

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 26th November, 1953.

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The SPEAKER took the Chair at 2.15 p.m., and read prayers.

## QUESTIONS.

### HARBOURS.

#### *As to Cost of Works, Bunbury.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: On Tuesday, the 10th November, the member for Albany was informed by me, in reply to a question concerning the Bunbury harbour, that the cost of dredging and maintenance at Bunbury from the 30th June, 1930, to the 30th June, 1953, was £346,943. The answer to the question should have been £273,978. I regret the error, which I now desire to correct.

### HEALTH.

#### *As to Canning Infant Centre.*

Mr. JAMIESON asked the Minister for Health:

(1) In view of the answers given to questions asked regarding the Canning infant health centre, is he still satisfied that his answer to question No. (1) was correct?

(2) Did he see the article regarding this infant health centre, in the issue of "The Sunday Times", for the 22nd November. If so, would he have the position regarding infant health in and about Cannington inquired into and reported upon?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes. I am fully informed of the position regarding infant health in and about Cannington.

The policy of the department is to keep well babies well and, in furtherance of this policy, babies coming under the supervision of the infant health sisters are, as far as practicable, kept from contact or association with children in the younger age groups or pre-school children, who are susceptible to such infectious diseases as whooping cough, diphtheria, scarlet fever, mumps, etc.

Many of the children in the age groups mentioned might well be carriers of one of these diseases whilst showing no outward symptoms.

The contraction of any of these diseases by a young baby undoubtedly would be fraught with consequence much more serious than those experienced in the pre-school or kindergarten age.

In these circumstances, the department has insisted that, where infant health clinics are erected, they shall be self-contained and not used for any other than infant health purposes.

### LANDS.

#### *As to Allottees under War Service Scheme.*

Mr. NALDER asked the Minister for Lands:

How many ex-servicemen, who were allotted properties have left the land settlement scheme—

(a) since its inception to the 31st December, 1952—

(i) sheep and wheat;

(ii) dairying;

(iii) other categories?

(b) since December, 1952, to the present—

(i) sheep and wheat;

(ii) dairying;

(iii) other categories?

The MINISTER replied:

The details are as follows:—

	Designates or		
	Lessees.	Caretakers.	Total.
(a) Wheat and sheep ..	1	13	14
Dairying .....	29	14	43
Other categories .....	10	1	11
(b) Sheep and wheat ..	1	1	2
Dairying .....	6	1	7
Other .....	8	—	8

**RAILWAYS.***As to Yearly Ton Miles.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Minister for Railways:

How many ton miles were travelled in each of the last five years—

- (a) gross weight—goods plus wagon weight;
- (b) paying goods;
- (c) non-paying goods, such as coal and water for locos. and departmental stores?

The MINISTER replied:

The following are the details:—

- (a) 1951-52—1,348,425,687.
- 1952-53—1,140,216,431.

This information was not recorded for the three preceding years.

- (b) 1948-49—393,524,755.
- 1949-50—426,358,732.
- 1950-51—459,973,271.
- 1951-52—469,747,516.
- 1952-53—409,590,736.
- (c) 1948-49—107,643,818.
- 1949-50—100,714,450.
- 1950-51—103,375,817.
- 1951-52—96,334,244.
- 1952-53—86,294,404.

**BILLS (3)—FIRST READING.**

- 1. Reserves.
- 2. Road Closure.

Introduced by the Minister for Lands.

- 3. Conservator of Forests (Validation).
- Introduced by the Minister for Forests.

**BILL—INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION  
ACT AMENDMENT.***Third Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn) [2.26]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

**HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT** (Mt. Lawley) [2.27]: I desire to make a final protest about this Bill. If it had been introduced with a view merely to effecting the policy of the Labour Government, I should not have protested because it has given rise to a protracted discussion; the principles have been fought out and the House has decided to adopt them. As I view the principles contained in the Bill, they are, firstly, that domestics should be brought under the Arbitration Court. Members decided on that and I have to accept that decision. The second principle that has been fought out is that concerning preference to unionists by statute. That principle has also been decided by members and I must accept it. The third principle brought forward by the Government

and decided by the Chamber is that relating to quarterly adjustments. It was discussed at great length and I will have to accept that also. But when the Government brings forward legislation containing provisions that could wreck the authority and discretion of the Arbitration Court, I shall protest to the last.

The Minister for Housing: Who is governing this country?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Minister certainly is not.

The Minister for Housing: I am assisting; and I have some authority to do so, which is more than I can say about the Arbitration Court.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I do not think the Minister has so much authority because he happens to have nine other colleagues, and I should imagine that they would rather over-awe him. I think the Minister for Housing's ideas would be hard to accept in Cabinet at times.

The Minister for Housing: You are making yourself more silly every time you speak.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Oh, keep quiet!

The SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will refrain from interjecting.

The Minister for Housing: I am being provoked.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: When the Government seeks to deprive the Arbitration Court of its discretion and its authority to settle industrial disputes, then I think I am entitled to protest just as long as I am able to do so. That is just what this Bill proposes. Last year there were inserted in the Act provisions to deal with fraudulent elections. There have been many fraudulent elections in connection with unions in Australia. Power was given to the court to impose certain penalties to ensure that justice was done in the election of union officials. Now the Government wishes to revoke those powers—

Mr. McCulloch: The same as the coco-nut Bill.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: —so that they will be ineffectual. That is a strange step to take and one against which every citizen should protest. Then again, certain discretion had been given to the court to deal with people who broke the law. The court was given power to impose penalties for breaches of awards; now it is proposed to do away very largely with those powers. Last year a penalty provision was included relating to union organisers who encouraged men to break the laws of the country.

Mr. Moir: In what way?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Instigating the breaking of the industrial laws of the country. To deal with that phase, a penalty was provided. It is also sought to do away with that penalty now, so

that a union organiser or secretary can go to any place of employment and say, "We will give the employers Hell. We will cause disruption. What do we care for the public economy?", without fear of repercussions.

Mr. McCulloch: That is revolution!

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Government is trying to sabotage the authority and discretion of the Arbitration Court.

Mr. O'Brien: We are trying to protect unions.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I would have thought that any body of men who affirm, day after day, that they believe in the arbitration system would not have done this, but they have. In spite of the Premier's denial yesterday, I can only say that this has been done on account of the pressure by a large number of union secretaries and organisers who are fearful for their own health.

The Premier: That is not true.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I am sorry; I am mistaken. Does not the Premier think—

The Premier: Yes, I do.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: —that I am quite right in saying that the conduct of the Government is suggestive of that conclusion, because wherever a union secretary or organiser is penalised, this measure seeks to lighten the penalty. I am entitled to make this protest. I do not want to delay the House. I oppose the third reading.

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [2.32]: I shall not let this opportunity pass without refuting, on behalf of the Government, the charges that have been made, unfounded as they were, by the member for Mt. Lawley in regard to the attitude of the Administration. The Government is not doing anything to undermine the confidence of the people in arbitration. On the contrary, every clause in the Bill has been framed with a view to restoring and extending the confidence of the workers in the principles of arbitration. I would remind the member for Mt. Lawley that had it not been for a strike which occurred in 1952 when the Government of the day panicked, and had it not been for the strong direction issued by the Liberal Party in the Eastern States, the Government would not now be introducing this Bill.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I use the expression of the Premier and say that is a lie.

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR**: I am carefully handling the truth, and what I say is correct. All this Bill seeks to do is to modify what I would call the savage provisions in the industrial arbitration and conciliation law. What has been done is designed to restore confidence in the

principles of arbitration that have applied in Western Australia for many years. As the member for Mt. Lawley was so devoid of strong argument to justify his attitude, he had to introduce a statement that there had been a number of crooked ballots in union elections in Australia. I notice that he carefully refrained from saying "in Western Australia". Western Australia has been free from any charges in that direction over the years. I challenge the member for Mt. Lawley or any other member to state concrete cases where elections have been rigged in this State. If Western Australia has been free, why then the need for this repressive legislation?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Where has it proved repressive? Can you tell us?

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR**: I have given my opinion. I shall not prolong the debate on the third reading. As a matter of fact, the hon. member's own Government accepted a number of amendments to the Bill it introduced. If it was considered that the original provisions regarding penalties and fines were not repressive, why did his Government agree to a 50 per cent reduction?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Why do you now appeal against your own suggestions?

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR**: I am refuting the charges of the member for Mt. Lawley in the final stages of the Bill. He is trying to make charges against the Government which are not warranted.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILLS (5)—THIRD READING.**

1. Prices Control Act Amendment and Continuance.
  2. Upper Darling Range Railway Lands Revestment.
  3. Water Boards Act Amendment.
  4. Inspection of Machinery Act Amendment.
  5. Police Act Amendment.
- Transmitted to the Council.

#### **BILL—DISEASED COCONUT.**

Report of Committee adopted.

#### **BILL—BUILDERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. J. T. Tonkin—Melville) [2.42] in moving the second reading said: This is not a large Bill, but it deals with matters of some urgency. Apart from one new principle, the proposals are merely an extension of principles contained in the Act. I shall deal with the smaller matters first, and then direct attention to a proposal

that will probably occasion some difference of opinion, though I do not anticipate that it will be very great.

The necessity for increasing the revenue of the board has been pointed out. Insufficient funds are being provided to enable it to function as it should and carry out the requisite inspections to police the Act. So we have decided to increase the fee that a registered builder shall pay to the board each year from one guinea to three guineas. This proposal has been referred to the builders' organisations—the Master Builders' Association and the Builders' Guild—and both on behalf of their members have agreed to the increase. As the persons concerned offer no objection, I cannot see that anyone else can reasonably do so.

The work of the board has grown somewhat and it seems unreasonable that the members of the board should be expected to sit for such a small recompense as one guinea per sitting. We propose to increase the fee to two guineas. The third matter is not one of vital principle, but represents a slight alteration to existing practice. We propose to remove the obligation to appoint the president of the Association of Architects as a member of the board and allow the organisation to select its representative. Comparatively frequent changes occur in the presidency of the organisation and, because of that, the continuity of representation is spoilt. It is preferred that the architects should be able to select their representative, who would then be able to continue on the board for a number of years. I think that is desirable.

The other provision proposes a somewhat big change in the designation of a registered builder. Members will recall that, under existing legislation, any person who proposes to build a house not exceeding £800 in value is permitted to do so without seeking registration, or he may build a house for himself of any value without being registered. If he desired to build for somebody else, he would not be permitted to do so without being registered unless the value of the building did not exceed £800.

The Bill proposes to provide that a person may build for somebody else a house of a value of £4,000, instead of £800, but he must first seek registration and he will do so as a conditional registered builder. The idea is that the board may be in a position to exercise some control over the work to be performed. Registration will not be withheld simply because a builder proposes to erect a house of a value in excess of £800.

Hon. A. F. Watts: He could still build of a value up to £800 without applying for registration.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes, and if he wished to build a house above a value of £800 and up to £4,000 for some-

body else, he must seek registration, but he will be able to obtain it without having to pass the prescribed examination. If he wishes to build a house for himself, he may do so even though the value exceeds £4,000, without having to be registered.

The other provision relates to conditions under which a builder of considerable practical experience coming from outside the State may become a registered builder here and enjoy all the privileges of a registered builder. The Government's notice has been directed to instances of men having been engaged in practical building in other parts of the world for many years—very large contractors who have erected thousands of buildings. When they come to this State, they are unable to obtain registration without first passing the prescribed examination, and men of their age do not find it easy to sit for an examination; and it seems a little ludicrous that a man who has satisfactorily carried out large building projects elsewhere should be prevented from undertaking work here simply because he has changed his domicile.

It is not intended that such a builder shall be automatically admitted to the ranks of registered builders. He will still be required to pass a test of a practical nature, such as a qualified man would experience little difficulty in passing, but he will not be required to undertake a lot of swotting. This is a departure from the requirements of the existing Act. It is highly desirable that the board should be able to exercise its discretion. Even though the board were perfectly satisfied that an applicant was fully capable of doing first-class work of any magnitude, it has no discretion to admit him to registration unless he first passes the prescribed examination.

That has been on insuperable barrier to a number of applicants. The purpose of the amendment is to give the board discretion to admit to membership and registration a properly qualified person after that person has been subjected to a practical test which the board will require him to pass. I think the necessary safeguards are there against the admission of unqualified persons, whilst at the same time latitude and flexibility are provided to enable us to meet a new situation in a practical way.

Hon. D. Brand: Such builders could not undertake a contract over £4,000.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Oh, yes! It is proposed that there shall be no limit to the work they may do, because they will be given full registration. They will apply for registration in the ordinary way, but they will not have to pass the examination which is at present set out in the Act for new builders, but will have to produce evidence of having been practical builders in the trade, and of having satisfactorily performed their work.

They will then be subjected to a practical test, the result of which will show unmistakably whether their claims are correct or not, and the board can then admit them to registration. Having been so admitted, they will be entitled to all the rights and privileges of the registered builders who are admitted in the normal way. That is a special provision to meet special circumstances. I know of instances where it seems absurd that the persons concerned should be excluded from building in this State, because they have carried out public works of great magnitude, and built some thousands of houses and public buildings in Great Britain. It is to meet that situation that this provision has been inserted.

With regard to the other builders who are already here—our own builders who up till now have been denied registration because they have not been able to pass the prescribed examination—it is intended to allow them to put up buildings to the value of £4,000. This will encourage those persons to undertake the erection of dwellings, but not the more substantial buildings where they would require a knowledge of the finer principles of building.

I have explained the new provisions in this amending legislation, and I repeat that for the most part it seeks to alter the existing position by way of a slight extension of principle in the two parts I have mentioned with regard to raising the valuation from £800 to £4,000 with respect to the type of buildings which the people concerned can erect, and for special provision to enable builders from outside the State with considerable experience, to gain registration. This is quite a new departure. With these exceptions, the Bill is quite simple and straightforward.

Hon. D. Brand: There is no change of conditions applying to the country.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, so far as the country areas are concerned, the position will remain the same. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. D. Brand, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—ABATTOIRS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE** (Hon. E. K. Hoar—Warren) [2.55] in moving the second reading said: The abattoirs of the State for a good many years came under the control of one particular man. This position obtained from 1909 until late last year when the then Government decided to take the control away from the individual who occupied the position, so far as the Midland Junction abattoirs were concerned, and to place it under a board of three.

It is too early to say whether the change is good or not. A period of 12 months is hardly sufficient in which to judge the efficiency of any person or body in connection with this type of work. I think the Government of the day overlooked one or two matters which the Bill seeks to correct. The provision in the legislation last year was, from the Government's point of view, all right so far as the personnel of the board was concerned at the time, and due to changing circumstances and the need—perhaps through pressure of population and because of modern ideas—to furnish a board of that description with the powers it has now.

But bearing in mind that the controller of the State abattoirs up to that time had the responsible job of looking after not only Midland Junction but all the abattoirs in the State, I think he should have been found a place on the board. That is only fair and reasonable, bearing in mind his undoubted and outstanding knowledge of this particular business. I do not know whether the matter was overlooked by the Government last year, or whether this was deliberate for some special purpose.

Hon. L. Thorn: I can assure you it was not overlooked.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** Then quite possibly the hon. member will be able to tell us the reason for the omission. I have looked at the hon. member's remarks in "Hansard," when he introduced the Bill last year, and he certainly omitted to explain to the House why the Government was making this alteration, and why it was refusing to place on the board the man who had the full control of all the abattoirs in the State, and who evidently had the confidence of the Government. His name was omitted, but it is not a question of a name as far as I am concerned.

I think the man who holds the job of controller of abattoirs in the State should at least have the opportunity of sitting on the board which controls the Midland Junction abattoirs to give it the advantage of his years of experience. One purpose of the Bill is to try to correct that anomaly. This is not without precedent. In fact, there are four States in the Commonwealth today where not only is the controller of abattoirs on the abattoirs board, but he is, in fact, chairman of them.

Hon. L. Thorn: We considered he would do far better work as chief executive officer instead of being on the board.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** I am not inclined to disagree with that. His position today as general manager of such a large establishment, plus his other responsibilities in respect of the other abattoirs, is quite enough to keep him fully occupied, but at the present time, although he is general manager and chief executive

officer of the Midland Junction abattoirs, he has no say whatsoever so far as policy is concerned; and he is never in a position to assist the new executive in the undertaking, which is of some considerable size and importance. If members give that aspect some thought, I think they may agree that he could find a place on the board, though not as chairman.

The South Australian board consists of nine members, with an independent part-time chairman, and the general manager of the abattoirs there is a full permanent member of the board, with power to vote. In Queensland, New South Wales and Tasmania, the boards consist of three members and in each instance the general manager of the metropolitan abattoirs is full-time chairman of the board. Each of those boards has two part-time members. Although I am not suggesting in this Bill that we should go that far, I think it would be advisable, in view of this officer's background and undoubted ability, that we should use his services to a far greater extent than is the case today, and consequently it is proposed that he should find a place on the board.

When we consider the tremendous amount of work involved in the change-over from the old system—which I think was called the open hall system—to the factory system which has been found necessary owing to the increase in population in the metropolitan area, as much as anything else, and the great number of employees involved in this work, I think it will also be agreed that it is only fair that the employees should have a voice on the executive, as well as the controller, in order that their points of view may be expressed. I do not think we should miss the opportunity of learning from other countries the lessons they have gained in past years. They have found it was to their advantage to have on the executives of organisations such as this some authorised person selected by the employees to have a share in the management.

America is a case in point, and there are also a number of industries in which the idea has been favoured in Great Britain. I do not like to think that Australia is to be further behind in such matters than other countries of the world. If we want industrial harmony—as we all do—I believe that the best way to avoid strife in industry is to give a stronger voice to all sections concerned in the management of an industry. If we do that, we will find that long before trouble starts, or leads to a dividing wall between employer and employees—a wall which often neither side is game to break down, perhaps through fear of loss of face, or something of that sort—the seeds of discontent will be prevented from growing to any great extent. I think we should give

some feeling of dignity to those who perform even the most menial tasks in an industry by granting them the right to speak with authority, through their representatives on the top executive. In that way, we will go a considerable distance towards preventing trouble such as we have known in industry.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you think that man should represent the unions? I have no objection to a man with union knowledge being on the board, but I do not think that in that capacity, he should advocate the interests of the unions.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I do not think any such industrial or domestic matters would come before the board in that sense, because this is a policy-controlling board to determine the policy of the abattoirs at Midland Junction.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you not think he could be a man of industrial experience rather than one representing a particular section?

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Who could have better industrial experience in the meat industry than the man who works in it?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I agree with that.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: As the result of his experience, he would have knowledge that would be of the utmost value to the executive members of the board. If the two sides, the workers and the employers, have representatives that can get close enough together, the tendency is for them to understand each other better, and I am sure that would prevent much of the trouble that we see in other industries today.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Yes, but I do not like the use of the word "representative." He should be someone who knows all the interests of the industry, but that word seems to imply that he would be a man putting forward the interests of the unions.

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It would not be a question of some direction being given to him by his union for him to put forward certain views. It would mean only that the executive would be complete in every detail. We would have the controller of abattoirs who is now the general manager at Midland and the three men already there, one representing the consumers, one the butchers and the other the producers. We would add to that body the person selected from the employees, and I think that would give a complete representation that could discuss, with authority, all phases of the meat industry, the marketing of meat and the work of the abattoirs generally. I believe that this provision will do much to avoid any future trouble at Midland Junction—not that I anticipate any there. However, with

such a board, any seeds of discontent could be nipped in the bud. For those reasons, I have pleasure in moving—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. L. Thorn, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR HOUSING** (Hon. H. E. Graham—East Perth) [3.8] in moving the second reading said: This Bill deals merely with one section of the State Housing Act—namely, that which has reference to the power of the State Housing Commission to acquire land for its purposes. The period during which the commission could exercise that power has been limited since the passing of the initial Act in 1946. There was an extension of two years, and that period expires within the next two months. I believe that every thinking member will agree with me that there is necessity—as indeed there will always be—for the State Housing Commission to acquire land by resumption, in addition to the ordinary process of purchasing land.

The State Housing Commission has, to a very great extent, become a planning and developmental authority. From time to time considerable areas have been acquired and it has been necessary, to conform to the requirements of modern times, completely to resubdivide and generally lay out the areas to make them suitable for the use of, and occupation by, individuals. As a matter of fact, only this morning I inspected an area in the direction of Scarborough where there is a private subdivision of blocks and the blocks are only 33 ft. in width. I think it will be agreed that for suburban residential purposes blocks should be of a greater width than that.

The Minister for Labour: How long ago did they subdivide it?

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Probably many years before the passing of the Town Planning Act. There are a number of these earlier subdivisions.

Hon. D. Brand: Would the Minister for Local Government agree with you there? Did not he express the thought that we should have smaller building blocks.

The MINISTER FOR HOUSING: Yes, and I agree with him, too; but I am discussing the question of frontages now. I think it will be generally agreed that in many suburbs—at least this has been my observation of it—because of the size of

the blocks most people erect trellises, hedges, or fences, across the back yards, and the rear portion of such blocks is practically never used. To put it under cultivation or garden would mean that a householder would have a terrific responsibility and practically no spare time available to him. There are some people who make a hobby of their gardens, but there are others who, like the majority, endeavour to escape as much of it as possible because they do not want it to become a burden. However, that is merely one aspect of the question.

If it is possible for the State Housing Commission to purchase, by the ordinary processes of negotiation, an area of land from a number of owners for the purpose of redesigning and laying out the area, all it requires is one or two obstinate individuals who refuse to sell for any reason or no reason at all, to make the position difficult for the commission. Some people knowing the requirements of this authority ask fantastic sums for their blocks and, as these isolated blocks would be scattered throughout the proposed new area, it would make it impossible for the area to be redesigned and laid out in accordance with modern town planning practice and to provide facilities of one sort or another.

There is a misconception of the role played by the State Housing Commission in respect of land which it holds, or which it might from time to time acquire. It is true that there is a considerable area of land held by the commission at present. But where there is development in an entirely new district, provision has to be made for the construction of roads, school sites, shopping centres, parks and playing grounds. Where there is a large development, other facilities, such as a playing field on which all types of organised sport can be conducted, must be provided for. By organised sport I mean the Australian national game of football, as well as other codes, tennis, bowls, hockey and so on.

Excluding the Mt. Yokine-Wanneroo area, which was acquired for long term development, the State Housing Commission has approximately 2,500 acres in the metropolitan area. Many members could mislead themselves into believing that that is ample for all reasonable requirements of the commission; but when one takes into account the various considerations I have just enumerated, it will be appreciated that considerable inroads are being made annually into the areas of land that are owned by the commission. In some cases portions of the land are unsuitable for use as building sites, at least until such time as comprehensive drainage schemes have been instituted.

We must bear in mind, also, that in the metropolitan area approximately 1,500 to 1,800 homes are being erected each year under the provisions of the State Housing Act, the Commonwealth-State rental

scheme and the war service homes scheme. I want to make it clear that the State Housing Commission and those who have been associated with the department, are well aware of the endeavours made to purchase land by the ordinary process of negotiation. That is invariably done in the first instance and the powers of resumption are exercised only as a last resort.

I have indicated the position generally in the metropolitan area. In some of the towns in the country districts, there is a more or less urgent problem. In Bunbury, for instance, there will be no land owned by the State Housing Commission upon which it can erect houses after the programme proposed for next year. Whereas an individual, or even a building company requires a single block, or perhaps a few blocks in a given locality, I think it will be generally appreciated that for an organisation such as the State Housing Commission it is far more effective for development to take place on a front rather than that its activities should be dispersed at a number of points within any community. With the orderly erection of houses, it is rendering a service to the local authority concerned and, of course, to the people residing in that area, because instead of there being long lines of communication to serve a few houses in the way of roads, electricity, water supplies, schooling and shopping facilities, with a broad front these long uneconomic services are not necessary. Therefore, it saves the local authority a considerable amount of money or, alternatively, those people in isolated spots must continue to dwell there for many years without amenities and reasonable requirements to which they normally should be entitled.

I hope that members, when addressing themselves to the Bill, will not confuse the issue with the position relating to the land at Mt. Yokine and Wanneroo. That area, as I have already said, was acquired for long-term development. As a matter of interest, it might be mentioned that at present work is commencing in that area and as from the 1st July, 1954, it is proposed that the first stages of the developmental work will be undertaken and houses erected as from that date. At the moment the town planning consultant to the State Housing Commission, Miss Margaret Feilman, is engaged in planning the area to be developed. As it is considerable in extent, it is unlikely to be built out for many years, but it is highly desirable that the State Housing Commission should be able to view a tract as a whole so that the development may be on sound lines spread over many years.

In the suburb of Victoria Park, for instance, there are no areas suitable for the playing of the Australian national game of football, together with the amenities and other necessary space required. That is a shocking state of affairs. At Wanneroo and Mt. Yokine it is possible to

make provision for all the various amenities that eventually will be required, and blocks will be reserved to provide all the facilities that should be enjoyed by a modern community.

In my opinion, there should be no opposition to the measure because the first time similar legislation was submitted to Parliament and agreed to was in 1946. That action was taken by a Labour Government, and then, two years ago, an extension of the period during which power could be exercised to acquire land was obtained by the McLarty-Watts Government. Therefore, the principle was established and is acknowledged by all parties. The only point that might arise is with regard to the period the State Housing Commission should continue to enjoy these powers. Frankly, in a matter such as this, I see no sense or reason in periodically introducing Bills to extend the period during which the State Housing Commission can exercise these rights. Any one who has thought about the question must appreciate that these powers will continue to be necessary so long as the State Housing Commission is building houses in great numbers.

No one can visualise when that state of affairs will cease to exist. Even if the erection of rental homes ceased, the activities of the State Housing Commission would continue, for the construction of homes under the State Housing Act in the form of what were previously known as worker's homes. I do not think anyone will contend that the powers provided in the Public Works Act should be granted for a limited period only. They have been placed in the Act as being a reasonable power that should be possessed by the Crown in order to undertake certain activities. In this case, it is housing.

Incidentally, I apologise for the late introduction of the Bill. I was under a misapprehension in that I understood the measure introduced a few moments ago by the Minister for Works would have been sufficient to meet the requirements of the State Housing Commission. It was only a few days ago that I learned otherwise, hence the necessity to introduce this Bill because, as I have already pointed out, this power will lapse in January, 1954. It was mentioned by the former Minister for Housing, when introducing an amending Bill two years ago, that this authority is necessary not only for the reasons I have outlined but also for the purpose of enabling the State Housing Commission to engage in slum clearance.

He stated then, very truly, that, because of the acute housing situation, it was unthinkable that houses, even those that were substandard, should be razed to the ground immediately because even poor accommodation was better than none. It is the hope of both the Government and the State Housing Commission that in

some of our slum areas, it will be possible to undertake this work. A step has already been taken to effect slum clearance in one spot in the metropolitan area, but that is slightly different from what will be encountered in the future. As there will be necessity to acquire private property in other areas for the purpose of demolishing some of these old shacks and hovels and replacing them with modern structures, power such as that embodied in the Bill is necessary for that reason alone.

As laid down in the present Act, there are, of course, rights of appeal and certain other rights. They can be checked by any member who is interested. Generally speaking, it can be said that the State Housing Commission has exercised its power in this direction with care and discretion. It has not wantonly rushed in and seized land merely for the sake of so doing. It is only natural, of course, that when a person is dispossessed of his land he does not react too kindly to the resumption. Such a position arises, of course, when the needs of the State Housing Commission, the Education Department or any other public authority are considered. I think sufficient has been said to show that the introduction of this measure is warranted and, to my mind, it is ridiculous and a waste of time to grant only a short extension of time to the State Housing Commission during which it will have the power to acquire land, rather than recognise that it is a power that should be possessed more or less in perpetuity. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—CLOSER SETTLEMENT ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**HON. A. F. WATTS** (Stirling) [3.28]: There can be no objection to the contents of the Bill because they simply propose to amend Section 6A which was inserted by the statute of 1945. All the Bill seeks to do with that section is to have an officer of the Lands Department and an officer of the Department of Agriculture on the committee instead of the original formation which was an officer of the Lands Department and the Director of Land Settlement in conjunction in either case with a person selected for his practical knowledge and residence in the district. There cannot be any exception taken to that.

The surprise to me, however, is that though the Minister had come to the conclusion that this amendment was necessary, mainly for the reason that the actual post of director of land settlement had

been abolished and replaced by a person known as the chairman of the Land Settlement Board, he did not get to work and overhaul the constitution of the board under the Act of 1927, because it seems to me that the committee provided for by the amending statute of 1945—the personnel of which this Bill seeks to amend—for all practical purposes has replaced the board which was provided for in the Closer Settlement Act of 1927. Yet we find they are both standing side by side.

I cannot fully understand why, when the provision respecting the committee was inserted in the Act of 1945, giving it wide powers of inspection and recommendation, and also providing the right of appeal to a judge of the Supreme Court from its recommendation, that the board set up under the Act of 1927 was not entirely superseded. Yet in the Act of 1945 I cannot find any reference to such supersession.

So it seems to me that although Section 6A, inserted in 1945, states that notwithstanding any other provisions of this Act the Minister may appoint the committee, and politely brushes aside the provisions of the Act in 1927, which appointed the Closer Settlement Board, it would be very advisable now, if there is any contemplation or attempt to seek a recommendation from the committee which was appointed in 1945, that we should dispose of the board altogether to enable us to have a nice, clean and tidy piece of legislation. To my mind it is not clean and tidy.

There are two bodies in the Act empowered to make recommendations. Apparently the Minister intends to use the second one which was inserted in the Act of 1945, because that is the one in which he proposes now to make the necessary change in the personnel. From the speech the Minister made it would appear that he is contemplating, in odd cases anyway, asking the committee to make recommendations. So while I am not going to oppose the second reading of the Bill because what little there is in it is quite harmless and neither adds nor subtracts from the powers conferred on the committee by the principal Act, it does seem to me that it would have been better to have tidied the whole matter up and to provide only for the activities of this committee—that is, if there are to be any activities at all.

The provisions of this Act—it was passed in the first place something like 26 years ago—have over the years been little exercised and on the few occasions they have been exercised, they have been so with great discretion. If the board or committee under this Act is to be entrusted with any inquiries with a view to making decisions in respect of unutilised land as defined by the Act, I trust that great discretion will be used in making those decisions and taking any action thereon.

It is, of course, impossible to deny that there are some cases where land has been held unutilised where it ought not to have been.

Accordingly, if there are pressing claims for land to be made available to persons who will utilise it, the services of the committee might be called in in those cases to examine the situation and make a recommendation. I venture to say that, in the main, those cases are few and far between. We must not lose sight of the fact that today the cost of developing land is extremely high and even in bona fide cases there are persons who find those developmental costs somewhat beyond them. In consequence, the process of development is much slower than these people would otherwise wish it to be. There are, in addition, instances where land has, of course, been developed for a certain purpose which does not on the face of it require the considerable development that would be desirable and necessary for other types of production.

So we cannot look around Australia and say, "Here are large lumps of country that do not look as though they have had as much development as those lumps over there", and classify them as unutilised land. That would not work. If the powers are going to be exercised at all they should be exercised with the utmost discretion. I am not complaining because there has been any lack of it in the past and I have no idea that there will be any lack of it in the future, but I think it would be as well to point out that it is not an easy proposition to claim land as being unutilised simply because to the eye of the passer-by it does not look as though it is being utilised sufficiently.

Accordingly I support the second reading of the Bill but I express my regret that the Minister has not seen fit to tidy up the legislation, in order to give us a clear-cut decision as to which body under the Act is to be empowered to make recommendations. Is it to be the board inserted under the Act of 1927 or the committee under the Act of 1945? With those few remarks, I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Lands in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 6A amended:

The PREMIER: I listened with interest to what the Leader of the Country Party has said. I will discuss with the Minister the suggestion he has made, and if he agrees we will recommit the Bill at the third reading stage for the purpose of making the amendment suggested by the hon. member.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

*Sitting suspended from 3.41 to 4.4 p.m.*

### **BILL—HAIRDRESSERS REGISTRATION ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 11th November.

HON. L. THORN (Toodyay) [4.4]: I do not intend to oppose the Bill because, as the Minister has stated, and I know from experience, the master hairdressers and the employees are finding the finance to make up the deficiencies in the operations of the Hairdressers Registration Board. When I was asked last year to introduce a Bill similar to this, I objected to doing so on the ground that I felt these people should put their house in order.

When I studied their balance sheet, I found it was all out of balance. The board had an income of about £1,200 a year out of which it was paying the registrar more than £600. It employed a part-time inspector to police the operations of the Act, but it could employ him only very casually. I do not think the 1952 report of the board was tabled; if it was not, it could have been partly my fault. Owing to the disagreement that I had with these people I have not been able to get possession of that report, but the 1953 report discloses the information I required.

First of all, the registrar received a salary of £500 a year. When I looked at the report I found he received the basic wage adjustments which increased the amount to £600 a year. Then he was charging a proportion of the charwoman's wages for cleaning the office, and he was also charging part of the telephone account and several other charges, so that out of the board's income of £1,200 the registrar was getting between £600 and £700. That is not the way to conduct a board.

The Hairdressers Registration Board was not getting sufficient money to police the Act. I was asked to bring down a Bill to increase the fees because, due to paying that large amount to the registrar, the board was £322 on the debit side of the ledger. According to the balance sheet it is still about £288 on the debit side. I know the matter must be straightened out, and that the leeway must be made up. According to the Minister in charge of the Bill the master hairdressers and the employees have been consulted, and they are prepared to find this money. I might say that they did indicate to me that they were prepared to find the extra amount required.

The board's position must be put on a satisfactory financial basis, and I strongly suggest to the Minister that he

watch its balance sheet and indicate to the chairman that the board must be put on a more businesslike basis. It should be clear to this Chamber that when a board has an income of only £1,200 a year and it pays the registrar in the vicinity of £650 a year, it is out of balance altogether. The board has a good chairman in the Under Secretary for Labour, but he has not always occupied the position; in fact, he has not been there very long. I know that he does not disagree with me that the position should be tightened up. I support the Bill.

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. W. Hegney—Mt. Hawthorn—in reply) [4.9]: I am pleased at the approach made by the member for Toodyay to the Bill. I made a close perusal of the balance sheets of the Hairdressers Registration Board and my first impression was such that I was not too happy about it, but I made inquiries and found that the registrar to whom the member for Toodyay referred is no longer connected with the board. There is now another registrar and from his fee a typist is paid. The inspector is not on a full-time basis. I have had a look at the other incidental expenditure and do not think the board could cut it much further. The fees for attendance at meetings are at a minimum and I am quite in accord with the sentiments expressed by the member for Toodyay.

It will be observed from the balance sheet that the finances of the board are in an extremely parlous condition. I am given to understand that if the fees are not increased in accordance with the provisions of the Bill, the board will not be able to function in an effective manner.

Hon. L. Thorn: That is so; it is well in debit.

**The MINISTER FOR LABOUR:** I received some correspondence from a person the other day complaining about the treatment she received from the board some years ago. The member for Maylands mentioned that he had received a letter from the same source, and I do not know what his attitude is in that regard. I hesitated before introducing this measure but decided finally to do so at the request of both parties, the employers and employees.

I did not ask a number of individual employers and employees their opinions but perused the minutes of a duly constituted meeting, of which the Secretary for Labour was chairman, and satisfied myself that the Hairdressers Registration Board, on which both ladies and gentlemen's hairdressers and the employees were represented, had reached this decision. They strongly requested the introduction of this amending legislation and indicated that they were quite happy to have the fees increased. That is the reason why the measure is now before the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

## LOAN ESTIMATES, 1953-54.

### *Standing Orders Suspension.*

The PREMIER: I move, without notice—

That so much of the Standing Orders be suspended as is necessary to enable a motion for the House to resolve itself into a Committee of the Whole to consider the Estimates of Expenditure from the General Loan Fund for the year ending the 30th June, 1954, to be moved without notice.

Question put.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have counted the House. There is an absolute majority present and there being no dissentient voices I declare the motion carried.

Question thus passed.

### *Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1953-54 and recommending appropriation.

### *In Committee.*

The House resolved into Committee to consider the Loan Estimates, Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair.

*Vote—Departmental, £236,000.*

## THE PREMIER AND TREASURER

(Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.17]: Western Australia's share of the loan funds to be raised this year amounts to £17,750,000, of which sum £3,750,000 has been allocated for Commonwealth-State housing projects, leaving a balance of £14,000,000 for the general works programme. Loan repayments are expected to yield £1,300,000 which, together with the allocation of £14,000,000 through the Loan Council, will permit of provision in the Loan Estimates for the expenditure of approximately £15,300,000.

### *Loans Authorised.*

At a later stage I will explain how that amount will be increased by £500,000 as the result of approval having been obtained recently, from members of the Loan Council, for this State to borrow that sum from the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Details of this proposed expenditure are set out in the Estimates which are in the hands of members.

In addition to the amounts I have just mentioned, the State Electricity Commission is expected to raise £2,000,000, which was approved by the Loan Council as a semi-governmental borrowing. Expenditure up to this figure by the State Electricity Commission will, of course, be met from its separate loans and will not form part of the Loan Estimates to be considered by Parliament.

Last year, funds available to the State for its general works programme amounted to £17,012,000, comprising an allocation through the Loan Council of £15,600,000 and loan repayments £1,412,000. Loan expenditure recorded for last year, however, totalled £19,012,000, or £2,000,000 in excess of loan moneys received during the year. The excess of £2,000,000 was financed from the carry-over of £4,000,000 in the General Loan Fund at the close of the previous year.

#### *Loan Fund Carry-over.*

Whilst the carry-over of £4,000,000 in the General Loan Fund at the 30th June, 1952, represented the excess of loan proceeds over loan expenditure, together with the unexpended balance of loan repayments, the amount was not actually held in cash at that date, having been used by the Government to finance the purchase of stores for advances of various kinds. With the substantial reduction in the Government Stores' Account during 1952-53 and the clearance of other Stores' accounts and certain advance accounts by a charge against loan funds received in 1952-53, it was possible to utilise the greater part of the cash thus released from the carry-over in the General Loan Fund, in meeting commitments which had previously been deferred for payment in the financial year 1953-54.

Early in 1952-53, deferments, totalling approximately £3,800,000, were arranged with our overseas' contractors. During the year, however, deliveries in respect of certain contracts slowed down considerably due to difficulties in maintaining the anticipated production schedules, mainly in British industries, and accordingly the total deferment, which would otherwise have been necessary, was reduced to £1,900,000. This figure was further reduced to £266,000 by cash payments in May and June, 1953, totalling £1,634,000. The Estimates now submitted cover an expenditure of £15,292,170.

#### *Railways.*

The total loan expenditure of this department for 1952-53, excluding an amount of £377,000 used for the purchase of stores, materials, and equipment, was £6,967,000 or £1,607,000 more than the amount provided in the Estimates. When introducing the Revenue Estimates, and dealing particularly on that occasion with the financial results as regards Consolidated Revenue during the last financial year, I mentioned that the problem of

State finance under that heading was, to a large extent, a problem of railway finance.

It could also be said, in connection with loan expenditure in this period of restricted loan moneys, that the problem of loan finance generally, in this State, is to a large extent a problem of railway requirements in regard to loan expenditure. It is true, as Ministers of the previous Government particularly would know, that a very large sum of loan money has been expended on railway rehabilitation in recent years. Yet we still find that large additional sums of loan money are required and it is not easy, at this period, to say when the time will come when the Railway Department will not continue to require from year to year large sums of loan money. Superficially it is not easy to find a reason for that.

I know we can say that during the depression, and right on until the end of the war, the Railway Department was starved financially as regards loan funds, and during the war period the railway rollingstock and the permanent way received a severe hiding, if I might use that term to express what actually was the situation. A terrific strain was placed upon the railway system during the years of the war, mostly in relation to war commitments.

Hon. C. F. J. North: We sent engines overseas; we lent them.

The PREMIER: Yes. Another important explanation is probably to be found in the fact that we have to expend these days roughly £3 to do what £1 would have done before the war. The excess expenditure over the estimate of loan funds by the Railway Department last year was due largely to payments to British contractors of amounts which would otherwise have been deferred for payment until this year. Of last year's expenditure, £4,910,000 was for wagons, locomotives and other rollingstock, and the balance, £2,057,000, was expended on track work, buildings, workshops machinery equipment, water supplies, etc.

For the current year, the amount allotted in the Estimates for railway spending is £6,793,000, of which £5,251,000 will be expended on rollingstock and the balance, £1,542,000, on other works. Commitments towards the completion of wagon, locomotive and machinery orders, will cost approximately £3,500,000 in the financial year 1954-55. Of the total sum of £6,793,000 provided in this year's Estimates, £5,527,000 is required to meet commitments chiefly on account of rollingstock.

#### *Coogee-Kwinana Railway.*

It is planned to have this line completed for use before the end of the calendar year 1954 and some funds for this purpose will be needed in the next financial year.

### *Rollingstock Programme.*

Expenditure during the past year for rollingstock amounted to £4,910,000, and the actual number of new wagons delivered and placed in service was 1,632. This total includes 120 bogie vehicles so that the equivalent in single wagons is 1,752. There remain approximately 2,813 wagons to complete current orders. Deliveries of wagons during the current financial year have averaged 210 wagons per month.

### *Locomotives.*

Although some expenditure was incurred last year for the purchase of the diesel electric and diesel locomotives and rail cars, none of these units was received before the 30th June, 1953. Deliveries have commenced since then, however, and one "Z" class shunting engine and one "Y" class diesel electric locomotive have arrived, and are at present undergoing preliminary trials. These units, together with the "X" class diesel electric locomotives and the diesel rail cars, will be arriving in increasing numbers from now on.

### *Railway Housing Projects.*

Last year, the Railway Department expended £364,000 on housing accommodation for employees, and during the year 229 new homes were completed for occupation, two more were purchased, while 56 were in process of construction at the 30th June, 1953. Thirty-five Nissen homes were completed at the Wexcombe Estate during the year, bringing the number now in use at that centre to 87. For the current year, the allocation for housing is £119,000, which represents a commitment for the completion of houses in progress. Since the Estimates were printed and these notes were prepared, there has been some additional expenditure approved for at least another 30 to 40 railway houses in the country.

### *Track Work.*

During the past year, expenditure on track work amounted to £709,000. This included the renewal of 570,000 sleepers apart from 34,000 which were used for special works. The renewal figures for sleepers is an increase of 201,000 on the number for the previous year. Sleeper and track renewals, together with renewals of bridges, culverts, telephone lines, pipelines, etc., for the current financial year are estimated to cost £952,000. Provision has been made this year to re-lay 80 miles of rails on the Eastern Goldfields, South-Western and Narngulu-Walkaway railways, at an estimated cost of £756,000, of which £577,000 represents the cost of rails which have been held in store for some time.

The Leader of the Opposition would know that while he was in office his Government concentrated particularly on the purchase of new rollingstock. His Government would doubtless also have concentrated upon the re-laying of railway lines—the more important ones, at any rate—except for certain financial and material difficulties which were in the way. Because the problem of track maintenance was not tackled to any substantial extent, and had not been tackled for many years, it is now one of very great urgency and of vital importance. Members will readily understand that with new railway engines capable of greater strength in relation to the pulling of loads, and with greater speed, a safe and reliable track is an urgent necessity.

The fact that many of our tracks, including some of our main lines, are in urgent need of strengthening imposes a restriction upon the weight of load which can be pulled by the new engines, and consequently imposes a speed limit upon many of the trains. That situation is naturally one which causes trains to run less economically than they should. To the extent to which loan funds can be made available to the Railway Department this year for the speeding up of track maintenance work, they are being made available.

As I mentioned a moment ago, we are providing, this financial year, sufficient loan funds to embrace the re-laying of 80 miles of main line track, and we hope to increase the mileage next financial year, and to increase it again in the succeeding year. I think, and I most certainly hope, that when this work of re-laying the main lines and some of the other important lines is completed, our railway system will be able not only to produce good results in the transport of freight and passengers but to produce better results financially.

### *Tram and Bus Services.*

For tramways and road bus services run by the Tramway Department, the total loan expenditure for last year was £113,000, or £4,000 less than the amount provided in the Estimates; that excludes an amount of £184,000 charged to tramways capital during 1952-53. During last financial year, bus services were extended to Herdsman's Parade and Wembley, whilst omnibus services to Mt. Lawley, North Perth, Morley Park and Bedford Park were acquired. The construction under contract of Guy omnibuses and Sunbeam trolley-bus bodies was completed, adding 25 vehicles to the fleets.

Provision has been made in the Estimates for 1953-54 for the expenditure of £34,000, which in the main is to complete the conversion of the Leederville tram route to trolley-bus operation, and to extend trolley-bus operations in the Wembley

area. On that point I would only add that the conversion of tram routes to either trolley-bus or road bus routes is governed only by the amount of loan money that can be made available for the purpose. I think members have been of the opinion for a long time now that the trams are doomed, except perhaps on special shortish runs in congested areas. It is the policy of this Government, as it was of the last, to change over from trams to trolley-buses and road buses to the maximum extent possible, as the financial resources from year to year will allow.

#### *State Electricity Commission.*

Capital expenditure by the commission was met from loans raised under its own borrowing powers. The two public loans raised during the year were very successful, and both were over-subscribed, showing confidence both in Western Australia and in the commission. It was suggested to me recently that we should place more of our public utilities under the State Electricity Commission, because if that were done the commission would have no trouble at all in approaching the public from time to time to raise whatever sum of loan money might be needed to adequately finance all the requirements of whatever number of public utilities were placed under the State Electricity Commission's control and management.

Hon. D. Brand: With that added responsibility, it may not be so popular with the public in the future.

The PREMIER: The suggestion has some merit, particularly to a Treasurer who is looking around all the time for additional loan moneys with which to meet the requirements of an expanding population and development. It also has some measure of temptation wrapped up in it. However, I can assure members that no Bill along those lines will be introduced this session!

Mr. Bovell: The inducement to subscribe to those loans was the higher interest rate which I note rose in some instances for similar loans in the Eastern States to 4½ per cent.

#### *Distribution of Electric Power.*

The PREMIER: Another reason is that the State Electricity Commission has proceeded quite rapidly with the development of the generation of electricity and also with the distribution of electric power to country areas. In my own electorate I have found that, whereas a year or so ago there was some hostility to the commission, there is today a very favourable outlook towards it and the work it is doing. Doubtless, as time goes on, the favourable outlook of the people towards the commission will increase.

Hon. D. Brand: It has remained reasonably solvent.

The PREMIER: Yes, I think it has. I think the Treasury has made a substantial contribution to that healthy financial condition, and the consumers of electric power have also made some worth-while contributions.

Hon. L. Thorn: The commission has increased the rates when it has suited it to do so. It should be financial.

The PREMIER: I would not say that the commission increases the rates when it suits it. More accurate would it be to say that the commission increases its charges to the public when financial conditions are such as to compel action for the balancing of its budget.

Hon. L. Thorn: That is what I should have said.

The PREMIER: The total estimated expenditure by the commission from borrowed funds during the current year is £2,554,000. The commission expects to raise £2,000,000 by borrowing on the open market, leaving £554,000 to be provided from the General Loan Fund. During the year ended the 30th June, 1953, the sum of £179,000 was spent on changing the frequency of the supply of current in the metropolitan area from 40 cycles to 50 cycles per second. Of this sum the Commonwealth Government has contributed £90,000. At the 30th June last, over 38,000 consumers in the metropolitan area had been changed over to 50-cycle current, and this work is still proceeding.

#### *South Fremantle Power Station.*

During last year, work on the second section of the South Fremantle power station proceeded satisfactorily. That section will contain two units, each of a capacity of 25,000 kilowatts. When the section is completed, the capacity of the power station will total 100,000 kilowatts.

Satisfactory progress was made on the construction of the second 66,000-volt transmission line between East Perth power station and South Fremantle power station.

#### *East Perth Power Station.*

Construction of the foundations for the new coal-handling plant is well in hand. Work has also commenced on the foundations for a new 30,000-kilowatt turbo-alternator to be installed at this station.

#### *Electricity and Gas Department.*

Satisfactory progress was made in the installation of a new carburetted water gas plant at the East Perth gasworks. The plant will provide a further source for the utilisation of Collie coal, and will help render the commission more independent of coal from the Eastern States.

### *South-West Power Scheme and Country Districts.*

During the year, the towns of Northam and York were connected to the metropolitan power stations by a high-tension line, and the old direct current local stations in those towns have been shut down. A modern satisfactory supply of 50-cycle alternating current is now provided.

The work of connecting farmers by rural extensions is proceeding satisfactorily, and 320 have already been connected. A high-tension 66,000-volt transmission line is being erected between Collie and Bridgetown. When this is completed, the local power station at Bridgetown will close, and the whole of the Bridgetown-Manjimup and Pemberton areas will be supplied from the Collie power station.

An indication of the way in which the extensions from Collie have been made can be obtained when it is realised that the towns of Pinjarra, Waroona, Yarloop, Harvey, Brunswick Junction, Picton, Bunbury, Boyanup, Donnybrook, Capel, and Busselton were drawing supplies from the Collie power station by last June.

### *Albany and Bunbury Harbours.*

Of the provision on last year's Estimates of £386,000 for the Albany harbour, the sum of £362,000 was expended in meeting final payments for dredging operations carried out in the previous year, and for drainage and other developmental work in reclaimed areas. In addition, construction commenced on a new concrete wharf. Provision has been made in this year's Estimates for an expenditure of £200,000 at Albany, which will embrace the continuance of work on the new wharf, rock removal from the harbour floor, and various minor works such as levelling, reclamation, and drainage.

Mr. Yates: Is that heavy expenditure at Albany justified?

The PREMIER: If I were the member for Albany, I would allow that to float by on the side. The sum of £71,000 was spent in 1952-53 on the Bunbury harbour, compared with the estimate of £75,000, and covered, in the main, the cost of break-water works and the extension of the existing timber jetty. In the current year's Estimates provision has been made for continuing the extension of the jetty at a cost of £35,000.

### *Cockburn Sound Harbour Works.*

The provision of £680,000 in this year's Estimates is for the continuation of the contract work of dredging channels to provide a suitable shipping approach to Cockburn Sound, and also to provide navigational aids for these channels. This work forms part of the Government's responsibility under the Oil Refinery Industry (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Limited) Act, 1952, and expenditure in the last financial year amounted to £216,000.

### *Fremantle Harbour Trust.*

In the financial year 1952-53, the sum of £670,000 was expended on port undertakings at Fremantle, compared with the estimate of £576,000. In the current year, an expenditure of £441,000 has been allowed for in the Estimates.

Works carried out last year included the provision of cargo sheds, mechanical cargo-handling equipment, and electric cranes. Preliminary work was also undertaken in the construction of a new berth (No. 10) at North Wharf. The works proposed to be carried out in this current year include the equipping of North Quay berths, North and South Quay reconstruction and construction of No. 10 berth. Further payment will also be made for electric cranes on order from England.

### *Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department.*

Expenditure last year through this department, excluding that on the Kwinana area, was £797,000, compared with the estimate of £779,000. In the current year, an expenditure of £390,000 has been allowed for in the Estimates. The most important of the works completed last year included the Mt. Yokine to Walcott-st outlet main. This 30in. diameter reinforced concrete main was the second outlet feeder main from the Mt. Yokine reservoirs to the reticulation in Mt. Lawley and was completed at a total cost of £74,000.

### *Reconditioning 30in. Steel Main—Kelmescott, Roleystone.*

The remaining portions of the 30in. trunk main from Canning Dam to Kelmescott were reconditioned by lifting, cleaning, concrete-lining, and relaying at a total loan cost of £20,000. An amount of £190,000 is included in this year's Estimates for further watermain extensions and improvements, and £60,000 for the purchase and fixing of new meters. Other works in the metropolitan water supply programme represent jobs in progress and include provision for an expenditure of £73,000 this year on the Guildford-Midland main, which will ultimately feed 11,000,000 gallons of water per day from Mundaring reservoir into the Perth system. The total expenditure to the end of last financial year on this trunk main was £284,000.

### *Sewerage and Drainage.*

Expenditure incurred in 1952-53 amounted to £276,000 compared with the estimate of £268,000. For the current year expenditure of £298,000 is anticipated, comprising £68,000 for recurring works and services, £176,000 for the continuation of works in progress in the Midland Junction (Midvale), Carlisle and Herdsman's Lake areas, and new works, including the Manning Estate area, £54,000. During last

financial year, 22 miles of sewer were laid in the Midland Junction, Perth, South Perth, Victoria Park, Claremont, Meltham and Wembley areas at a cost of £207,000.

#### *Kwinana Water Supply.*

During last financial year work was completed on the laying of the 10in. main to Kwinana from Fremantle and the provision of a 1,000,000 gallon storage tank on Mt. Brown. These completed works cost £124,000. Provision has been made in this year's Estimates for the completion of the 30in. main from Kelmscott to Lake Thompson reservoir upon which a sum of £180,000 was expended last year, and £178,000 is provided this year.

The Lake Thompson reservoir, with a capacity of 20,000,000 gals was commenced last financial year with an expenditure of £28,000. The anticipated expenditure this financial year is £170,000. The sum of £165,000 is provided for the construction of outlet mains from Lake Thompson reservoir to the refinery and the Kwinana townsite. Last financial year a sum of £49,000 was expended on the reticulation of the Kwinana townsite, and a further sum of £45,000 has been provided this financial year.

#### *Sewerage for Country Towns.*

Expenditure of £51,000 in 1952-53 closely approximated the estimate and comprised £28,000 for Albany town sewerage, £14,000 for Collie town sewerage and £9,000 for Geraldton. In the current financial year £20,000 has been provided in the Estimates for construction of sewers at Albany (£16,000), and the remaining £4,000 will be applied towards meeting commitments on purchase of equipment for Geraldton and Collie.

#### *Country Areas and Towns Water Supply, including Goldfields and North-West Districts.*

Total expenditure under this heading during 1952-53 was £811,000 compared with the estimate of £804,000. Provision has been made in the current year's Estimates for a total expenditure of £530,000. Continuation of work on the comprehensive scheme would absorb £288,000 which will, in effect, mean the expenditure of £576,000 on this work as the Commonwealth Government shares the cost on a fifty-fifty basis. Work on the northern section of the scheme includes £50,000 in connection with the contract for the new electrically-driven pumping station at Mundaring.

Approximately £80,000 has been allowed for extensions and duplications of the main conduit between Mundaring and the vicinity of Cunderdin, so that an increased water supply can be provided from Mundaring early in the summer when one electrically-driven pump will be in operation in conjunction with two steam-driven pumps in the existing pumping station.

A sum of £80,000 will be used for the purchase of pipes and the relaying of some further sections of the main conduit, together with the laying of portion of the Bruce Rock-Narembeen new main.

On the southern section of the comprehensive scheme, £71,000 has been provided for the completion of the pumping stations at Wellington Dam and east of Collie, and the continuation of the Wellington Dam-Narrogin pipeline. Provision has also been made for the expenditure of £38,000 on the existing Goldfields system where the main items of work will be £13,000 for renovations on the 30in. main, £9,000 for booster pumps between Coolgardie and Norseman, and £6,000 for pumping station quarters.

An amount of £135,000 has been provided for water supplies for towns, and the major items include £50,000 for Geraldton, where extensive improvements are being made on enlarging the gravity main, the provision of new engines and further development of bores. The sum of £11,000 has been provided for Albany for the installation of new pumping equipment and improvement to mains, £9,000 for Wongan Hills in connection with a storage dam, £7,000 for Three Springs water supply, and £30,000 for extensions and services in various towns, together with minor amounts for the completion of construction works in a number of localities. The sum of £12,000 has also been set aside for improvements to water supplies in towns in the North-West, £24,000 for improving water supplies on stock routes in the North-West and Kimberleys, and £2,500 for investigations into river flow and possible storage sites in the Kimberleys.

#### *Drainage and Irrigation.*

Of last year's total expenditure of £119,000, the sum of £48,000 was spent in the development of irrigation channels in the Harvey area, and £34,000 on the Wilson drainage district at Albany. Other minor works accounted for the balance of expenditure. In the Estimates for 1953-54, the sum of £50,000 has been provided, in the main, for the further development of irrigation channels in the Harvey area, and for surveys in connection with the ultimate irrigation of the Capel-Boy-anup area from the Collie River.

Mr. Bovell: I hope the Government will proceed with that matter as soon as possible.

The PREMIER: The member for Vasse has been so co-operative with the Government in recent months, and so friendly disposed towards it, that I am sure the Minister will be anxious to proceed with that work during the next financial year, provided a decision can fairly be made to do so without prejudicing other works which might have even better claims.

Mr. Bovell: Thank you very much, but I am not going over to that side.

The PREMIER: If the member for Vasse could at some future date whilst this Government is still in office, see his way clear to come over to this side, I feel sure that one section of the Opposition would, more or less, fall to pieces.

Mr. Ackland: You would get such a shock that your side probably would, too.

The PREMIER: The hon. member is quite right.

#### *Development of Mining.*

Expenditure during 1952-53 under this heading totalled £252,000 as compared with the estimate for the year of £250,000. In this year's Estimates, provision has been made for an expenditure of £138,000. Deep drilling at Collie under the control of the Mines Department is continuing to prove the field to bedrock, and to prove the continuity of seams. This drilling has been very successful to date, having established the existence of much more coal than was previously suspected. Some remarkably good new seams—one of 37ft. in thickness—have been located. This year's expenditure on the two drills at this centre is estimated at £40,000. Another diamond drill is operating on the iron and pyrite deposit near Southern Cross, and here also boring has confirmed the existence not only of a fine iron lode, but of a body of pyrite which must at some future date be of considerable value to the State.

#### *Goldmining.*

It is proposed to purchase a further diamond drill to search for new gold deposits in the goldfields, and £25,000 has been provided for this purpose, together with the cost of the first year's operation. It is intended that the Government be recouped for drilling expenditure in regard to any payable deposits located under this drilling programme. Money is also provided under this item for assistance to prospectors, and secured loans to miners for development and mechanisation of mines.

#### *State Batteries.*

An amount of £10,000 is provided to enable completion of the new State treatment mill at Northampton, which will be in operation before the end of this calendar year. It will treat lead, copper, wolfram and similar minerals. A new State battery, estimated to cost £15,000, is to be erected at Menzies to meet the needs of a large active district, of which Menzies is the centre. This area was previously served by a private mill, which is closing down because of the retirement of its owner and to some extent because of the age of the plant.

#### *Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry.*

Expenditure for 1952-53 totalled £106,000 represented mainly by the purchase and installation of a pig casting machine, ore-

handling equipment, housing, and the provision of additional working capital to cover stocks on hand pending sales. For the current year, £76,000 has been placed on the Estimates for the purchase of plant and vehicles for handling Koolyanobbing ore with the object of reducing production costs. Provision has also been made for blast furnace improvements and sundry items of equipment.

#### *Rural and Industries Bank.*

During the last financial year it was found necessary to provide the bank with additional capital of £320,000 to assist in the development of the State's primary and industrial production. A further £100,000 has been provided for this purpose in the Estimates for 1953-54. I am sure that when the Minister for Lands introduces his Revenue Estimates he will give members some information about the growth of this bank which will show how remarkably the bank has progressed during the short period it has been in existence.

The bank could make a very great amount of additional progress immediately, and in the near future, if the large additional sums required by it could be made available. To the extent to which the Government is able to make additional sums available to the bank from time to time, that action is taken.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is really a question of repayment to the bank by the Government.

Mr. Bovell: The Act would have to be amended. There is a restriction on the capital of the bank, £12,000,000, and Parliament would have to agree to an extension of its financial powers.

The PREMIER: I am sure that Parliament would willingly agree to do that.

#### *Forestry.*

A sum of £104,000 was spent last year on pine planting operations and the provision of houses for forestry employees, as compared with the estimate of £83,000. In the current financial year £50,000 has been allotted for pine planting and £25,000 is to be used in meeting commitments in respect of seven houses in course of erection and for the erection of 18 additional houses at various forest centres.

#### *Public Buildings.*

An allocation of £1,656,000 has been made in this year's Estimates for public buildings. Last year a sum of £2,680,000 was expended under this heading compared with the estimate of £2,522,000. Of this year's allotment of funds, £1,342,000 are required to continue works in progress at the 30th June last, leaving a balance of £314,000 for new works.

The major works in progress and the estimated expenditure during 1953-54 include the Narrogin High School £100,000; Bridgetown, new school £40,000; Margaret River, new school £40,000; the Midland Junction hospital, £100,000; the Mullewa hospital, £24,000; the Three Springs hospital, including nurses' quarters £35,000; Princess Margaret Hospital, nurses' quarters £35,000; Perth Chemical Laboratories, additions £59,000; and Claremont Hospital for Insane, "X" block, kitchen £40,000. In addition, expenditure from general loan funds on the Royal Perth Hospital is expected to be £164,000.

New works will consist of the erection of prefabricated school units purchased in 1952-53, commencement of work on the new Meekatharra hospital, and a number of miscellaneous projects embracing the requirements of several departments including the Education, Health and Police Departments.

#### *State Brick Works.*

An amount of £386,000 was expended in 1952-53 including a recoup to the concern of £86,000 in respect of the previous year's operations. The first section of the Armadale pressed brick works came into production in October, 1952, and the wirecut plant was in operation for the full year. In the current year £40,000 has been provided for the completion of the second section of the Armadale pressed brick works.

#### *State Saw Mills.*

Expenditure for the year 1952-53 totalled £334,000, including the clearance from Treasurer's advance of the sum of £250,000, which had been advanced in previous years to the State Saw Mills as additional working capital. The Estimates for this year provide for expenditure of £15,000, the principal item being the erection of a vertical saw at Shannon River to break down karri logs now too large for the main mill. The wiring and rewiring of State Saw Mill cottages and buildings at Deannmill and Pemberton to connect with the State Electricity Commission system is also planned.

#### *State Housing Act.*

During the past year, 325 homes were completed under the provisions of the State Housing Act and, at the close of the year, 97 houses were under construction. In addition, the State Housing Commission erected 131 housing units for the accommodation of evicted families. At the end of June, the commission had existing contracts for the supply of components for 150 local pre-cut homes to be delivered during the current year.

Activities under this Act for the year 1953-54 will include the completion of the homes under construction at the close of

last year, the erection of 200 new local pre-cut houses in country towns, and 80 in the metropolitan area, together with the erection of two shops at Collie. This programme will be financed from the provision in this year's Estimates of £379,000, and a carry-over of £387,000 in the commission's funds from the previous financial year.

#### *Kwinana Housing.*

A vigorous building programme was commenced last January to meet the housing needs of the Australasian Petroleum Refinery Ltd. at Kwinana, as required under the Oil Refinery Industry (Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Limited) Act, which provides for the erection of 1,000 homes within three years from October, 1952, for the accommodation of the company's employees. Good progress has been made in the completion of these homes, the first group of which was handed over to the company in May last. At the 30th June, 1953, there were 244 houses and nine shops under construction. These will be completed, and a further 371 houses will be put under construction during the current year. An amount of £1,197,000 has been provided in this year's Estimates for the continuation of this programme.

#### *Loans for Purchase of Motor Vehicles for Departmental Officers.*

Loans to Government officers for the purchase of motor vehicles required in the discharge of their duties have, for some years, been financed by the Treasury from moneys available in the Public Account. It was felt that it would be better policy to finance these loans from the General Loan Fund by appropriating £200,000 in 1952-53 for this purpose. The sum was transferred to a Treasury trust account and used mainly to clear expenditure previously incurred from the appropriation "Advance to Treasurer."

#### *Assistance to Fishing Industry for Loss on Guaranteed Accounts.*

During 1952-53 the Treasury was called upon to make a payment of £184,000 to the Rural and Industries Bank in connection with guarantees given for advances to Anglo-Australian Fisheries Pty. Ltd., Anglo-Australian Trawlers Pty. Ltd., Seafoods Ltd., and Westralian Trawling Co. Ltd. Of this sum, £50,000 was charged to revenue in 1952-53 and the balance of £134,000 to the General Loan Fund.

It is intended to recoup the debit to the loan fund of £134,000 by a charge against the revenue fund of £50,000 in 1953-52 and £84,000 in 1954-55. Whilst losses of this nature are a correct charge to revenue, it was thought desirable to spread the loss over a period of three years in view of the relatively large amount involved.

*Kwinana Area Development.*

An amount of £72,000 was expended last year in the development of the Kwinana area, part form the provision of housing and water supplies. The Estimates for this year provide for a total expenditure of £195,000 of which £110,000 will be absorbed in road construction for the new townsite area, and £27,000 for clearing operations. The balance is required for surveys, planning and land resumption.

Since the printed Estimates were prepared, further loan funds have become available. As I did not wish to postpone the presentation of the Loan Estimates any further, allocation of the additional loan money is not shown in the printed Estimates.

*Loan from Anglo-Iranian Company.*

When I was in London, together with the Leader of the Opposition, I approached the chairman of directors of Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Ltd. with a request for financial assistance, particularly in regard to the housing at Kwinana which is required for the company's employees. After a very helpful discussion, it was agreed that the company would explore the possibility of lending us a sum of £500,000. Subsequently, on my return to Australia, the Government was advised of the company's willingness to make this money available through funds provided for the local company, namely, Australian Petroleum Refinery Ltd.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: For what term is that?

The PREMIER: For a period of 12 months. I might say in amplification of the answer I have just given to the Leader of the Opposition, that when we were in London we stressed to the chairman of directors of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Co. Ltd., and to his fellow-directors, the great strain which the Kwinana development programme was placing upon the loan resources of this State. We indicated that because such a large percentage of our total loan funds had to be concentrated at Kwinana, other parts of the State, particularly the country areas, were being penalised. We were not able to obtain loan moneys for essential works in country towns, particularly for the provision of hospitals, schools, water supplies and the like.

Following the notification of the willingness of the company to make this sum of money available by way of a loan to the Government, an approach was made individually in writing to members of the Australian Loan Council in an effort to seek their approval to the proposed loan. Advice was recently received from the Commonwealth Treasurer, Sir Arthur Fadden, to the effect that the members of the Loan Council had given approval to the raising of a loan by the Government from the company.

*Semi-Governmental Loan.*

It is proposed that this money will be borrowed by the State Housing Commission as a semi-governmental loan and the money which is provided for the commission in our ordinary loan programme will be devoted to other uses. In addition to this loan of £500,000, an amount of approximately £250,000 has become available owing to a further deferment in delivery of the diesel locomotives ordered by the Railways Commission. The companies that are manufacturing these locomotives in Britain have not been able to keep up with their deliveries because of circumstances outside their control and so approximately £250,000, which had been set aside to pay for these locomotives, is now available for other purposes.

These two additions to our loan funds, plus some other small ones, have provided about £800,000 for additional work. The allocation of moneys to the Railway Department did not provide sufficient funds for the very urgent and pressing requirements of the department in regard to its relaying programme, and it has been decided to allot a further sum of £537,000.

*Additional Ship for North-West Run.*

The Government has just completed negotiations with the Commonwealth Shipbuilding Board for the purchase of an additional ship for the North-West.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What is the cost involved?

The PREMIER: It is £200,000 for this financial year.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What is the total cost?

The PREMIER: The contract has not yet been finally signed but the estimated cost is in the vicinity of £800,000. The balance of the £800,000 additional loan money will be allocated to the Public Works Department, mainly for the erection of an extra number of Bristol school buildings which have already been purchased but have been held in store pending the receipt of sufficient loan moneys to finance their erection. Other moneys provided for the Public Works Department will enable some necessary water supply extensions to be undertaken, and a small amount of £9,000 has been allocated to the Metropolitan Water Supply Department for the replacement of water mains in High-st., Fremantle.

*Kalamunda Water Supply.*

In that regard the department has now decided to complete the water supply scheme to Kalamunda. The member for Greenough will know that his Government put this work in hand. Unfortunately it had to be suspended this year when the main was within two miles of the outskirts of Kalamunda. It is debatable whether, if this work had not

been started and almost completed when we came to office, we would have undertaken it. However, nothing can be gained in debating that question now.

A large sum of loan money has been expended on the work so far completed and that work is a dead loss as long as it is left in its present condition. Obviously, therefore, the sensible thing to do, from every point of view, is to make a comparatively small additional amount of loan money available in order that the scheme may be completed and start to return revenue on the comparatively large sum of loan money expended on the construction of the extension to Kalamunda.

Mr. Wild: Has any money been made available to continue the Roleystone scheme?

The PREMIER: I could not say from memory. If the hon. member would like to give me a short note or place a question on the notice paper in regard to the matter, I will have it checked for him.

Mr. Wild: I think the same conditions apply to Roleystone. The pumping equipment is already here and paid for and it is only a matter of installing it.

The PREMIER: It is proposed to complete the water supply undertaking at Carnamah and make necessary overdue extensions in the North Tammin area. Geraldton sewerage is to have some additional money spent on it as a result of the loan funds which have become available during the last few days.

#### *General.*

Generally, what I have said covers the majority of items of loan expenditure last year and also the major items of expenditure which will be incurred during the current financial year. I have in mind some review of the overall economic result of our loan expenditure in recent years. However, I think I will reserve what I have to say on that matter until I introduce the Loan Bill later in today's proceedings. I submit the Estimates for the consideration of the Committee.

Progress reported.

#### **BILL—LOAN, £17,850,000.**

#### *Message.*

Message from the Governor received and read recommending appropriation for the purposes of the Bill.

#### *Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.25] in moving the second reading said: The Bill is to provide the necessary authority to raise, by way of loan, sufficient money to meet the proposed capital expenditure on works, as detailed in the Loan Estimates. In the

First Schedule are shown the amounts required for the various works and which, after allowing for unspent balances of sums previously authorised, should be sufficient to complete the projected works or, where necessary, enable them to be carried on for about six months after the close of the financial year. By that time Parliament will have had the opportunity of reviewing next year's estimates and of authorising further loans, if necessary.

Clause 6 authorises the reappropriation of certain moneys which are not now required for the original purposes or for items which have now been placed under more appropriate loan titles. The Second Schedule shows the amounts and the Acts by which they were first authorised, while the Third Schedule sets out the work to which it is now intended to apply these amounts.

At the 30th June, 1953, the public debt stood at £153,072,170, an increase of £14,783,639, compared with the position at the 30th June, 1952. This morning I was having a look through the speech made in 1945 by the then Treasurer when he was introducing the Loan Bill of that year. In it I found that the total loan expenditure for that year was £4,500,000. If members compare that figure with the total figure for last year and the total figure for this year, they will see how greatly loan expenditure has increased and is still increasing. Consequently, the State's public debt is growing quite rapidly.

Such a state of affairs used to cause ever so much more worry in prewar years than it seems to occasion these days. In prewar years the growth of the public debt was always a matter for great concern, for considerable debate and often considerable contention. I can vividly remember how some members of Parliament and some members of the public were really scared about the way the public debt was growing and automatically, too, the interest bill, which was being imposed upon the people. I am sure there was ground for the concern, the doubt and even the fear which existed in regard to that problem at that time.

These days, members of Parliament, except perhaps the few, and members of the public, do not seem to worry much, if at all, about this problem. We very seldom hear or read of any reference to the public debt or to the total interest bill on the public debt.

Mr. J. Hegney: Have you the figures of the total interest bill with you?

The PREMIER: Not at the moment. I was going to suggest that if some member of the House—perhaps the member for Claremont—were to total the figures of the Commonwealth debt, the public debts of all the States, and also were to total the Commonwealth interest bill and the interest bills of all the States, we would

have presented to us figures which would, to some extent, be staggering. And, if those figures, when presented, could be published as vividly as some other news is inserted in newspapers these days, I think members and the public would receive a pretty severe jolt.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The late Mr. Marshall used to tell us about it once a year.

The PREMIER: Yes. In this period of at least superficial prosperity and, to some extent, actual prosperity, the problem does not impress itself upon us so much. It is not a burden imposed on the community, or any individual, to an extent which causes the community to complain or worry. It does not cause any individual to complain or worry. Looking into the near future, it is not difficult to anticipate a time when the size of the public debt, and especially the pressure of the interest bill on the proceeds of production, will create a problem which, I suggest, will be extremely difficult to overcome.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Money will just inflate, that is all.

The PREMIER: I am not at all clear what the member for Mt. Lawley means when he says that it will just inflate.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It will depreciate the value of the currency. Therefore, the depreciation will be loaded on to the national income.

The PREMIER: I am not sure what that means, either. What will happen is that money will appreciate.

Mr. Ackland: The greater safety will encourage people to produce more. The Loan Estimates do anything but that.

The PREMIER: We can discuss that in the general debate on this Bill. I can look forward to the time when our exports will decline, and the price-value of goods being sold in this country will also decline.

Mr. Ackland: All the more reason why we should have more revenue in order to produce more goods to send away.

The PREMIER: If the member for Moore would allow me to state my proposition, which I shall try to do clearly and briefly, I shall be satisfied. When the sale price of goods falls and the value of money appreciates, then it will be found that the total income from taxation available to Governments will be ever so much less. Consequently, every fixed burden on the Government will be harder to bear. The interest, which is fixed in the terms of a number of £s, will have to be paid in £s of greater value; in other words, in those times we shall be paying back in £s double in value of the £s which were fixed when they first came into the interest bill.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That has not happened over a long period.

The PREMIER: That has happened.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Only in depressions.

The PREMIER: Of course, in the depression. The position became so acute, as the member for Mt. Lawley will remember, that Governments in Australia were forced to indulge in a respectable kind of repudiation. I merely draw attention to this matter because some time during the next ten years this could become a front rank problem in Australia. I am convinced that the great size of the public debt and the greater size of the interest bill, will together provide a first-class problem for Governments and for the people of Australia during the next five or ten years. If the member for Moore wishes to discuss that matter at greater length during the debate on this Bill, I shall listen with interest.

Of the new debt incurred during the last financial year, £5,799,000 came from two public loans raised by the Commonwealth Government. The first of these loans was issued at 4½ per cent. for nine years, the share of Western Australia being £1,533,000. The second loan was issued at 4½ per cent. at par for nine years, or 3 per cent. at the issue price of £99 10s. for 2½ years, Western Australia receiving £2,400,000 of the former and £1,866,000 of the latter.

As in previous years, the Commonwealth Government undertook to supplement the loans raised on the market by an amount sufficient to provide a total of £180,000,000 for the various States. The amount which the Commonwealth raised to enable that overall total to be reached was approximately £52,000,000. Of that £52,000,000, Western Australia received £8,187,000, of which sum £5,857,000 bears interest at 4½ per cent. and the balance at 3 per cent.

Under the Savings Bank Transfer Agreement, the State is entitled each quarter to 70 per cent. of any increase in depositors' balances. The amount thus available to the State last year was £1,650,000, on which interest is payable at the rate of 3½ per cent., that is, 1 per cent. above the rate allowed to depositors, as provided for in the agreement.

Operation of the sinking fund controlled by the National Debt Commission resulted in the redemption of the Western Australian debt totalling £859,931, of which £16,500 was domiciled in London and £6,575 in New York. At the 30th June last, there was a balance of £930,678 to our credit in the sinking fund and, as contributions during the current year by the State and Commonwealth will amount to approximately £1,560,000, there will thus be about £2,500,000 available for the reduction of the State debt.

The loan programme this year, very much like the loan programme for recent years, is not the type that would make any Treasurer happy. For my part, and

I am sure in this I would be expressing the opinion of the Leader of the Opposition and probably every member of the House. I would like to see a very different loan programme. I would like to see much more of our loan expenditure going into channels which would be directly reproductive in regard to actual wealth, and reproductive in regard to a return to the State of the loan money expended. The fact which we must take into account when considering the type of loan programme which is before us at present, and which has been before us in recent years, is that we are the victims of very stubborn circumstances.

I ask members to take their minds back to the depression years, to the years from then to the beginning of the war, to the period of the war, and to the early post-war years. From 1930 up to the present time, I would say that no Government in this State has been in a position to put into operation the loan programme which those Governments were keenly desirous of so doing. We know that in the depression years loan money was practically non-existent. Even in the later years, towards the beginning of the war, loan moneys were restricted.

During the war years, the States had very little loan money, because all of it was required by the Commonwealth to concentrate on the war effort. Whatever loan money was then made available to this State was expended mainly to assist the war effort. In the early postwar years, there certainly was more loan money available—unfortunately, more than could be expended. But, paradoxically enough, like other States, we were up against the problem of shortage of labour, essential plant and materials.

Last year and this year the Governments concerned had a glorious opportunity to develop and put into operation a type of loan programme which would greatly increase the actual production and, in addition, would be reproductive financially to the State. That looks logical enough on the surface. However, if one bears in mind that from 1930 until recently there was not sufficient loan money available, or, in the odd years when there was sufficient money there was not sufficient labour, plant, equipment or materials, then the conclusion is reached that this State, in common with all other States, faces a heavy backlog of works which, for one reason or another, could not be undertaken previously.

So today in this State great pressure is brought to bear on the Government to expend the loan funds available in order to overtake the arrears of work that have accumulated. Everyone knows that the building of schools is not reproductive in terms of real wealth and that such expenditure is not financially reproductive to the State. The same applies to hos-

pitals and works of that description. From the purely economic-theory point of view, we should this year—as the previous Government should have done in the preceding two or three years—be expending a much greater percentage of the loan moneys available to us on water supplies, irrigation works, land clearing, soil improvement, measures to prevent soil and salt erosion and activities of that sort. That would have been a statesmanlike thing to do.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: I think that has been the aim of all Governments for many years, but circumstances have prevented it.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition is agreeing with the theme that I have been developing during the last four or five minutes.

Mr. Ackland: That is the only thing that will save the State.

The PREMIER: I thoroughly agree with the member for Moore, but I hope he has been following the trend of my argument. No Government should be forgiven if this year or at any time in the last five years it had neglected completely, or largely to make provision for schools, hospital accommodation and other activities financed out of loan funds that are essential to the community life of the State.

The task of developing a properly balanced loan programme is not difficult. The Leader of the Opposition, when Treasurer, could have easily developed a programme on paper that would have appealed to the member for Moore and probably to nearly all the other members of the House. However, the natural desire of a Treasurer to develop a programme of that sort has been severely curbed in recent years because of the pressure of events and the demands of the community for the provision of those facilities to which I have referred—facilities that could not be provided in the depression years, the post-depression years, the war years or the postwar years.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: The Budget tables at page 1258 of "Hansard" give a clear indication of the loan expenditure that has been reproductive.

The PREMIER: Yes; those tables are worthy of close study by every member. I give the House and the public an assurance that it is the anxiety of this Government—as I am sure it was of the previous Government—to reshape in a practical way our loan programme with an emphasis upon increasing the production of real wealth as soon as circumstances permit of this being done. It would be fair to say that a good deal of the accumulated arrears have been overtaken during the last four or five years. When this year's loan moneys have been expended, further arrears will have been wiped out. Thus, from year to year, it should be well within the bounds of pos-

sibility under our loan programmes to place the emphasis in favour of contributing to a greater increase in the production of actual wealth.

The problem to which I have referred has been intensified by the rapid growth of our population. This growth in recent years has placed a far greater strain upon our loan expenditure than before as regards school, hospital, water supply and housing requirements. I can tell members that the new Australians have necessitated substantially greater expenditure of loan moneys by the Government for housing. In my own town of Northam, there is a considerable number of new Australians. Quite a proportion of them have purchased the freehold of dwelling-houses, and as soon as the law would permit them, they have had evicted from those homes the families who had occupied them as tenants for many years. This is another direction in which the growth of our population by migration has contributed to the problem of Government loan expenditure.

I do not say that, because new Australians are in a position to buy houses, they are not justified in acquiring them. This is an arguable point with which we need not concern ourselves at the moment. The fact is that their action in buying dwelling-houses in country towns—and I suppose the same applies to the metropolitan area—where housing accommodation has been in very short supply creates a problem for the evicted families and for the Government in many instances.

Within reasonable time, members will, I hope, study the Loan Estimates and the Loan Bill closely and make whatever contributions to the debate they consider will be helpful in all circumstances. There are many things that come before Parliament that completely transcend party politics. This is one of them. From that angle, I believe that the public would gain a far better and fairer impression of the valuable work that members do if the debates in this House were more fully recorded in the newspapers. I believe that the public would get a more realistic understanding of the relationship between the Government and its supporters and members of the Opposition if occasionally the newspapers were to high-light the things upon which we agree instead of always highlighting only the things upon which we disagree and especially those things upon which at times we violently disagree. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from 19th November.

**HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray)** [5.55]: When the No. 1 Bills were introduced some few weeks ago, I opposed them, as did other members on this side of the House. Members will recall that the Commonwealth vacated the field of entertainments tax and, having done so, our views was that the Treasurer should not re-enter that field. However, the Bills that were then introduced by the Treasurer seem to have been abandoned. They reached another place where amendments were made to one of them. One of those measures has disappeared from the notice paper, and the other is being kept well down, doubtless with the idea of its being ultimately discharged.

Now we have this proposal for the re-imposition of the State tax which, as members know, was suspended during the time the Commonwealth collected entertainments tax and reimbursed the States. Having opposed the principle of the imposition of entertainments tax a few weeks ago, I still adhere to that attitude. I am opposed to entertainments tax generally, but I have to face the fact that we have on the statute book an Act that authorises the imposition of this tax and, even though the amending Bill were defeated, the original Act would remain and under it the tax would be levied. Therefore it is of no use our opposing this Bill. However, I hope that the Treasurer will agree to accept amendments in certain directions.

I stated previously that the Treasurer had already received reimbursement of this money from the Commonwealth, and I still maintain that that is so. In the payment to the State of income tax reimbursement, entertainments tax and other taxes taken over by the Commonwealth, provision was made by the Commonwealth for entertainments tax. The Treasurer has explained that this Bill proposes to provide for two schedules as against the one schedule in the existing Act and that in this respect he is following the Commonwealth Act. The purpose, as he explained, was to provide certain concessions for live shows. Members will recall that this class of entertainment will be exempt for admission charges up to and including 5s.

Under the provisions of the Bill there will also be considerable benefit to entertainments for charitable purposes. Where the rate for admission to live shows exceeds 5s. but not 5s. 6d., the rate of entertainment tax to be levied is 9d., with an increase of 1d. for every 6d. by which the admission charge exceeds 5s. 6d. For shows other than live shows, the exemption will be raised, and instead of commencing at charges below 9d., tax will be imposed on charges over 2s. I do not think that will give much relief to patrons of entertainments. Other than as regards day sessions, there will be virtually no relief from taxation in the city

as in theatres there very few seats are available at less than 2s., as members who patronise picture shows must know. In the suburbs I believe there are a considerable number of seats available at prices below 2s.

In the country, as members who represent country constituencies are well aware, there are few picture shows indeed where the charge is less than 2s. In a large number of country centres such entertainment is all of the one class as regards accommodation, because there is just the local hall in which the pictures are shown. This provision will, in fact, give little relief to country districts. At the present day it is difficult in country areas, and particularly in the case of non-live shows, to provide entertainment without incurring heavy expenditure.

When speaking previously I gave some idea of what these costs were, and mentioned some of the districts concerned, including the area represented by the member for Murchison. I find that it costs something like £6 or £8 to send a single moving picture programme to such an area, and it must be remembered that in many centres the population is sparse. To transport a moving picture programme to Esperance, for instance, the cost is £8. Esperance is a fairly large town, apart from being a holiday resort and no doubt picture shows have large audiences there.

But in the towns of smaller population—and there are a great many of them—where the cost of transporting the programme would be on the same level, the position is difficult and members can realise that it would be unlikely that a charge of less than 2s. 6d. could be made. I think the Treasurer should give this matter further consideration. When the Bill is in Committee I will move an amendment in an endeavour to raise the exempted charge from 2s. to 3s. That would give general relief and not relief to one section only of the people, for whom cheaper seats can be provided. That is a reasonable request and I hope members will agree to it.

Mr. Heal: Is that provision contained in the Commonwealth Act?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: No. I notice that in the Bill certain live shows are set out at page 2, but no mention is made of sport. I am wondering whether provision should be made in this Bill, or in the other similar measure with which we will be dealing, to cover the position with regard to that phase. I think consideration should be given to those bodies that make a charge for admission to sporting events and which today are hard hit. Whether I am in order in mentioning this matter while speaking to this measure, I leave to you, Mr. Speaker, but I will go as far as I can and make my explanation.

Some concern has been expressed about the charges made for admission to sporting events.

When the Treasurer was dealing with the matter recently, I asked what effect these proposals would have on certain sporting bodies and mentioned the first that came into my mind—cricket, football and so on. Some expenditure is involved in that kind of sport as an organisation of that description must have a paid secretary, and there are also other expenses incurred. In the main, however, those taking part in such sports are not paid.

The Premier: They would not be taxed.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I desire to be clear on that. What about interstate cricket?

The Premier: That would not be taxable.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am pleased to have that assurance from the Premier.

The Premier: I give the Leader of the Opposition the assurance that I will have the matter checked again and, if it is necessary, I will tighten up the Bill in that direction to make sure that that kind of sport will not be taxed.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I am very glad to have that offer from the Premier.

The Minister for Lands: This is a good Bill.

Mr. Heal: Will football be taxable?

The Premier: No.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: What about the Davis Cup tennis?

The Premier: That will not be taxed, either.

Mr. McCulloch: What about soccer?

The Premier: I think the matches in which the Azurri Club participates should be taxed.

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: I do not know much about the activities of that team. I hope the Premier will agree to the amendment which I propose to move when the Bill is in Committee.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [6.8]: I wish to touch on the First Schedule, which deals with certain forms of amusement where the exemption is higher. I would have liked to see dancing included in that schedule rather than in the Second Schedule. There is a new form of dancing that has lately come into vogue and I believe that recently there were 3,500 people—

The Minister for Labour: I know, it is all on the square.

Mr. Heal: Were you down there?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes.

The Premier: Were you on the square?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I was not on the square. In my view, that form of entertainment is health-giving and I think it has the support of the National Fitness Council. That type of amusement must cost a certain amount of money and I think that where it takes a humble form and the charge is less than 5s., it would have been reasonable to exempt dancing from taxation. Expensive balls should be taxable under the schedule. I ask the Premier to give consideration to including dancing in the First Schedule. He has already included ballet there. That form of amusement is relieved from taxation under the assessment Act and it would not have been unreasonable to put it under the schedule also.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [6.10]: I will support the second reading of the Bill, but there are one or two aspects of it to which I would like to draw the Premier's attention. Of them—the major one—is that, as I said,—not actually but in its effect—this taxation measure differentiates between the metropolitan residents and those living outside the metropolitan area. I think I am correct in saying that in nearly all the country picture theatres there are no charges that do not exceed 2s. 0½d. and therefore none of the admission prices of country theatres will be exempt from taxation.

With the exception of children's seats—I do not think they come into this discussion—there are, as far as I know, no seats available in country theatres for less than 2s. 6d. and there are certainly none such in the great majority of instances in the rural areas. The net result is that, as the Bill at present stands, one could see a show in the metropolitan area without tax—by paying the minimum charge—and then, while still paying the minimum charge in a country place would have to pay the tax which, of course, increases the charge considerably on the minimum.

The position is that the tax is superimposed on the extra charge. We cannot expect a country theatre, in the main, to offer entertainment to its patrons, in a similar type of seat, at the same price as could be offered in a metropolitan theatre. In the first place, the turnover is by no means as large in a country theatre because the population does not provide the considerable audiences that are available in the city and, secondly, transport costs—quite apart from railway freights—are often considerable and, lastly, the railway transport cost of films from the metropolitan area is substantial.

Taking those three factors into consideration there is ample justification for the small additional sum charged for an equivalent seat in a rural district. I believe that the rail freight on the spool or whatever it is called in which the film is packed costs for a three-hour show, approximately £4 from Perth to Goomalling

or Perth to Narrogin. The additional cost incurred by a rural theatre to provide exactly the same form of entertainment as is provided in a metropolitan theatre is certainly part of the justification for the increased cost of the lowest-priced seats.

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

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Before the tea suspension I was developing a line of argument to the point where I thought I had established to a reasonable extent that though not actually, at least in effect, the Bill was inclined to differentiate between the metropolitan and the country theatre. I would like to extend the argument a little by saying that I have referred to the moving picture theatre particularly for two reasons. The first is that in many country centres it is virtually the only type of entertainment that is available apart, of course, from the dances and gatherings of that character. The live stage play is in some cases absolutely non-existent.

While I appreciate to the fullest extent the Treasurer's intention in this Bill, as it concerns such shows, because they are mainly non-existent in smaller country centres, they would, of course, derive no benefit from the rebates which the hon. gentleman proposes to give. On the other hand, if we want to encourage the people to remain in the rural places we must contemplate some measure of equality even as far as entertainment is concerned.

As I have tried to indicate, one can attend a picture theatre in the metropolitan district, I understand, for 2s. One would be extremely lucky, however, to get in for 2s. 6d.—and as I understand it this measure immediately makes it 2s. 11d.—in the country theatres. I do not suppose for one moment that that state of affairs was thought of by the Treasurer when he produced this Bill; but I do think that in all the circumstances I have mentioned, it does require his favourable consideration. Before the Bill is disposed of I trust something will be done to bring the two classes of entertainment into some sort of equality.

Members will recall that I said I proposed to support the second reading of the Bill, but that does not mean that I have abandoned my unfavourable attitude towards entertainments tax, which I indicated when the earlier Bills were before the House. Perhaps I had better make a short explanation as to why I support the second reading of this measure. First of all it is that if I allow the law to remain as it is by attempting to reject this measure, there are certain rebates, of which I approve, which will be entirely lost because the existing law starts at a very much lower figure and the net result would be that there would be many more charges than this Bill proposes to impose.

The second reason is that the hon. gentleman has made some concession to the argument I advanced on the second reading of the previous Bill when I said I thought there should be some attempt made to make the cost of attendance at live stage shows cheaper rather than dearer by the imposition of a tax. Some attempt has been made to do that. For those two reasons I support the second reading of the Bill, and again I hope the Treasurer will see fit to make some alteration which will achieve a measure of equality.

**MR. JOHNSON** (Leederville) [7.35]: I, too, support the Bill. I would like briefly to refer to a couple of items in the hope of generating light without heat. Unfortunately the report of the Commonwealth statistician which I have is two years old, but it is the latest I could procure. The report indicates that of the number of persons admitted to tax-paying entertainment, the largest groups were those from the 1s. 6d. and 1s. 6½d. to 2s. class. In fact, over half the number of persons who were admitted to tax-paying entertainments during the years 1950-51, which are the figures I have, were in those two groups; certainly the largest proportion of the picture-going group was in the under 2s. rates. There have been, I will admit, some increases in the admission rates since 1950-51 and it could be that this report is not very accurate. I bring it forward as the most recent we have in order to show that if the minimum were raised very much higher there would be a very small number of persons attending entertainments capable of attracting taxation. If we are to have the revenue which members on both sides of the House agree is necessary, it is, I think, inadvisable, immediately at least, to raise the minimum.

Further I would point out that in the same series of figures, under the heading of "Collections," Commonwealth tax reimbursement per head of population, is an indication of the incidence of entertainment tax in the various States. It is of considerable interest to prospective taxpayers in this State to know that with the exception of the State of Queensland where we are informed there has never been an entertainments tax, but where, according to the statistician, they pay 4s. 2d. per head, Western Australia has been the lowest-taxed State in the entertainments tax field, the amount being only 8s. 7d. as compared with South Australia's 19s. 9d.

I would point out that South Australia has had a non-Labour Government for many years and it would seem that it is not the policy of the Playford Government to completely remit entertainments tax. In the same book of figures and in

relation to Commonwealth tax reimbursement, there is a schedule showing the reimbursement for the various years from 1942-43 to 1951. Against reimbursements for the years 1943-44 and 1945-46 is a little note which says—

(b) includes Commonwealth reimbursement,

		Per Head.
1942-43	...	574,000 @ 1s. 6d.
1943-44	...	776,000 @ 2s. 1d.
1944-45	...	776,000 @ 2s. 1d.
1945-46	...	766,000 @ 2s. 1d.

It is interesting to note that from the financial year 1947-48 until, I presume, 1952-53, there has been no reimbursement for entertainments tax in the Commonwealth field. The schedule makes that quite clear. I feel that the Leader of the Opposition, in making his claim that we have received a reimbursement, has perhaps proceeded without enough research to disprove the point my Leader made in the course of the debate to the effect that this particular reimbursement ceased some time ago.

The figures relating to it are here under the signature of the Commonwealth statistician, and I think it can be assumed that they are completely accurate. I disagree with the contention of the Leader of the Opposition that we have received reimbursements from the Commonwealth for future collections.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Did you not say those figures were two years old?

**Mr. JOHNSON:** Yes, but 1945 is a good long while ago. The last occasion on which we got reimbursements on entertainments tax was in 1948, and the figures are here from 1941 to 1950.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: And now the whole situation has been taken into consideration with income tax reimbursement. That is my point.

**Mr. JOHNSON:** I know there was a rearrangement that year of the original plan, but there was no entertainments tax reimbursement after 1946. Income tax reimbursement and other tax reimbursements did continue but the reimbursements quite obviously did not make allowance for entertainments tax. Had that been the intention, I have no doubt that the figures would have shown 2s. 1d. per head as they did in the earlier years. There may, of course, be some argument that it does enter into the schedule, but at least the argument is not a sufficiently sound one to allow the Commonwealth to rearrange the formula by a reduction of 2s. 1d. per head for that particular item.

Personally, I am not keen on the idea of a tax on entertainment, but it is one of those taxes that people can see they are paying. It is paid by the people who

have the money to spare for entertainment and is a better type of tax than the indirect taxes which are concealed in the purchase price of so many requirements that we have to handle in our daily lives. No tax is pleasant, but this is one which I think can be fully justified, and I do commend the raising of the minimum to 2s. because it does give the group that can only afford 1s. 10d. some relief. I am sorry it does not go higher, but I cannot see how it could. I support the Bill.

**MR. HEAL** (West Perth) [7.45]: It was very gratifying to hear the Treasurer say, when replying to questions by the Leader of the Opposition, that the cricketers and other sporting bodies will be relieved of entertainments tax. It will be a great relief to the leagues concerned, and also to the clubs. Like the member for Cottesloe, I know that the clubs affected find it hard to carry on with the dividends they receive from the respective leagues, and during the season they have to increase their income by entertainments. I am sure that the removal of the tax will mean increased attendance at sporting fixtures, and therefore increased revenue.

The two schedules submitted by the Treasurer provide for a decrease in the rate of entertainments tax, and that will be a marked relief for the people of our State. I am positive they will not begrudge paying tax when they know that the money is to go into the building of schools, hospitals and institutions such as that for the blind, and those established for aged people. I support the Bill.

**MR. COURT** (Nedlands) [7.47]: I find myself supporting the second reading, not because I am in favour of the entertainments tax, but because the Premier is in rather a favoured position, inasmuch as, if we did anything to upset the Bill, we would find ourselves left with the greater of two evils, as we would have a continuation of the measure which is at present on the statute book, and which provides more severe rates for entertainment-loving people than does the measure before us. I am sorry the Premier did not see fit to give way in this matter, and discontinue the entertainments tax at the time the Commonwealth Government abandoned it.

**Mr. Andrew:** The party you support would not have done so if it had been in power.

**Hon. Sir Ross McLarty:** You do not know what we would have done.

**Mr. COURT:** In my view, as I stated when speaking to another measure, the State has been reimbursed for entertainments tax to the 30th June, 1954, in spite of what the member for Leederville has said. If he conducted research into the recorded utterances of the late Mr. Chifley, made at the time when that gentleman

was reconsidering the relationship between the States and the Commonwealth, he would find that Mr. Chifley decided to do away with the separate Acts for reimbursement, identified as the Income Tax Act and the Entertainments Tax Act. He had very special reasons for dealing with the matter on a conglomerate basis, and eventually brought in a tax reimbursement Act, which was all embracing.

I stick to my original theory that, in the calculation of reimbursement up to 1954, an amount which it could reasonably be considered would have been collected by the States from entertainments tax was allowed for. I feel it would have been a good thing if we had removed these rather irksome taxes, particularly one where the trader or entrepreneur is made the tax gatherer. A degree of misunderstanding springs up between the trade or the entrepreneur and the public in those circumstances. The words "entertainments tax" can be displayed in the biggest letters on a notice outside a theatre, but some people will still think that the proprietor is getting the money. To have removed the entertainments tax would also have had a direct bearing on the actual amount of money people have to pay for admission to entertainments.

I am pleased to see that the Premier has brought forward a differential rate of tax, and I would like to raise a query which the Premier could perhaps deal with when replying to the debate. It may be a little technical, but possibly he can clear up the point. In the relevant clause, what are classed as First Schedule performances are clearly set out. It is hard to fault the list, but I would invite the Premier's attention to a practice that has grown up in connection with some shows of having recorded orchestral music. There may be a play in which all the persons who have to speak are on the stage in the flesh, and qualify within this section. But in order to save the expense of an orchestra, the members of which would have to be paid full rates from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m., recorded music is used as a background to the play or by way of overtures and intermission music.

As I read this measure, if the commissioner were very strict in interpreting it, some of these very desirable people would be excluded. There are some desirable local movements that put on fine live shows; and in order to keep down expenses, they resort to recorded orchestral music. But, for all practical purposes, the show is still a live show coming within this definition of "performers whose words or actions constitute the entertainment are present and performing." The use of recorded music would raise a problem.

I feel that making this concession in entertainments tax for these live shows can do much to help such entertainments. They are the means by which our own

local talent receives most of its opportunities to try itself out and gain experience. They are also the means by which artists of world-wide repute can be brought to Perth to benefit the cultural life of the State, and also give our own people a chance of learning how to develop their technique and artistry; although I must confess that some of our own local artists have shown up in a favourable light alongside people of so-called world standard. That in itself is a good reason for encouraging local performances and enabling our own folk to demonstrate how good they are.

Comment has been made by the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party regarding the matter of country charges, and I feel that is a point that should have special consideration. I suggest to the Premier that some schedule could be formulated along the lines of that used in connection with price-control. There we have large schedules gazetted to overcome the problem of differing climatic and other conditions in various districts. We have gone so far as to gazette the names of towns and districts to which certain proposals shall be attributable. Such a scheme would be practicable in connection with this entertainments tax.

The overall loss of tax by affording some concession in this direction would not be great in the aggregate. Of course, I can see that the Treasurer might not want to give way on the 2s. exemption in the metropolitan area, because that is where he will get a lot of his revenue; but the loss of revenue in providing a concession at the 3s. mark to country people would not be very great in the aggregate, but would be of considerable importance to those living in the rural areas.

**MR. McCULLOCH** (Hannans) [7.55]: There was a fair amount of logic and reasonableness in the remarks of the member for Stirling concerning the excessive cost of getting films to outback centres. It costs a considerable amount of money for proprietors of mobile picture shows to travel around the various mining towns, and I would like the Treasurer to give some concessions to those people. I know that the film exhibitors charge enormous sums for the release of the films. Some years ago a picture was shown in Coolgardie called "Gone with the Wind", but it could not be shown in Kalgoorlie for some reason or other. The film proprietors had some hold over the film and would not allow it to go there.

On account of the cost of getting films to country centres, a radius should be fixed in the metropolitan area of 60 to 100 miles in respect of which exemption could be given up to 3s. It is not possible to get into a country picture show, even when it is held in the open air, for under

3s. What I have said applies not only to the Goldfields areas, but also to country towns not far distant from the metropolis.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [7.58]: Replying first to the question raised by the member for Nedlands in regard to the incidental use of music at a stage entertainment where all the performers are present in person, I would say that such entertainment would undoubtedly come under the First Schedule. The degree to which canned music—if that is the right term—can be used at an entertainment before that entertainment comes into the Second Schedule, is something that would naturally have to be left to the judgment of the Commissioner of Taxation. However, I would have no hesitation in saying that the example given by the hon. member would fall within the first schedule.

I suppose that if we looked into the difference between showing a film in Perth and showing it at, say, Wyalkatchem, we would find a balance in favour of the metropolitan area in some respects, and possibly a balance in favour of showing the film at Wyalkatchem in other respects. I think we would run into a mass of technical difficulties if we tried to work out just what degree of difference, if any, in the rate of tax should apply, that is, if we tried to measure the ratio of income per £ to the ratio of expense per £ in showing films in one part of the State as against another part of the State.

Therefore, I am inclined to think that we would not make much progress in trying to frame suitable amendments to meet the situation of variation as between country and metropolitan area, and as between one part of the country and another part. If the Bill is considered in conjunction with the measure which is immediately to follow, members will agree that substantial concessions are being made with regard to the imposition of entertainments tax in this State. It is estimated that patrons of entertainments will benefit to the extent of at least £75,000 a year by the concessions in the Bill, plus those in the other one. In the circumstances, that appears to members of the Government to be a reasonable proposition.

It is true that prior to the 1st October this year the State Government was receiving no direct income at all from this source except the indirect benefit which it might have been securing from the Commonwealth by way of general tax reimbursement. I do not want to set myself up in this matter as being a better judge of public opinion than any other member in the Chamber, but nevertheless I am convinced that the great majority of the people in the State—which would mean the great majority of the people who patronise entertainments—are not opposed to a reasonable

tax on entertainments, provided they are able to feel assured that the money which they pay per medium of the tax will be used for deserving purposes.

As I have already explained in previous debates in connection with this matter, the money we will receive from the imposition of the tax will be devoted entirely to deserving causes. Every member knows them, and we have already, during the short time the tax has been in operation, increased the measure of governmental assistance to causes of the description I have mentioned. I have not received from my electorate one protest about the reimposition of the tax by the State.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Has there been anything about dancing at all?

The PREMIER: I doubt whether many members have received protests or complaints, except possibly protests that have been made directly, or even indirectly, by proprietors of certain types of entertainment, such as film proprietors.

Mr. Hutchinson: I think that is due to your own shrewdness, to a great extent, because you allowed no hiatus between the ending of the Commonwealth tax and the reimposition of the State tax.

The PREMIER: I do feel there was some merit in my successful resistance to the urgings of the member for Cottesloe in regard to that angle of the situation. In connection with the point raised by the member for Mt. Lawley as to whether exemption should be granted to dances, I would say that would not be a reasonable proposition. If there is one class of entertainment more than another which in Western Australia is patronised, shall I say, by the younger people, it is this entertainment and sport of dancing.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: And the new form of dance, which is mostly patronised by the older people.

Mr. J. Hegney: The old birds are coming to light now.

The Minister for Native Welfare: It will make them young.

The PREMIER: These young people have some money to spare, and consequently I feel no hardship is being imposed by calling on them to pay when they go to a dance a small amount of tax to assist such causes as the blind, the near-blind, the chronically sick, the aged, the kindergarten movement, the infant health centres and many others to which reference could be made.

It might very well be, as the member for Mt. Lawley says, that this new square dance sport or exercise has captured the imagination of people who had, years ago, given up practical indulgence in the light fantastic. It might very well be that older men and women are now feeling younger,

physically as well as in spirit, and are disporting themselves with grace, vigor and elegance in square dancing. Frankly, I must admit that I have not a clue about either the square dance or the round dance. I feel it would not be a reasonable proposition to exempt dances altogether, or even to include them in the First Schedule.

Hon. A. R. V. Abbott: It is hard to distinguish between people who take their form of exercise in cricket and those who take theirs in dancing.

The PREMIER: I agree with the apparent logic of the contention, but if we follow that line of argument and concede that it has logic and merit, where are we to draw the line?

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They are taking physical exercise in the form of entertainment.

The PREMIER: Indeed they are! I feel that if we were to make further concessions beyond those already made in this Bill and the next one, we would reach the stage where we might as well abandon the tax altogether. The Government has reimposed the State entertainments tax for one reason only, and that is to enable the Government, on behalf of the people of the State as a whole, to assist more adequately the many deserving causes in the State which are urgently in need of substantial additional assistance. In the circumstances, I think members ought to concede that the Government, by introducing the two Bills, has gone a long way towards making substantial concessions to the patrons of entertainments. Therefore, this Bill, particularly and, indeed, the next as well, ought to be passed without any serious attempt at amending either of them.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—First and Second Schedules added:

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: When speaking on the second reading, I suggested to the Treasurer that he should agree to raise the admission charge from 2s. to 3s. in respect of country shows. The member for Stirling and the member for Hannans have since supported me in that contention. The exemption up to 2s. will have very little effect in the city because there are few seats costing less than 2s. in any city theatre—I am talking of picture theatres, of course—and there are none in the country areas. I gave examples of what it costs to take films to a number of our country centres and, as I explained, the halls in many country

towns provide only the one class of accommodation, and therefore the one charge is levied.

The Premier: Would not there be provision for front seats and back seats?

Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY: Yes, in some, but in many there is not. Let me put this aspect: In the last few years, there has been a tremendous increase in the number of people attending picture shows. In quite a number of large country centres, the picture show is the main entertainment of the district. Members who represent country constituencies know that people drive long distances to attend the pictures. If the Treasurer would only take time to obtain information concerning the tremendous increase in the patronage of pictures throughout the State, he would know that his revenue from this tax will increase by leaps and bounds.

We know how the population of the State is increasing, and a great percentage of that increase attends this form of amusement. So I ask the Premier to think seriously about accepting my amendment. I do not think he will be the loser by it. Where the charge exceeds 2s. but does not exceed 2s. 6d., the rate of tax will be 4d., and there is to be an increase of 1d. for every 6d. by which the admission charge exceeds 2s. 6d. Therefore, in country districts people will be paying, I think, an extra 5d. tax.

I think the Premier might well accept my amendment. If he does so he will be handing out justice to all sections of the people. Under the proposal in the Bill one section will be getting a benefit and another large section will be deprived of it. I appeal to him to accept what I shall propose. I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of the first item in the Second Schedule under the heading of "Payment for admission, excluding the amount of tax," the word "two" be struck out.

If my amendment is agreed to I shall move to insert the word "three."

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition has appealed to me to give this amendment serious consideration. I am sure that upon reflection he will realise that I have, in recent times, and together with other members of the Government, given this idea serious consideration. If we agreed to the amendment we would lose an additional £60,000 or £70,000 a year in addition to the £75,000 or £80,000 which the Government is conceding in this Bill and the succeeding one.

Mr. Yates: Increase the betting tax.

The PREMIER: Obviously, if the Government were to agree to the amendment, or if it were to have the amendment forced

upon it despite its objection, there would be only two worth-while alternatives open to it. The first worth-while alternative, if it could be termed worth-while, would be to abandon the tax altogether. The second alternative, which would be very worth-while indeed from the point of view of the Government, would be to abandon this Bill. The Treasurer tries to convince me—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: No; you are the Treasurer.

The PREMIER: The Leader of the Opposition tries to convince me that the Government should accept this amendment because he says that the growth of population and the increasing tendency of people to go to films will ensure that our estimate of the income to be received from this tax will grow and grow. I am sure there is something in that. But surely the sensible thing to do is to wait until Parliament meets next year when we will know from practical experience just how this increase in film attendance has developed.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: It is always desperately hard to remove a tax. I know that.

The PREMIER: If, as the Leader of the Opposition anticipates, the receipts from the imposition of this tax increase rapidly and substantially, it might be within the bounds of practical application at that time to raise the proposed 2s. exemption to some higher figure. So, much as members of the Government would desire to please and satisfy patrons of entertainments by raising the exemption from 2s. to 3s., the practical issues of the situation are such as to make it impracticable and, in the circumstances, unwise for us to agree to this amendment.

Mr. McCULLOCH: I cannot support this amendment. If it is passed it will have State-wide application. However, I do not agree with what the Premier had to say during his reply to the second reading debate. He said that a system involving a radius wherein different rates would be charged would cause confusion. The Commonwealth Government has divided this State into three zones for taxation purposes, and that works quite well. My idea is that the people in the outback country, who have no other amenities except picture shows once a week or once a fortnight, and with whom I am concerned, should have some further exemption. To my mind there should be a higher exemption for those people.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	20
Majority against	1

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott  
Mr. Ackland  
Mr. Brand  
Mr. Court  
Mr. Doney  
Mr. Hutchinson  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. Manning  
Sir Ross McLarty  
Mr. Nalder

Mr. Nimmo  
Mr. North  
Mr. Oldfield  
Mr. Owen  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Wild  
Mr. Yates  
Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Andrew  
Mr. Graham  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. Heal  
Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Hoar  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Kelly  
Mr. Lapham  
Mr. Lawrence

Mr. McCulloch  
Mr. Norton  
Mr. O'Brien  
Mr. Rhatigan  
Mr. Rodoreda  
Mr. Sewell  
Mr. Sleeman  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. May

(Teller.)

Paire.

Ayes.

Mr. Hearman  
Mr. Cornell  
Mr. Hill  
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver  
Mrs. Perkins

Noes

Mr. Guthrie  
Mr. Moir  
Mr. Brady  
Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Jamieson

Amendment thus negatived.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I am still hopeful that the Premier can be induced to do something along the lines I suggested when I spoke to the second reading. It seemed to me that his approach to the matter, when he replied to the second reading, was not quite the right one. He went into the question of the relative costs of running a picture show at Wyalkatchem and the metropolitan area. I am not concerned about that; I think I have the same views as the member for Hannans in this regard. Additional charges may be occasioned by a smaller turnover owing to less population and increased costs. While there will be some exemptions in certain metropolitan-suburban theatres where some seats cost less than 2s., there will not be any exemptions in country theatres because there are no charges less than 2s.

For my part, I want to know if the Premier will accept an amendment to the schedule in the nature of a proviso to the effect that the tax should not be imposed in such places outside the metropolitan area as might be determined by the Governor-in-Council, unless the charge for admission exceeded, say 2s. 9d. That is the best suggestion I can make. It would leave the matter open to the Treasurer himself because the Governor-in-Council would make a decision upon the Government's recommendation. As the Bill stands there will be a measure of inequality between the two sections of the State and that should be avoided if possible. I will not move the amendment at this stage because I would like the Premier to express his views upon it.

The PREMIER: The suggestion by the Leader of the Country Party would, I am afraid, if any attempt were made to put it into practical operation, lead

to all kinds of complications. Let us say, for example, that it became part of the legislation and in due course an attempt was made to put it into effect. We would grant exemption, say, to Lake Grace, Lake Brown and Lake Leonora, and immediately those places in the near vicinity would commence an agitation to be treated similarly and they would have a great deal of justification for their argument.

Finally, unless the Treasurer desired to be driven mad, he would have exempted the whole of the country areas completely. I suggest that we should not nibble at half the block of cheese that is still left. We have given half of the block of cheese to those attending entertainments and we should leave the remaining half as it is. When the next session is under way, the Government could give consideration to the matter and if the financial position of the State is reasonably satisfactory, it could be within the bounds of possibility that a further amendment might be introduced to grant some further concessions to those people who patronise the various types of entertainment.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I regard this matter as of such importance, at least to those people with whom I am closely connected, that I will have to test the feeling of the Committee. I move an amendment—

That at the end of the Second Schedule the following proviso be added:—

Provided that in towns declared by the Governor in Council to be included in this proviso, no tax shall be payable in respect of any charge for admission not exceeding 2s. 9d.

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

Ayes	19
Noes	20
Majority against	1

Ayes.

Mr. Abbott  
Mr. Ackland  
Mr. Brand  
Mr. Court  
Mr. Doney  
Mr. Hutchinson  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. Manning  
Sir Ross McLarty  
Mr. Nalder

Mr. Nimmo  
Mr. North  
Mr. Oldfield  
Mr. Owen  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Wild  
Mr. Yates  
Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Andrew  
Mr. Graham  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. Heal  
Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Hoar  
Mr. Johnson  
Mr. Kelly  
Mr. Lapham  
Mr. Lawrence

Mr. McCulloch  
Mr. Norton  
Mr. O'Brien  
Mr. Rhatigan  
Mr. Rodoreda  
Mr. Sewell  
Mr. Sleeman  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. May

(Teller.)

Ayes.	Pairs.	Noes.
Mr. Hearman		Mr. Guthrie
Mr. Cornell		Mr. Moir
Mr. Hill		Mr. Brady
Dame F. Cardell-Oliver		Mr. Nuisen
Mr. Perkins		Mr. Jamieson

Amendment thus negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

# **BILL—ENTERTAINMENTS TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMEND- MENT (No. 2).**

## *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 19th November.

**HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY** (Murray) [8.38]: I have not much to say on the Bill and I can give it my support. It proposes to amend the Entertainments Tax Assessment Act. Already that Act provides for the exemption of certain classes of entertainment where the expenses are not more than 50 per cent. of the total proceeds. Such classes of entertainment are conducted by religious, charitable, and scientific bodies and I know that we all agree with those exemptions.

The Bill proposes to provide further exemptions for entertainments such as sports in which human beings participate. I was interested to hear the Treasurer say that certain sporting bodies such as cricket, football, golf and tennis clubs would be exempt from entertainments taxation.

Mr. Nimmo: And life-saving clubs.

**Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY**: Yes. These clubs, of course, are not run for profit and their members are, in the main, amateurs. I know that some of these sporting bodies have difficulty in making ends meet.

Recently an interesting cricket match was held in Perth and the W.A. Cricket Association had great difficulty in making a financial success of the fixture. Therefore I was pleased indeed to hear the Treasurer say that these organisations would be relieved of entertainments tax. I think, too, that it will give great satisfaction to followers of tennis in this State to know that the Davis Cup match that is to be played in Perth within the next few days will be exempt from this tax.

The Premier: We will have to hurry the Bill through another place.

**Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY**: I will do the best I can with whatever influence I have there. The Bill, however, needs some clarification in one part. This reads—

that no person receives remuneration or profit as promoter or organiser of or participant in, the entertainment.

It is known that some sporting bodies do have certain paid officials and also other people that receive part remuneration. When the Treasurer replies to the debate, I suggest that he might clarify the meaning of that provision.

The Bill also proposes to increase the percentage of the total proceeds that may be used for expenses in conducting an entertainment, from 50 to 60 per cent. which is the limit permitted if exemption is to be granted. Such entertainments include those that are conducted for a charitable or public purpose. I have already mentioned some of those organisations that would be exempt, and under the Bill, entertainments that are run for the purpose of raising funds to erect public halls, infant health centres or any function held by a parents and citizens' association would be exempt, provided the expense of conducting the entertainment does not exceed 60 per cent.

The Premier: Of the total proceeds.

**Hon. Sir ROSS McLARTY**: Yes. I think this is a generous concession and I hope it will not be abused. The Premier is justified in saying that certain precautions should be taken. Although we realise that the majority of those people who interest themselves in charitable and public bodies are actuated by the highest possible motives, there are certain people—and it seems to be unavoidable—who enter such organisations with the idea of making some profit for themselves. Such people should be guarded against. I think the provision allowing for exemption when the expenses are less than 60 per cent. of the total proceeds, is a generous one. Provision is also made in the Bill to give the Commissioner of Taxation some discretion in regard to taxation exemption where entertainments are run for the purpose I outlined. This is a very fair provision; as the Premier pointed out certain happenings might occur to militate against the successful running of such an entertainment. He enumerated such things as bad weather, breakdown in transport and others. So in giving the Commissioner this discretion the Treasurer is acting very fairly.

The only other provision I wish to refer to is the one giving the Commissioner power to impose a fine where returns are not sent into the Taxation Department. We cannot quibble at that. I know that action can be taken through the courts under the present Act, but I must point out that in ordinary matters of taxation where assessments are not paid in time a fine may be imposed by the Commissioner. I understand that principle will become law if the Bill is passed. I am of the opinion that the principles of the Bill are deserving of support. I support the second reading.

**MR. COURT** (Nedlands) [8.47]: I support the second reading of the Bill because I consider that it improves the machinery at present existing for the operation of the Assessment Act, but there is one point on which I would ask the Hon. Treasurer to comment. That relates to bodies coming within the definition of "public." A word is being brought into the legislation obviously to improve the effectiveness of the exemptions. In his second reading speech the Treasurer explained that such bodies as progress associations, parents and citizens' associations and the like would receive the benefit of this amendment.

I find it hard to bring one particular case within the meaning of the principal Act, if this amendment goes through, and that is the Guild of Undergraduates of the University. This has several attached societies, councils and clubs. During the course of its activities it operates over a very wide field. It conducts functions to raise funds for various causes, most of which come within the ambit of the principal Act, or the amended Act if this measure goes through.

It also conducts other functions such as dances and other forms of entertainment to raise money to send their delegates away for debating, dramatic, interstate sporting, and intra-state sporting purposes. Unless the word "public" has a much wider meaning, I can not see a worthy body like the Guild of Undergraduates coming within the amendment. I would ask the Premier to comment on that in reply. He may intend that the word "public" is designed to cover bodies like the Guild of Undergraduates.

The amendment to Section 9 of the principal Act is a desirable one. Many worthy causes have found it difficult or impossible to get around the obstacles, no matter how sympathetic the Commissioner was, in the absence of the words "unforeseen circumstances." I consider that an increase from 50 to 60 per cent. is adequate to overcome the degree of embarrassment that used to result under the principal Act.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam—in reply) [8.50]: I thank the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Nedlands for their acceptance of this measure. Replying to the member for Nedlands I would point out that Section 8 of the principal Act, as he doubtless knows, does not differentiate between organisations as such, but specifies the purpose for which the entertainment is held. The Guild of Undergraduates might run an entertainment which would be exempt. That would depend on the cause for which it was run. However, I would say that most of the entertainment the Guild conducts would be for philanthropic or charitable purposes, or, if we were to include the amendment, for "public" purposes. I cannot at the moment think of any cause for

which the Guild of Undergraduates runs an entertainment which would not come within Section 8 of the Act, or within that section if this amendment becomes law.

**Mr. Court:** What is the position when it is raising money to help sporting and dramatic bodies? Most of their other functions would automatically be covered by the Act.

**The PREMIER:** It seems to me to be an alternative cover, if we were to consider this Bill with the one dealt with a few moments ago. Most of its entertainment would come under the schedule of live shows, with the possible exception of dances.

**Mr. Court:** They are mainly worried about dances.

**The PREMIER:** If that is its main worry, I can point out that in respect of the type of entertainment it would be taxed accordingly. If the dance run by the guild could reasonably come under the heading of philanthropic, charitable, public or religious purposes, then the entertainment would be exempt. The guild would have to rely on the judgment and the decision of the commissioner.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

**Mr. J. Hegney** in the chair; the Premier in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 to 4—agreed to.

Clause 5—Section 8 amended:

**Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT:** I would point out that the provisions of this clause are being added to Section 8 which provides that entertainments tax shall not be chargeable for entertainment where the commissioner is satisfied that it is run for specified purposes. The Act sets out the conditions under which the commissioner shall be satisfied. The Bill before us seeks to insert a further one. I have no objection to paragraph (e) (i); I oppose subparagraph (ii). As we have discussed that matter on the previous Bill I do not propose to deal with it further. The Committee has clearly shown its views. In subparagraph (iii) there is an added stipulation. In subparagraph (iv) the words "or organiser of, or participant in" deserve special attention. I understand the Premier to say that the Davis Cup matches would be exempt, but I cannot agree because there is a paid organiser. The Premier, in answer to the Leader of the Opposition, said that interstate cricket would not be taxable. There is certainly an organiser and a paid one, and, of course, there are the paid umpires. I am being technical, but it is better to raise these things now than for the commissioner to interpret the views of the Premier in another manner. I understood the Premier to say that in

a football match where the players were not receiving remuneration, the proceeds would be exempt from taxation. There again are the paid organisers and referees. It cannot be said that they are not participating in the game.

The PREMIER: When I gave an assurance earlier today to the Leader of the Opposition regarding cricket, football and tennis matches, I added further that I would check this part of the Bill to ascertain whether a further amendment is necessary to ensure that what the Bill seeks to achieve will be achieved beyond question. It was because I had some doubt in my mind whether the provisions would exempt those classes of sport, that I gave such assurance to the Leader of the Opposition. There is probably a necessity to alter that part of the Bill relating to the organiser of, or participants in the entertainment not receiving any remuneration or profit to which the member for Mt. Lawley referred. There could be room for argument about an organiser for the Test cricket matches. I believe that the W.A.C.A has a full-time secretary, but I doubt whether he could be said to be a paid organiser of Test cricket. However, I am anxious to ensure that football, cricket and tennis are exempt and shall have the matter checked by the Crown Law officers. If alterations are considered necessary, as I think is likely, the Bill will be recommitted here or amendments will be moved in another place.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Will the Premier have the word "remuneration" considered at the same time, because it is customary for players to receive fares, expenses and allowances?

The PREMIER: I shall do that.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 6 and 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Sections 12A, 12B and 12C added:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If the proprietor of an entertainment does not comply with the Act or regulation, he may be prosecuted. The proposed new subsection 12B (3) states—

In any action, prosecution or other proceeding in any court by the Commissioner, he may appear either personally or by a legal practitioner or by an officer in the public service of the State or Commonwealth.

This is a question of consistency. It is not reasonable that the commissioner should be entitled to legal representation while the citizen defending himself is denied that right. The Premier may have good reason for including the reference to a legal practitioner. I think the commissioner should be so represented, but the Premier is not following the precedent

laid down in the recently considered workers compensation and arbitration Bills.

The PREMIER: I appreciate the playful spirit in which the hon. member has raised this query.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Not altogether playful.

The PREMIER: The reason for providing for such representation is that there may be important legal issues to be argued and the commissioner should have the right to be represented by a lawyer, especially as the defending company might be powerful financially and backed by powerful American film interests. Thus the commissioner should be enabled to contest any legal technicalities advanced by opposing counsel.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I agree with the Premier, but I have a further objection to voice. The proposed new Section 12C taken from the Commonwealth Income Tax Assessment Act represents the most severe form of inquisition that could be devised. In many instances it operates with extreme harshness. The proposed new section reads—

(1) The Commissioner may, by notice in writing, require any person, whether a proprietor of an entertainment or not—

- (a) to furnish him with such information as he requires; or
- (b) to attend and give evidence before him or before any officer authorised by him in that behalf

for the purpose of inquiring into any matter arising in connection with any of the provisions of this Act, and may require him to produce all books, documents and other papers whatsoever in his custody or under his control relating thereto.

(2) The Commissioner may require the information or evidence to be given on oath and either orally or in writing, and for that purpose he or the officer so authorised by him may administer an oath.

Failure to comply entails a penalty of £100. One could scarcely conceive of a harsher provision. A man may not have committed an offence, but he is to be put through the third degree and compelled to disclose his defence to any charge that may be laid. The existing Act contains severe provisions, Section 12 stipulating that any person concerned in any fraudulent act shall be liable to imprisonment for one year. I do not know how the member for Fremantle views the proposal. The Premier may be able to convince me that, in the interests of society, the provision is necessary, but I doubt it. A man should not be compelled to go before his accuser and be examined by him.

Mr. Heal: If he was innocent, the finding would be in his favour.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: But for most criminal offences, the law provides for trial by jury, and the accused is not called upon for his defence until the evidence for the prosecution has been given.

The PREMIER: I think there is some merit in the remarks of the hon. member. It is no exaggeration to say that there are a few people in the entertainment business who are amongst the smartest Alecks in the world. They are not only very clever; they are also very unscrupulous. Two or three of them are in Western Australia and are well known to the commissioner. Under the Commonwealth law, he has been able effectively to control them, but now that he is looking after the tax for the State, he finds the State Act deficient in important particulars, and naturally he wants the more stringent conditions of the Commonwealth law to deal with such people. The purpose is to overcome the necessity for instituting court actions—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Frequently the Commonwealth has instituted court actions afterwards.

The PREMIER: —court actions which would possibly have been obviated because the commissioner was able to avail himself of the Commonwealth provision. He was able to prove to the person before him—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That crime does not pay.

The PREMIER: Exactly.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I agree with that.

The PREMIER: I was about to say that the commissioner was able to prove to the person before him that he had been flagrantly breaking the law. When that stage of the interview was reached, the entertainment proprietor came clean and made full payment of the tax due and owing, and the commissioner did not institute court proceedings. I should like the member for Mt. Lawley, as well as other members, to listen carefully to what I am about to suggest.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I was about to suggest that you report progress.

The PREMIER: I shall explain what I have in mind; it will perhaps be acceptable to the Committee. I would agree to move a number of amendments to proposed new Section 12C, which I think would meet the wishes of the member for Mt. Lawley.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I am quite happy about it, if the Premier can remove any objections to the clause in this way.

The PREMIER: I think what I have in mind will eliminate anything that could be used harshly against the proprietor of an entertainment. I move an amendment—

That after the word "requires" in paragraph (a) of Subsection (1) of proposed new Section 12C all words down to and including paragraph (b) be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 12C the words "or evidence" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in line 2 of Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 12C the words "on oath and" be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 12C all words after the word "writing" in line 3 be struck out.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in paragraph (b) of Subsection (4) of proposed new Section 12C all words after the word "neglect" down to and including the word "or" in line 4 be struck out.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That would give the commissioner power to require information either orally or in writing. I think provision should be made for it to be furnished in the manner required.

Amendment put and passed.

The PREMIER: I move an amendment—

That in the penalty provision the words "one hundred" be struck out and the word "fifty" inserted in lieu.

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

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

## BILL—ABORIGINES WELFARE.

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [10.26]: Unfortunately, I was not present in the House when the Minister introduced the Bill, but since then I have read it over with a great deal of care and attention, and during the debate on this measure in the last two sittings I have listened with close attention to all that members have had to say. For some years past I have read everything that I could lay my hands on in relation to this vexed question.

This evening, since coming into this Chamber, I have been given a copy of a publication called, "People," dated the 7th October, and I will read a paragraph from an article on aborigines. It is as follows:—

The most vociferous opposition to his work has come from politicians and pastoralists, the State's biggest employers of native labour. Not content with attacking Middleton for his public activities, those who feel themselves most wronged by his reforms have subjected him to vicious personal assaults. Undaunted, he has proceeded calmly with his duties, and has issued instructions that all instances of discrimination against aborigines, such as the insulting rebuff experienced by the Korean veteran, are to be reported to him immediately.

I have not had time to read the whole of this article, but I believe it is along much the same lines from start to finish. However, I happen to know well a gentleman who edits a paper at Katanning. Later on, this article states—

At Katanning recently, a country editor, introducing Middleton to a friend in his club, said, "This is Stan Middleton, Commissioner of Native Affairs, but do not hold that against him."

That is an expression very frequently used by that gentleman when introducing one friend to another—

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Read what they said about him at Port Hedland.

Mr. ACKLAND: I will leave that to somebody else as I have not had time fully to peruse this article, but that is the sort of publication to which we have been subjected for a long time. Here in a paper printed in Narrogin and called "The Reliance Weekly," of Thursday, the 30th July, we have an account of a speech made by Mr. Middleton to Rotary. He concluded his speech in this way—

The future of these people lies in our hands. They must be given a point of commencement and that point is the immediate removal of this worthless legislation that bars their pathway to opportunity and eventual assimilation. Without this basic requirement neither they nor we who are their official sponsors can readily progress. The remedy and the means of effecting it lie in the hands of the electors of the State.

I have always looked upon Mr. Middleton as a man who has endeavoured to do his job to the best of his ability, and I have given him credit for having carried out his duties in an excellent manner. How-

ever, after reading the article that appeared in "People" and particularly the concluding remarks of the speech I have just quoted to the House, I wonder where the civil servants in this State are heading. There is nobody in Mr. Middleton's department, or in those organisations that have been so loud in their condemnation of present conditions, or even the Minister himself, who has a greater sense of responsibility to these people than I have.

For my part, I contend that this is a wicked piece of legislation and I am going to oppose it as vigorously as possible. If I hear two members calling "No" when the question is put on the second reading, I shall call for a division. If this legislation is placed on the statute book, those people who have been so loud in their condemnation of present conditions will find, within the next 12 months or two years and certainly before the next election, that they have done a disservice to the State.

Mr. Andrew: I hope you will tell us why.

Mr. ACKLAND: I will tell the hon. member why if he will give me an opportunity. There are organisations in the city and also in the country which are actuated by the highest possible motives with regard to what they wish to do for the welfare of natives, but for the most part they are people who know nothing about natives; they are people who are not living in the country towns where some natives have obtained their citizenship rights and they are not in a position to appreciate how those natives act in country centres.

In my electorate there is a town called Miling. Until a few years ago many coloured people were employed on the farms in that district. The farmers were very glad to have them. They received exactly the same wage as any other employee. They were not imposed upon. The ruling rate of wages was paid to them. Two natives, who were fine chaps, obtained their citizenship rights. Today it will be found that there is only one coloured person working in the whole of the Miling district.

Both I and my colleagues in the Legislative Council were constantly approached by the people of Miling to obtain police protection because every time there was a dance, picture show or similar entertainment held in the district, they had trouble with the natives. The two I have mentioned, who originally were fine men, did not have the moral courage to stand up to the constant pressure that they were subjected to in the way of liquor being thrust upon them and as a result chaos ruled in that town whenever an entertainment was held.

The Minister for Police will be called upon to provide police protection not only for Miling, but also for such places as

Mogumber where there is a church mission; Watheroo, Pithara and other places where natives congregate and where there is any chance of them obtaining liquor.

The Minister for Native Welfare: And the corner of James and Lake-sts.

The Minister for Lands: Are they good workers?

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, a great many of them are until they leave their employment during the most important period of farming operations. The people who are fostering this Bill know very little about the subject. Most of them are idealists who have read about the Four Freedoms and the Charter of Human Rights. I too, desire to give these coloured people their human rights and all the freedom that is possible as quickly as it can be granted to them.

The Minister for Lands: It does not sound like it.

Mr. ACKLAND: I have been a practical man all my life, and it is my desire to approach this question from a practical point of view and no other. To those people who are so anxious for natives to be assimilated into our community, I would make the same suggestion that was made by a friend of mine to a lady who takes a prominent part in a Perth organisation that is interested in native welfare. She made the statement that the natives should be treated better than they have been in the past. She contended that they should be taken into our homes. This friend of mine, knowing that she had a large home and that her husband was the only other occupant of the house, made the suggestion that she should practice what she preached and that she should approach Mr. Middleton with the suggestion that part of her home should be made available to one or two of these unfortunate people; that she should allow them to mix freely with her friends and the young people that visited her home. Of course, she was completely horrified at such a suggestion.

The Bill has, I believe, three main objectives and only three. One is to alter the name of "native" to "aborigine." I can see no virtue in that. If I were a coloured man, I think I would prefer to be called a native any time than to be called an aborigine. However, it is a matter of choice. If it is the wish of the House that the word "aborigine" should be substituted for the word "native" I see no reason why it should not be done, particularly if some good arises from such a step. I would be prepared to give every native in this State a vote if it could be proved that it would do some good. However, I contend that, in many instances, under present conditions, the votes would be sold to the highest bidder.

We have legislation that was introduced in 1944, and I have been interested enough to look up what the Minister himself had to say on that occasion. In Vol. 1 of "Hansard" for the year 1944, on p. 860, the Minister had this to say:—

I am absolutely against any proposal which would indiscriminately confer the right of citizenship on every coloured person throughout the State, but I know of many men of half-blood, who have reared families and who speak good English and know how to manage their own affairs.

That legislation came into effect and we find that since 1944, 875 natives have applied for citizenships rights. Of those, 634 applications have been granted; 241 were rejected. Since that period 12 out of the 634 have had their citizenship rights cancelled, so that those 634 must at least be the cream of the more than ten times the number which would automatically receive citizenship rights should this legislation come into effect. I can see that giving those people a vote would play right into the hands of a man called McLeod living in the North. I should say that that gentleman would very quickly be a most important and influential man in the politics of this State.

Mr. Rhatigan: If this legislation passed, how many of them would be entitled to a vote?

Mr. ACKLAND: I know that many more would come into the South-West Land Division.

Mr. Lawrence: What do you know about McLeod?

Mr. ACKLAND: I think the hon. member would be more closely allied to that gentleman than I am.

Mr. Lawrence: You purport to give us the information, but I do not think you know yourself.

Mr. ACKLAND: If there was any possibility of doing these people good by giving them a vote, I would be agreeable to do so; but whether they have the right to cast their vote or not, it would not by any means be a big factor in this legislation. The Minister said when the measure was introduced that it would be a new deal for the native population of this State. I say that the new deal for the natives of this State started in the year 1947, and greater progress has been made in the uplift of the native and for his general good in the last six years than in the previous 60 years of this State's history.

Members on the other side of the House asked what the previous Government did for these people. With the exception of six years, for 23 years or so we had Labour administrations in this State. When I made my maiden speech in this House on

the 12th August, 1947, I had this to say with reference to a native settlement in my own electorate:—

The Mogumber native settlement is a festering sore and a reflection on every one of us. The settlement contains school children, medical cases, v.d. cases, warrant cases, indigent natives and blind and deaf natives. They are all herded together. I went to the school there and I believe that the average intelligence of those children is nearly as good as white children. Their art work is outstanding. There were boys and girls of various ages together, and the school teacher in talking about them and expressing her worry at the conditions said—"In this class there are three pregnant girls and I expect there are some with venereal disease." There are compounds for both young men and boys, and for girls. But it can be seen that the heavy link mesh netting has been torn down so that there is no hope of keeping the sexes separated. The natives who go there to recuperate or who go there because of trouble with the police are able to roam from one end of the place to the other. A valiant attempt is made to keep some sort of order but it is quite impossible for that to be done.

So much for what I have to say on that point. Members, of course, are quite at liberty to discredit it if they wish, but partly because of that and partly because of other complaints that were made, the Government of the day decided to appoint a Royal Commission. Mr. Bateman was appointed to that Royal Commission and I would like to read what he had to say. It is as follows:—

Even a cursory inspection of Moore River will convince anyone that the outlook from an institutional viewpoint is absolutely hopeless. The various attempts during the last 150 years to educate and train the native race has demonstrated beyond doubt the difficult nature of the task. The results so far obtained have been anything but encouraging and even where the best of conditions and circumstances exist all kinds of complexities arise. In the conditions which exist at Moore River there can be no possible chance of success and its continuance without a drastic change of policy represents a waste of money and effort.

There are three main types of natives admitted to the settlement. Firstly, children of both sexes for education and training, secondly, delinquent natives for what is described as disciplinary correction; and, thirdly natives suffering from venereal disease for medical treatment. Furthermore,

a number of indigent natives reside on the property in typical native camps a few hundred yards from the main settlement. All of the inmates mix quite freely and it is not surprising therefore that over the years many of the school girls have become pregnant. In view of the ample opportunity for sexual intercourse which exists during the hours of daylight, opportunity of which advantage is taken, one wonders at the incongruity of locking the girls in dormitories at night. It may be likened to bolting the stable door after the horse has gone.

It is not necessary for me to read any more.

The Minister for Lands: I should think not.

Mr. ACKLAND: But members on that side of the House wanted to know what the previous Government had done. To those young members who have only just recently come into the House, I would suggest that they approach the Minister for Native Welfare and ask for transport to be made available to enable them to visit Mogumber today. If the Minister for Native Affairs will not do so, I will be quite prepared to take these young members there myself. If they only knew of the conditions that existed in 1947, they would have some idea of what had been done during the intervening years.

The Minister for Lands: But you will not give them freedom.

Mr. ACKLAND: In due course they will all get freedom.

The Minister for Lands: In what due course; when?

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You have not taken any interest in them.

Mr. ACKLAND: I would suggest to members that they ask the police to express themselves in relation to giving these half-castes freedom to enter hotels, and without any further educational preparation to give them these privileges, and see what they have to say. I have spoken to the police at Moora on this question; doubtless there are other members who have spoken to the police in various centres. The Police Department would have to considerably increase its force to deal with the problem. It is no good having a police station in only a few centres.

Mr. Lawrence: Do you not think that was done when the immigrants came into Australia?

Mr. ACKLAND: The country police say that this position would exist. I quote from the report of the Commissioner of Police, published at the end of the last financial year—

Drunkenness amongst natives is very prevalent, and the obtaining of liquor by them is made easier on

account of the large money earned by some of them, for there always appears to be someone around willing to get them wine, for which the natives usually pay well.

Native women are becoming a menace around the city. Not only has drinking amongst them increased, but many wander about the streets to a late hour, especially around the week-ends, and solicit for prostitution, or place themselves in such a position that they can be contacted by white men seeking them.

Mr. Heal: The white man is just as much to blame as the native girl.

Mr. ACKLAND: The white man is to be blamed far more than the native girl.

Mr. Lawrence: Why not take action against the white man?

Mr. ACKLAND: I say that these people are not yet ready—

The Minister for Lands: You realise white prostitutes also have votes.

Mr. ACKLAND: Of course they do. I suggest that city people should acquaint themselves more fully with the true position before rushing in to advocate this type of measure. The present legislation was introduced 48 years ago and the Minister said it is obsolete, but instead of introducing a new Bill he brought down an amendment to the existing Act. The Bill consists of 77 clauses, to replace the Act with 75 clauses. The Bill contains 42 amendments to the existing legislation and 35 repeals. The reason a new Bill was not brought down was because people supporting this legislation have no conception of some of the items which have been repealed in the present Act.

The Minister for Native Welfare: You do not give people credit for much intelligence. All they need do is to go and get a copy of the parent Act to see the items repealed.

Mr. ACKLAND: They are capable of doing that. In my electorate I have discussed this matter with people who have been associated with natives since childhood. I recall four ladies who have done yeoman work trying to help these people in the Moora district. One is a grandmother, so she has had plenty of experience, and only last Saturday week when I attended a function at Dandaragan, she told me that she had invited Mr. Middleton to go there and examine the conditions which exist and to stay for a week, but that Mr. Middleton declined the invitation. He would not be nearly so anxious to support this legislation if he knew what prevailed in that district.

I have another instance of a person, who far from taking advantage of their position, has paid the natives more than the basic wage, and has built homes for his native employees. Part of those homes

were burnt up to make firewood. The natives put a fire on the floor of the kitchen rather than use the stove, the kitchen being the only room in the house with a cement floor.

There is another case of a coloured girl, and a fine one she is. She is accepted into a home on nearly equal terms with the white inmates. She is one of the family. She is taken away on holidays. She enters into the sports in the local hall such as badminton and the like. She was assisting with other white girls at the fete I attended and she speaks at least as good English as anybody in this Chamber. I asked her what she thought of this legislation. She told me, "I would very much like to be able to go to Perth and not be subject to be asked for my permit to be in the city. I find it most degrading. I would dearly like citizenship rights, but I am afraid what would happen to so many of the coloured people I know if they were given citizenship rights, that I would rather be under a permit than they without restraint.

Mr. Lawrence: How old is this child?

Mr. ACKLAND: She is at least 25.

The Minister for Lands: Does not that prove to you she is able to respond to treatment? Why not extend the rights to the rest?

Mr. ACKLAND: Legislation already in existence has given 647 of these people citizenship rights.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Why should a woman like that have to apply for citizenship rights?

Mr. ACKLAND: There are two missions doing good work. I have referred to the Methodist mission at Mogumber. If new members of this Chamber cannot go and inspect this mission, I would arrange transport and take them myself.

Mr. Lawrence: Do not keep on calling us new members. We know how to look after ourselves.

Mr. ACKLAND: There is another institution run by the Catholic church in New Norcia. It is a treat to go there and see the treatment given to the native girls. Money alone would not compensate for the services given by those in charge of the mission. This work can only be carried out by those with a true Christian missionary spirit. I believe that the greatest advancement for these poor unfortunate people—I agree we are responsible for it—can best be brought about through the religious denominations.

I spoke to a man who has had lifelong experience as a missionary with natives and he considers that the best method to deal with the problem is to start with the babies. I suggested something on those lines in this House, which I know was not well received. I suggested that all natives who could not give their

children a decent up-bringing should surrender the children to a department like the Child Welfare Department. But I say there is no native today in the South West Land Division who cannot give his children a good upbringing, if he has the will, because he can earn the same wages as any white man for the same class of work.

The Minister for Native Welfare: A lot of that is seasonal.

Mr. ACKLAND: I refer to my own electorate. There is no need for them to engage in seasonal work; they can find work all the year round if they desire it. They can build their own homes if they have the will. For those natives who are not prepared to make some sacrifice but prefer to live hand to mouth, their children should come under a measure like the Child Welfare Act. Their children should be taken away from them at an early age, and brought up in religious institutions. They would lose their identity, just as a white child would lose his if adopted into another home.

The Minister for Native Welfare: And yet you will not grant citizenship.

Mr. ACKLAND: Those children will automatically get citizenship just as do the children who are brought up under proper conditions. If we pass legislation granting citizenship rights to people who are not fit for them, it would result in chaos. Because I take interest in these people, because I appreciate the responsibility that rests upon us, and because I realise what the McLarty-Watts Government did during its term of office, I am satisfied that that work only needs to be speeded up and then we shall have more girls' homes in Mt. Lawley, more boys' homes in East Perth, and there will be coming from the orphanages children who cannot slip back into the morass of their former homes, to do which would, after the education they have received, make their last state worse than the first. Believing all this as I do, I am prepared for Mr. Middleton, if he so desires, to make of this an electioneering stunt in my own electorate. I shall vote against the measure and most definitely call for a division when the vote is taken if there is one other voice raised with mine.

I believe that if the Minister had his own way, great abuse would be hurled at him, not only by the whites with whom these coloured people come into contact, but also by the coloured people themselves because their last state would be very much worse than the first. It should not be necessary for me to say anything further. I have taken a most definite stand on this matter. Doubtless I shall incur considerable unpopularity on account of my utterances tonight, but those utterances have been made with the absolute conviction that what the Minister proposes to do would cause incalculable harm to the people to whom he suggests he is trying to give a new deal.

MR. RHATIGAN (Kimberley) [10.3]: I support the second reading of the Bill because I realise from personal experience that the legislation at present in force has long outlived its usefulness. I have had extensive experience of the coloured population in the North, not only theoretical, but also practical, and I ask members on both sides of the House when dealing with these people, to do so, not on party lines, but with a view to framing a commonsense Act that will be of value to them.

I am pleased to find that the Bill proposes to repeal many sections of the existing Act. In my opinion the Act for the benefit of natives should be a welfare Act in its entirety and not an Act under which prosecutions are launched. If a native infringes the law, let him be prosecuted under the appropriate Act for his offence, but it is ludicrous to have welfare legislation and then prosecute the person whom that legislation is supposed to care for.

Let me mention the case of a girl in Broome whose mother is supposed to be three-fourths native and the father a white man. She married a white man and had a child. According to the Native Administration Act, that girl is three-eighths native and the child is classed as seven-sixteenths native. The child does not come within the provisions of the Native Administration Act, but the mother does. She was under the age of 21 and was not able to get citizenship rights. Her father was dead and therefore she could not go on his certificate. She was told that she could get exemption, but that did not permit her to come south of the 20th parallel. Consequently, she had to remain in Broome until she reached the age of 21, when she would be entitled to come south.

The other day I approached the Minister in relation to a matter affecting one of the master pearlers. I received a frantic wire from the secretary of the Pearlers' Association, Broome, stating that a boat employing natives was nearer to Port Hedland than Broome and that they desired to call at Port Hedland for rations. My inquiries elicited that no authority could be granted to them to pick up rations at Port Hedland as that centre is south of the 20th parallel.

There was another case of a girl who had been working as a housemaid at a Broome hotel for a couple of years. It was discovered that her employment on licensed premises was against the law and she had to leave. The most remunerative employment she could obtain in Broome was 15s. a week and her tucker, and she had had to leave employment where she had been receiving the award rate and all because she was not permitted to work on licensed premises.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: She could have got permission.

Mr. RHATIGAN: That is not so.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Why not?

Mr. RHATIGAN: The hon. member should read the Act. Under no consideration may a female native be employed on licensed premises. Following on the remarks of the member for Moore, I wish to inform the House that I have discussed this matter with police officers. I should like to quote the opinion of an inspector of police—I shall not mention his name—but he was the inspector at Broome for a few years and previously was a constable in country districts. He said, "When are our legislators going to wake up and give these people the right to have a drink? They are working with whites, Malays, Koe-pangers, Japs and other types who, after knocking off work, can have a drink at the hotel, but the unfortunate Australian half-caste has to walk past the hotel."

I have given this matter much thought and have read carefully the definition of "half-caste." If this Bill be passed, such men will have the right to drink, but only the better class. Anyhow, there is provision in our laws whereby a man may be put under the dog Act and in that way natives could be deterred, in the interests of their families, from indulging to excess. Objections raised on that score could easily be met.

If the measure be passed, those who remain under the Act will be mainly full-bloods, and they constitute the large majority in the North. Something has been said about the treatment meted out to aborigines employed on the stations, but I am satisfied that the treatment given by pastoralists to their full-blood employees is quite satisfactory. We often read in the Press of the ill-treatment of the native, and the raw deal he is getting from station-owners, but on the whole that is not right, although there might be isolated cases of ill-treatment. The pastoralists, generally, are amenable to suggestions for the improvement of living conditions for the native, when they are put to them by the native welfare officer as he travels around the district. I am glad to say that a lot of improvements have been made, to my personal knowledge, north of the 26th parallel.

I thoroughly endorse the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition regarding missions and the good work they are doing. I would like to see the remainder of the departmental institutions go over to the missions as soon as possible, because the missionaries regard this work as a life-time job, and no hours are too long or sacrifices too great for them. In the Derby leprosarium, there are 272 inmates consisting of the most primitive type of native. They have been gathered in from the desert and along the coast and, in some instances, are unable to speak a word of English. Among them are quadroons and octoroons.

It is impossible to describe the good work being done there; it has to be seen to be believed. The staff at the leprosarium consists of a superintendent and an assistant-superintendent and their wives; and the whole of the nursing is done by four sisters of the Order of St. John of God. It is impossible to describe the true Christian work being done by these nuns, who devote their lives to the task. Anyone who sees the improvement in the natives at the leprosarium will be convinced that something can be done, even for the most primitive native, if sufficient care is taken.

We must concentrate on the children. As I say, I thoroughly agree that every institution we have should go over to the missions. I have seven missions in my district, as well as the Holy Child Orphanage in Broome. I have also visited other missions in the North, and I cannot speak too highly of the excellent work they are doing, and will continue to do. The most important thing in the ultimate objective of citizenship for natives is the provision of housing. I rate that as being more important than citizenship rights.

Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. RHATIGAN: Whilst I agree that citizenship rights are important, I still rate the provision of a suitable type of house to which the natives can add as being more important. We have heard nothing but disparaging remarks about the natives, particularly from the member for Moore, but I do not agree with those statements, and I claim to have had, if not more, at least as much experience of natives as he has had—and I mean practical experience, not only academic. I have gone to the trouble to see some firms in Perth to get a plan of the building I had in mind. I was sorry to hear the Minister for Housing say that the Commonwealth Government refused assistance for buildings for our native population. However, the Minister has given me a sympathetic hearing, and I hope he will convince the Commonwealth Government that our native population is entitled to assistance for housing.

If there is any justice on this earth, the Commonwealth Government will come good and see the point. Thinking wholly and solely of the North, the type of house I have in mind is something which could be constructed at a cost of about £1,000, and for which natives would pay something like 30s. a week in rent. Nobody, not even a white on the basic wage in the North, is in a position to pay the £3 13s. 6d. a week rent for the dog-boxes that were built in Derby a few years ago.

Mr. O'Brien: Who built them?

Mr. RHATIGAN: The past Government. Some seven were built. The type of house I would like to see for the natives would be constructed of angle-iron, with an asbestos roof and sides, and consisting of

two rooms, verandah all round, concrete floor throughout, and equipped with stove, wash-troughs and sink. I am positive that such a building could be shipped North and erected there for less than £1,000. Despite the disparaging remarks about our coloured population, I say without fear of contradiction that the coloured people in Broome, Derby and Carnarvon are quite capable of adding to these buildings.

The pearling boats constructed in Broome today are being built with the assistance of native labour. These fellows learnt their trade at the Beagle Bay Mission from the German Brothers who came to Australia many years ago. Unfortunately, the Mission has not now many trained staff, as these Brothers are getting old and are incapable of working much longer. However, these native lads are capable of adding to these buildings as the family increases; and a coloured family does increase.

The Minister gave a promise the other night that the Electoral Act would be amended so that it would be compulsory for these people to vote if the Bill passed. I am not looking for votes under the Bill. It does not affect me that way one iota. In supporting it, my aim is to arrive at some legislation which will be of benefit to the coloured population. I suppose in the Department of Native Affairs there are stacks of files containing stuff that has been written regarding what should or should not be done for the natives, but in my opinion, the problem is not such a big one as it appears to be. We would go a long way if we rendered a little assistance along the lines I have indicated regarding housing, and the deletion of those sections of the Act under which natives are prosecuted.

Let the Act be entirely a welfare measure for the benefit of those who come under it. The member for Narrogin the other night was concerned because these people might lose the assistance of the officers of the Native Affairs Department if the Bill passes. Those officers are humane chaps and are out to assist the native population generally. Admittedly, the natives are not entitled to have it both ways, but, I would say that whilst I was an employee of the department, I assisted the natives with citizenship rights by giving them whatever advice I possibly could, and I think the present officers would carry on in that way. I do not think that they would otherwise have much work to do.

I would say that 80 per cent. of the work of an officer consists of trying to work out, from the great-great-grandfather down to the present generation, whether a person has 1/168th part of native blood in him, and most of the remainder consists of dealing with medical forms, or finding out whether a chap should be covered by permit or should have citizenship rights. If the Bill passes, 80 per cent. of the work of the welfare officers will be done away

with, and they will surely have time to render the advice and assistance that they have done in the past.

If a coloured person found that he would be better off under the Act, he could apply to the magistrate to be put back under it. The natives will not lose but will gain by this measure. I do not desire to say much more at this stage, but will deal further with some of the provisions of the Bill when they are considered in Committee. This question should be approached on commonsense lines without being made a party issue and in that way we would arrive at legislation that would be of real benefit to our coloured population. I support the second reading.

**MR. HUTCHINSON (Cottesloe) [10.21]:** I wish to make my contribution, however small, towards the solving of this important problem. I feel sure that the matters raised in this Bill and the interest it has created throughout the State will bring home to the people the fact that this is a problem and not merely a question. I was interested in the remarks of the member for Kimberley, who, I think, made a most worth-while contribution to the debate.

At the outset I desire to refer to the remarks of the former member for Kimberley, the late A. A. M. Coverley, who said it was not extra legislation that was required to assist the natives to arrive at a better standard of living, but better administration, and with that I largely agree. I should like to comment on the proposed change of the term from "native" to "aborigine" although it is a minor point. I find the term "aborigine" repugnant, and I think it would be so to most people and particularly the natives themselves.

In this regard I gleaned some information from "Hansard" where Hon. F. J. S. Wise, a former Labour Premier of this State, in speaking to the debate on the amending Bill of 1936 said—

The Bill proposes to alter the term "aborigine" to "native" because it is claimed by the department that very many of the coloured people of various grades of colour do not like being classed as aboriginals. It is stated by the department that the word "aboriginal" is repugnant to those who desire to rise in the social scale and become, say, mechanics and useful members of civilised society.

That is a view I can understand, and I find it difficult to comprehend why the term is now being changed.

I think the first legislation dealing with the native problem was passed in this State in about 1886 when certain sums of money were voted to protect and uphold the welfare of these people. Many amendments to that original Act have been passed in the intervening years, but the lot of the native has not improved to the

extent that one would have expected following upon all that worth-while legislation. It looks so good on paper and yet what it does in a practical way amounts to very little.

A new deal for natives is, I believe, impossible if it is tackled only through legislation. In December, 1905, in introducing the Aborigines Bill in the Parliament of this State, the Minister for Commerce and Labour, Hon. J. Hicks, referred to the fact that the provisions of the Bill were for promoting the welfare of the native, for providing him with all medical comforts, for creating a condition that would prevent his extinction and for providing for his education, etc. As far back as that people were purposing to do great things for the native race, but very little of a practical nature has been done.

Let us recall what the member for Kimberley said a moment ago. He said he would not deny that he supported the idea of citizenship rights for natives, but that over and above that consideration he counted as more important the fact that they should be housed comfortably and effectively. I will endeavour later to show that in their present circumstances some natives do not desire to be housed as we think of housing, because they prefer camp life and on that score I will probably deal with the questions of education and environment.

I repeat that legislation cannot possibly improve their lot, but better administration and a more wholesome and proper education might do so. I have had in mind the false hope of what the promise of citizenship rights could give to the native people. I do not refer to all of them, of necessity, but there are many that see in this Bill a gleam of hope, something, as the Minister said, which could give them an entirely new deal. One can imagine the hope that has been built up in their breasts. One does not have to see very clearly into the future to realise how those hopes could be blasted.

Is it thought that the white people of this State will receive natives into their homes or into the social circles of the south? Will they be welcomed everywhere they want to go? Citizenship rights will give them the right to do what they wish, but members can imagine the situation in which they will find themselves. In view of that, are we doing the right thing? I feel that we are not being fair to the natives at present in attempting to foist citizenship rights on them.

Does this House believe that we, as a people, are prepared for this step? I suggest strongly that if the benefits of citizenship rights are to work effectively the main responsibility lies not with the native, but with ourselves, and that is a sobering thought—whether we are sufficiently educated to accept our natives and assimilate them into our type of

society. I think we should forget for the moment whether the natives are prepared for citizenship rights or not and let us ask ourselves whether we are ready for this Bill. Unless we are prepared to eat and live with them, in the full meaning of those terms, then to grant full citizenship rights to natives is a move that is premature and doomed to failure, and the spiritual purport and higher purpose behind the Bill is defeated.

How many of us are prepared to accept natives into our economic, social, recreational and even into our religious lives? There are very few; there are some high-minded and idealistic people who are prepared to do that. But what percentage of our citizens would do it? It will not be doomed just to a cold failure like that; it will be a heart-breaking failure to these people to whom we have held out, in, to my mind, a premature fashion, such high hopes of advancing themselves. It will throw back disastrously the good and desirable cause of eventual assimilation of these people into our society. One has only to imagine the depths of despair into which these people will undoubtedly be plunged when they find that citizenship rights open up few doors to them and break down no social barriers.

I further believe that this is a move which unwittingly, if one likes to put it that way, could become a wicked weapon, because in its full import it could bring confusion and despair to the coloured people of this State, after initial high hopes. I feel that this citizenship move will fail on the field of human relations. I believe that we should think on that point. Legislation on this aspect can not only be premature but also dangerous to the welfare of these people in the future.

The equality of natives, to be successful, should be not only legally based but also inspired by the nation as a whole in the desire for full assimilation. The State's policy must be to encourage these people to become part of the life of the community, sharing its responsibilities as well as its privileges. However, we must remember that to do this the natives must live very nearly along the same lines and in the same manner as we do in our brand of society, and they must be fully prepared and able in every way to cope with the many situations that crop up in our way of life.

I mentioned previously that the white people must be prepared to play their role, and they do not yet know what that role is. I shall now proceed to become a little more practical and let us ask ourselves, in what practical ways will this Bill improve the lot of the native people? That is another sobering thought that has been expressed before. I am not going to submit any reason but I will leave it to members to decide in what practical ways the Bill will help our natives.

To my mind, the solution to the problem lies along the lines of education and environment, and those two aspects must go hand in hand. In the past we have failed dismally to educate the native because we have neglected one of the most important phases of educating a backward race. We have paid little or no regard, in a general sense, to making education and environment work hand in hand. It is only by implementation of a sound educational and environmental policy that this problem will eventually be solved.

With regard to education and environment, Mr. F. E. A. Bateman made some interesting comments in his report on the survey of native affairs. This report was prepared in 1948 and, although it may take some little time to read these comments, I think they will be of value in this debate. He refers to several classes of native children but I mention this particular quotation. He states—

The second class of native children are in a much more favourable position regarding education than their less fortunate brothers and sisters on the stations. In practically all the towns educational facilities exist in the way of State schools and in some cases convents and mission schools also. Native children are admitted to all State schools and may only be excluded on the grounds that they are suffering from any contagious, offensive or infectious disease or are habitually of unclean habits.

That is logical enough and, as a matter of fact, white children can be sent home at odd times for similar reasons. I think it was a forward step to have native children placed in our State schools side by side with their white brothers and sisters. But, as I mentioned earlier, we fell down and failed because of our lack of appreciation of the value of environment. The report goes on—

The policy of non-segregation has, at various times and in various towns, raised storms of protest from the white parents. When one visits the native camps and perceives the squalid, filthy conditions under which the average native child is reared, it is not surprising that the white parents feel so strongly about the matter. When white children become infected with serious eye and other diseases commonly associated with native children, there is every justification for white parents bitterly resenting a policy which exposes their children to infection. There are some persons sympathetically disposed towards the natives who are intolerant of white protests and who argue quite reasonably that a black skin in itself is insufficient reason for excluding the native children from the State schools.

He mentioned both sides. The report goes on—

A great many of such persons are not parents themselves or if they are they do not fully appreciate the position in some of the country towns. It is my opinion that the root of the objection is the lamentable home condition and environment of the native children and not so much the colour of their skin.

It is unarguable that the environment of the native camp can only result in a low code of morals, bad habits and serious exposure to infection. In these circumstances it is not a strange phenomenon, but only a natural consequence, that parents of white children object to their children being compelled to associate with children reared in such an environment.

I make that point again because it is important. Education and environment go hand in hand when dealing with this problem. Another extract from Mr. Bateman's report reads as follows:—

Scholastically they hold their own with the white pupils until they reach the 4th or 5th standards. In fact, up to the 3rd standard they often excel but from then on they gradually fall away and a comparatively few only are able to attain the standards of the 5th and 6th classes. There are some who maintain that the half-caste child has equal ability to the white, but this is not borne out by facts.

There are reasons for that which I do not intend to mention but which will spring readily to the minds of those who care to make a study of the problem. Continuing—

Practically every teacher I have discussed this matter with held the same view—until the 3rd or 4th standard they hold their place but from then on a gradual slipping back occurs. This circumstances may possibly explained by the fact that their attendance at school is rarely regular and in many cases their tuition commences comparatively late in life. It is by no means uncommon to see native children of 11 or 12 years of age in the 3rd or 4th standards, side by side with white pupils 8 or 9 years old. This, of course, is not in the best interests of either class of children.

Here is an important paragraph—

Furthermore, no one will deny that home environment plays a vital and major part in the training of the child. The home environment in the case of our own children in the majority of cases is favourable to them but the opposite obtains in the case of the native children. Their home environment is all against their climb to

future citizenship and is a heavy burden rather than an assistance to them.

Mr. Bateman goes on to say—

Education then must be made to fit these people into our own economic and social structure. They must be changed from a nomadic, idle and discontented race to a settled, industrious, contented section of the community.

With respect to education and environment, there is another extract from Mr. Bateman's recommendations which I would like to quote at this stage, which, although it may be a little premature, does point to the Bill. It reads—

Probably the legislation subjected to the greatest criticism is that dealing with citizenship rights which came into operation in December, 1944. There are many who hold that the Act was premature but I do not subscribe to this opinion. I believe, however, that the Act should be administered strictly and that only natives of a high standard should be granted these rights.

I know that that statement was made several years ago, and much has happened since. Nevertheless, I think that few can deny that there is a great deal of truth in the major portion of those remarks. Do not members agree that the best plan for the assimilation of native people depends upon the attention we are prepared to give native children over a period of years and to educate them and make sweeping changes in their environment? These will be so sweeping that the ire of certain sentimentalists will be aroused, but they will be so important to their welfare that I consider steps must be taken along those lines.

The action necessary is that native children should be separated from their squalid home life which gives them no chance of attaining any degree of citizenship until they reach that point where they can readily be accepted into our social way of life. It is only through a natural interweaving of education and environment that this important problem can be solved.

As I have already said, we will have to contend with sentiment because there are many parents and also many well-meaning people who will be horrified at the idea of children being separated from their parents. At the same time, I think there will be many parents of these children who will be only too pleased to see their offspring being given an opportunity of developing along the right educational lines.

Mr. O'Brien: Would you like to be separated from your child?

Mr. Ackland: He would be separated from it if he did not bring it up properly. Provision is already made for such a circumstance in our law.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: I do not think there is any need for me to enlarge on the fact that sentiment will creep into this problem. I have admitted that it is not easy to do so, but it is important that action should be taken along those lines. Whether the hon. member agrees with me or not does not matter. I think that there are many parents of these children who will agree that squalid surroundings and poor environment give their children no chance of developing along the right lines.

It is interesting to note that on this point South Australia, as far back as the 1860's, appointed a Royal Commission to inquire into the native question, and one of the recommendations it made was that all native children should be removed from their parents with the idea of educating them along the right lines and taking them from their rough environment to surroundings where they could be assimilated into society. No mention was made of a follow-up in adult life and it was just a bare recommendation. It goes without saying that it was not adopted.

One can be excused for thinking, however that had that suggestion been put into effect, the native problems in South Australia today would not have assumed the proportions it has done. In the matter of exempting certain coloured people from the provisions of the Act, it is pertinent to point out that one can be too hasty with such an action. Exemptions and the desirability to grant them often follows along sentimental rather than intellectual lines.

Although so much is hoped for in granting citizenship rights, serious repercussions could follow as a result of the premature move that could be taken; the high hopes that are held by the coloured people could be so easily blasted and will be blasted if this Bill becomes law. The Government should attempt, in a practical and positive way, through administration and spending of a great deal more money to raise their general standards of living and bring them up to the point where their hopes will not be blasted upon their being granted citizenship rights.

I think the Bill tackles the problem in the wrong way; it attacks the problem in the same way as it has been tackled since before the beginning of the century. There is no practical advantage to my mind for those people who are to be excluded from the provisions of the Act. It will only discommode them. It will make their lot a most unhappy and unenviable one. The Bill will not increase their comfort or their living standards and it will not improve their education. I think the measure actually puts the cart before the horse.

One may be excused for saying that this legislative way of tackling the problem is just the easy way out of such a difficulty.

The Minister for Native Welfare: Do you think that boys or girls who receive a primary education, say up to Junior standard, and then attain the age of 21 years, should be subject to the legal barrier? Do you think they should be given ordinary citizenship rights or should they have to apply for them or be regarded as natives under the law? Can you answer that one?

Mr. HUTCHINSON: Yes, I can. This is legislating in a general way. The majority of these people are not ready for the move and, in the course of my speech, I have tried to point that out. I have endeavoured to make my small contribution to this debate. In the cases mentioned by the Minister, where these people have been educated, I think they should be given citizenship rights.

The Minister for Native Welfare: But they have to apply for them now.

Mr. HUTCHINSON: That is so, and I think it is the logical way to deal with the matter until we reach the stage where we can bring them into our way of life. I see the Minister's point quite clearly, but I do not think this is the proper way to tackle the problem. We should not give citizenship rights to all of them. The legislative way is the easy way out of the difficulty, and any Government must be prepared to tackle this problem in a hard and fast, matter of fact way. I know that the Bill has been introduced with a view to trying to do the best in a legislative way for these natives. But in so far as citizenship rights are concerned, it will be a dismal failure because it will not help them at all. I want to see their lot improved and accordingly I feel that certain points can be made in Committee. For the present, therefore, all I can do is to support the second reading.

On motion by Hon. A. F. Watts, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Council

Tuesday, 1st December, 1953.

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### MOTOR ENGINES.

*As to "Sponge Chrome" Cylinder Wall.*

Hon. N. E. BAXTER asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Did he read an article on page 8 of the "Daily News" dated Saturday the 21st November, in which it was stated that "a British motor manufacturer has perfected the 'sponge chrome' cylinder wall for motor engines, which entails a porous chromium cylinder wall for motor engines, capable of retaining the lubricating oil and reducing wear almost to nil?"

(2) Whether the answer to the question is "Yes" or "No", would he be prepared to bring this matter under the notice of the Minister for Transport and confer with him as to the advisability of requesting the Government to obtain full details of the process, with a view to having the treatment applied to Government motor transport?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Yes.