway to the Ozone Hotel. It is also a common occurrence at peak times for trams to take eight or ten minutes to get across the Causeway, and for the same reason, namely, the traffic jam. Knowing that to be the position, I visualise a great deal more traffic in the same direction when the war is over. It will take three or four years to construct a causeway of the type that should be built. I hope the Minister for Works will give consideration to that suggestion. The work is worth while and is of paramount importance to the State.

Then again, if the Minister is looking for works that can be undertaken in the interests of public safety, he should consider the covering of the tram-track from the Causeway to Douglas-avenue in South Perth with a bitumenous surface. The track has been covered lightly with gravel. I recognise it is not the business of the Tramway Department to construct a road for ordinary traffic, but the Canning Highway is extremely dangerous, and the Minister should consider that suggestion as well. The work which would not be expensive, could be of a temporary nature because in a few years' time the track will be pulled up and buses will be utilised on the south side of the river. While giving attention to that phase, the Minister could also take steps to widen the road at the loops because the existing conditions represent so many death-traps. The wonder to me is that more accidents have not occurred at those points. If any member travels to Fremantle by the Canning Highway, he will quickly realise that when the trams are at the loops, no room is left for two cars to pass. Motor traffic from Fremantle, in proceeding round the trams on the loops, goes directly ahead on to the traffic from the city, which makes conditions dangerous. Only by extreme care and good luck have serious accidents been avoided in the past. These represent the most dangerous traffic points in the State, particularly in view of the great volume of traffic over the Canning Highway. I trust the Minister will give consideration to the matters I have mentioned.

**MR. HOLMAN** (Forrest) [10.37]: I was pleased to hear the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty) refer to the

drainage question in the South-West. That problem has caused considerable concern throughout the irrigation areas, and the issues involved have been placed before the Government not only by the member for Murray-Wellington but by myself, arising out of complaints that have been received. It is difficult to convince farmers in the South-West that any merit attaches to the Government's replies to their complaints. Recently a meeting was held in Brunswick, which is the centre of the Collie irrigation area, and the discussion showed that the people are up in arms against the payment of drainage rates and the incidence of that taxation. The departmental replies have been to the effect that the rates paid by the farmers are not sufficient to cover interest and sinking fund charges on the capital expenditure. That is all very fine, but the department also stated in reply to a petition from the farmers, in which they asked the Minister to convene a general meeting of rate-payers to discuss the matter, that a much more effective method of handling the business was available and suggested that the farmers should submit a statement of the matters they desired to discuss so that arrangements could be made for the Land Drainage Appeal Board to meet their representatives at Brunswick to consider the issues raised. The department also suggested that any matters affecting the general principles on which decisions were required, could be placed before the Minister by a deputation consisting of representatives of the farmers. In those circumstances the farmers would require in the first instance to discuss their grievances with the Land Drainage Appeal Board, and therein is the primary cause of dissatisfaction because no representative of the farmers has been appointed to the Appeal Board. I am convinced that if that defect could be remedied, and a representative of the farmers in the irrigation areas appointed to the board, a twofold purpose would be served. If the department's argument is sufficiently sound, the farmer's representative on the board should gain sufficient inside knowledge to enable him to convince his fellow-farmers of the sincerity of the departmental point of view. Secondly, as the representative of the farmers, such a member would act as the watchdog in their interests. Generally speaking, we believe that any section of the community should be represented on a body in which its inter-

ests are involved. I sincerely hope the department will take that point into consideration. My hope is based on two grounds—consideration of the interests of the people concerned and the peace of mind of the Parliamentary representatives of the constituencies affected. Certainly we have no peace when we visit the irrigation centres, seeing that these issues are raised from time to time. There may be considerable merit in the argument submitted by the department, but until those vitally concerned can be convinced, not much progress will be achieved in overcoming the present dissatisfaction. Large sums of money have been spent in the South-West on irrigation projects, and the Government has wisely planned well ahead. That fact is appreciated, particularly this year when, due to adverse seasonal conditions in the wheat areas, we look more and more to the South-West to pull us out of our economic morass. Because of the lessening of production elsewhere, more and more products of the South-West can be utilised. When I interviewed the manager of a cheese factory in the South-West last week, I was informed that every pound of cheese manufactured there could be disposed of and even larger quantities could be sold if they could be produced. For that reason I say the money spent in the district has been wisely expended. The farmer has no grouse against the high irrigation rates he must pay, but some farmers consider that the drainage and irrigation rates should be amalgamated, even if the amalgamation meant a still higher payment. The irrigation scheme is, so to speak, in its infancy. It cannot be compared with the Victorian scheme, but that may be due to the difference between the land in Victoria and in our South-West. The residents of Brunswick asked the Minister for and obtained a water supply for the township. They now complain, however, that they are being charged as much as 3s. for a thousand gallons. They have consequently put forward a case for a reduction in the rate; I hope the Minister will go into the matter. He assured me that after a 12-months' trial of the scheme he would reconsider the question of the water rate. I trust he will do so and not cause the residents of Brunswick to lose more sleep over the question of their water and drainage rates. Apart from that, I congratulate the Minister on the way

in which he has expended money in the South-West district, especially in the electorate I represent, and in that of the member for Murray-Wellington (Mr. McLarty). Large sums of money have been expended in the two electorates.

Throughout my electorate many men are being employed. As the Minister told us to-night, 455 men are employed on the Stirling Dam and at Samson's Brook. These are works of considerable importance; but I hope that in future, when big undertakings are being discussed, the department will take into consideration the health and convenience of the people who must labour on them. It should not be necessary for a member of Parliament, months after some important work has been in progress, to go down in order to investigate the living conditions of the workers. Surely that is work which could be done by the engineer of the job. If he is an engineer of any standing whatever, he will give consideration to the health and convenience of the workers while he is discussing the major portions of the scheme.

I congratulate the Minister upon the treatment meted out to the men now working on the Bundibup estate. Mainly "C" class men are working there and I feel that the satisfaction they express with their conditions should be made public. Through these men being given the chance to work in that district many of them have regained their health; they have a sympathetic overseer, who treats them with the kindest consideration.

I desire to say a few words with regard to the unemployment position. I was interested in the criticism of the Government by the member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney). In my opinion, that criticism should have been directed to private employers who have not done their share with regard to the employment scheme, more especially since the outbreak of war. Twelve months ago the statement was made in this House that a certain large newspaper firm had, immediately war broke out, put off a considerable number of men. Further retrenchments I understand have taken place since. The same remark applies to various other business houses in the city. Circumstances, however, may have compelled the firms to act in this way. We must realise that during the war period it may be necessary to retrench workers because of the rationing of

certain raw products. I can foresee further retrenchment resulting from petrol rationing. I can also foresee reduced production in the South-West district if the petrol rationing scheme is not reviewed. All these factors tend towards decrease of employment, thus placing an additional burden on the shoulders of the Government. In my opinion, the Government is to be congratulated on the way it has taken up the slack caused by private enterprise. I am not saying that everything possible is being done for the unemployed; one cannot truthfully say that, because of the lack of adequate financial assistance by the Commonwealth Government to our Government. But I assert that, because of the action of private employers, we have not seen the decrease in unemployment figures that we otherwise would have expected to see. The member for Williams-Narrogin (Mr. Doney) interested me when he gave his interpretation of full-time employment. Throughout the industrial world that term bears a definite meaning. I have never yet been able to go to an employer and obtain from him a guarantee of a full-time job. I interpret the expression in the way in which it is used in industrial awards: A permanent employee is a permanent employee in many cases even if he is engaged for a week only.

Mr. Doney: Do you think full-time means part-time?

Mr. HOLMAN: I am stating how the terms is used in awards.

Mr. Doney: It is not very enlightening.

Mr. HOLMAN: It may not be to the hon. member.

The CHAIRMAN: Order!

Mr. HOLMAN: The fact remains that no private employer offers a man a full-time job according to the interpretation put upon that expression by the member for Williams-Narrogin. As a matter of fact, it would not be reasonable to expect an employer to give a man a full-time job until he was assured that the man could competently carry out the work required of him, and that the employer had the necessary work to be carried out. Full-time work as it is known now is work while the job lasts. When we can get full-time work for everybody according to the hon. member's interpretation of full-time work, we will all be satisfied. I might remind the Minister that there is plenty of work that could be done in the South-West,

especially on roads. In most cases the roads to the timber mills are a perfect disgrace. One reason is that the local governing bodies cannot spend money on those roads because they are mainly on Crown land and lead to the State mills and therefore little or no rates are collected from the district. I hope the matter will be given consideration because people working at the mills more than anybody else are entitled to good roads. The only enjoyment most of them can hope for is to jump into their motor cars and drive to the beach or to town occasionally, and they should be able to do so without being shaken to pieces before reaching their destination.

Progress reported.

### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. J. C. Willcock—Geraldton) [10.56]: I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till Thursday next.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.57 p.m.*

## Legislative Council,

*Thursday, 10th October, 1940.*

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

### ASSENT TO BILLS.

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

- 1, Financial Emergency Tax Assessment Act Amendment.

- 2, Coal Mines Regulation Act Amendment.
- 3, Mine Workers' Relief (War Service).
- 4, Mine Workers' Relief (Payments Authorisation).

### QUESTION—HOSPITAL, NORTHAM.

Hon. V. HAMERSLEY (for Hon. G. B. Wood) asked the Chief Secretary: In view of the ever-increasing overcrowding and congestion at the Northam Government Hospital, which is causing much concern to the health authorities, will the Government make an early statement as to its intentions in respect to building extensions to the hospital?

The **CHIEF SECRETARY** replied: Yes.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

- 1, Land Tax.

*Passed.*

- 2, Harbours and Jetties Act Amendment.  
Transmitted to the Assembly.

### BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).

Further report of Committee adopted.

### BILL—INCOME TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 8th October.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West—in reply) [4.39]: I thought it desirable to take the assessment Bill before the tax Bill in view of the fact that amendments have been placed on the notice paper. I take this opportunity to explain briefly the reasons for the amendments appearing in my name. Since the Bill was received in this House, copies of the measure that the Commonwealth Government proposes to introduce to amend the Commonwealth Income Tax Act have come to hand, and that Bill deals with the question of taxation at the source. There are certain provisions in it which, if they become law, will render necessary an amendment of our legislation