

# Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 10th September, 1958.

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

## QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

### WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT.

#### *Dairy Farms at Narrikup.*

1. The Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Referring to paragraph (2) of the question asked on Wednesday, the 3rd September, re Narrikup dairy farms, will he inform me as asked, of the different amounts for rent in respect of the 11 properties mentioned for which the lessees are currently liable?

(2) What was the figure for the average price of butterfat last season?

(3) Is such figure likely to be maintained this season, and if not, what difference might be expected?

(4) Does the amount of working expenses—i.e., from £1,365 to £1,720 per annum—include living allowances; and if so, approximately how much is so included?

The MINISTER replied:

(1)—

Eleven Narrikup Farms.	Annual Rent for which Lessees Currently Liable.		
Farm No.	£	s.	d.
A984 .....	149	18	0
A1099 .....	58	0	0
A1102 .....	54	0	0
A1103—Unallotted under lease.			
A583 .....	66	0	0
A758 .....	85	0	0
A822 .....	58	0	0
A820 .....	61	0	0
A985 .....	60	0	0
A1101 .....	60	0	0
A1097 .....	58	0	0

(2) The price for butterfat for last season after the recent bounty payment, was 4s. 1.9d. per lb. There may be a final equalisation distribution payment to come.

(3) I am not in a position to answer this question.

(4) Yes—£550 per annum.

### FRUIT-FLY INFESTED BANANAS.

#### *Importation Restrictions.*

2. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is the banana a natural host for the Queensland fruit-fly?

(2) If so, what action is being taken with respect to the importation of bananas from eastern States, which could be carriers of this pest?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The banana is a host of the Queensland fruit-fly.

(2) All bananas entering this State by rail must be accompanied by a certificate from either the Department of Agriculture, Adelaide or Melbourne, stating that they were in a green condition at the time of despatch to this State. On arrival here, each consignment is thoroughly inspected by officers of the department.

#### *Dipping and Examination of Imports.*

3. Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Are all consignments of imported bananas from the Eastern States examined to ascertain that they have been dipped in "Salicylanilide" in conformity with regulations under the Plant Diseases Act?

(2) What percentage of each consignment is examined?

(3) Have any untreated cases been detected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) 100%.

(3) Yes—a small number. New regulations were published in the "Government Gazette" on the 25th August, 1958. These revised regulations provide for more effective protection against the introduction of squirter disease and include provision for a chemical test to detect the presence of salicylanilide. The period to which the regulations apply, which commences on the 1st May, has been extended to the 30th November of any year.

*No. 4: This question was postponed.*

### SWAN RIVER.

#### *Incidence of Algae and Removal.*

5. Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is the incidence of algae in the Swan River increasing or decreasing?

(2) Whose responsibility is it to keep the foreshores of the river clear from algae?

(3) Do the local authorities adjacent to the river assist in removing the algae?

(4) On what basis are they recompensed for their labour?

(5) What has been the cost to the Government for dealing with algae for the years ended the 30th June for 1956, 1957 and 1958?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Generally there has been an improvement in the incidence of algae, which is dependent on seasonal conditions.

(2) The Government and local authorities. An inspector appointed by the Swan River Reference Committee co-ordinates the algae clearance.

(3) Yes.

(4) Local authorities are recouped 50% of the cost.

	£	s.	d.
(5) Year ended the 30th June, 1956 .....	615	0	1
Year ended the 30th June, 1957 .....	931	4	8
Year ended the 30th June, 1958 .....	531	11	10

### MOTOR-VEHICLES.

#### *Registrations and Accidents.*

6. Mr. GAFFY asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) What was the number of motor-vehicles registered in the metropolitan area for the year ended the 31st December, 1957?

(2) What was the number of accidents in the metropolitan area for the same period?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 100,523 motor-vehicles, excluding trailers, caravans and tractors.

(2) 8,394, comprising casualty accidents and non-casualty accidents involving damage of £10 or more to property.

### HIGH SCHOOL SYLLABUS.

#### *Investigation Committee.*

7. Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) When was the committee to investigate the general syllabus of teaching in high schools appointed?

(2) Has the committee begun functioning as yet?

(3) If nothing has been done in that regard, will he ensure that the work of the committee is facilitated by providing members with copies of the Wyndham Report on Secondary Education submitted to the Minister for Education in New South Wales in October, 1957?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) October, 1957.

(2) Yes.

(3) The Wyndham Report has been made available to members of the committee.

*No. 8: This question was postponed.*

### UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

*Commonwealth Aid for Western Australia.*

9. Mr. COURT asked the Treasurer:

(1) How much is the Commonwealth Government contributing to university education in Western Australia arising from the recommendations of the Murray commission?

(2) How is the money to be paid? In particular, is it to be paid direct to the University by the Commonwealth, or is it to be paid to the State Treasury for payment to the University on certain conditions?

The TREASURER replied:

(1) Under the terms of the Commonwealth legislation, States Grants (Universities) Act, 1958, arising from the recommendations of the Murray commission, subject to certain contributions by the State, the following maximum amounts are available for university education—

Year	Commonwealth Contribution
	£
1958 Emergency Grant	90,000
Recurrent Grant	224,190
1959 Emergency Grant	135,000
Recurrent Grant	245,300
1960 Emergency Grant	180,000
Recurrent Grant	268,500
For specified building projects during the three years	630,000

The Commonwealth will also make available 16% of its contribution for the purpose of assisting in equipping these buildings.

In addition, subject to certain expenditure on buildings by affiliated residential colleges, a sum of £40,000 is available to these colleges for building purposes from the Commonwealth.

(2) The money is paid by quarterly advances to the State and is immediately paid by the State to the university as provided under the Commonwealth legislation. The amounts paid are subject to the State making certain contributions as specified under the Act. In addition, the legislation restricts the expenditure of these moneys to certain purposes.

### MARKET SITE.

*Provision at Albany.*

10. Mr. HALL asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

(1) As the population of Albany and its districts is growing, has any provision been made for a market site in Albany?

(2) If not, would he take the matter up with the local authorities?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

(1) The Government is not aware of any provision having been made.

(2) Apart from commodities controlled by specific boards, marketing of produce is handled by private organisations, and it can be presumed that one of these firms would consider setting up markets in Albany if it was likely that sufficient business was available.

### MARKET GARDENING.

*Availability of Land at Albany.*

11. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has any provision been made by the Agricultural Department for land adjacent to Albany to be reserved for market-gardening purposes?

(2) If not, would the department have the matter investigated, bearing in mind that the increase of population in Albany and its districts will be demanding a greater quantity of market-garden produce?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Department of Agriculture has no power to make such reservations.

(2) The Albany Council has proclaimed a rural area within its municipality. Further action is not warranted at this stage.

### LOWER KING BRIDGE.

*Reconstruction.*

12. Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will he give consideration to the rebuilding of the Lower King bridge, Albany, this financial year?

(2) If so, can he give the approximate cost?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) No provision has been made for rebuilding the Lower King bridge this financial year.

(2) Plans have not been prepared and no estimate is available.

*No. 13: This question was postponed.*

### BUNBURY HOSPITAL.

*Decision as to Site.*

14. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Town Planning:

Has a final decision been made following an investigation by the Town Planning Commissioner in relation to the area and location of the 17 acres of land set aside for a regional hospital in Bunbury?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

The matter is still under investigation by the various departments concerned.

### NEW INDUSTRIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

*Amounts and Increases Negotiated Before the 30th June, 1953.*

15. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

Further to my question No. 33 (the 4th September, 1958) dealing with new establishments in industry, will he now inform the House:—

(1) How much of the total amount of £98,791,819 was actually negotiated prior to the 30th June, 1953?

(2) What were the increases, excluding projects negotiated prior to the 30th June, 1953, for each of the following years ended—

- (a) the 30th June, 1954;
- (b) the 30th June, 1955;
- (c) the 30th June, 1956;
- (d) the 30th June, 1957?

The MINISTER replied:

The replies to these questions reached me only a few moments ago and I notice that the reply to No. (2) is not in accordance with the question asked. I will give the replies as given to me and later will check whether information can be supplied in accordance with the wording of Question No. (2). The replies are—

(1) Not known.

(2) Increases in estimated capital value of fixed assets of Western Australian factories, including projects negotiated prior to the 30th June, 1953—

Year ended—	Increase.
	£
the 30th June, 1953 ....	7,531,556
the 30th June, 1954 ....	7,939,505
the 30th June, 1955 ....	32,254,196
the 30th June, 1956 ....	4,204,508
the 30th June, 1957 ....	9,399,193

Clearly, I think the figures for 1955 would include a great amount of money which was expended on the Kwinana Oil Refinery.

### LAND AGENTS.

*Amendments to Act, and Registration.*

16. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Justice:

(1) Are any amendments to the Land Agents Act proposed this session?

(2) Has he or the Land Agents Supervisory Committee received complaints or had cause to take action during the last 12 months in respect of persons not registered as land agents but acting as such or purporting to act as such either as agents or sub-agents?

(3) Is there any provision for sub-agents to be recognised, or are they contravening the Act if they are not themselves registered as land agents?

(4) Is there any lawful procedure for a registered agent to be represented in places other than his main place of business? If so—

(a) what is the procedure and what are the duties a representative can perform; and,

(b) what are the respective responsibilities of the representative and the registered agent to the client?

(5) Do registered agents notify the committee of their duly appointed representatives?

(6) Has he or the committee had cause to question the conduct of representatives who are not registered agents or has the procedure worked to the satisfaction of the committee and himself?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The Land Agents Supervisory Committee has received a complaint questioning the right of a person to advertise that he is a sub-agent for a registered land agent. The Land Agents Supervisory Committee has notified the persons concerned that no advertisement should give the public the impression that a person is a licensed land agent when he in fact holds no licence.

(3) The Land Agents Act makes no reference to sub-agents. A person who acts as a land agent on his own behalf without a licence contravenes the Act, but the Act does not prohibit a person acting as a representative of a licensed land agent.

(4) The Act does not prohibit a licensed land agent being represented in places other than his main place of business, nor is there any procedure laid down for representation of a licensed agent in a place other than his main place of business.

(5) No.

(6) The committee up to date has had no cause to question the conduct of any representatives. The committee considers some form of registration and control of representatives is desirable.

### RAILWAYS.

*Concessions Paid to Accredited Travel Agencies.*

17. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What concession is paid by W.A.G.R. to accredited travel agencies for the service they provide in issuing excess fare tickets and blank sleeper-seat tickets to persons travelling by train?

(2) Are these agencies appointed as a means of boosting passenger travel?

(3) Is it not considered that a reduction in fares would be a better means of encouraging more passenger traffic?

(4) Are railway officers who issue railway tickets required to pass examinations or undergo a period of training for this work?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

(1) Five per cent. commission on passenger tickets excluding those for suburban travel, periodical tickets and tickets issued in exchange for Government ticket orders.

(2) Yes.

(3) No.

(4) Railway officers who issue tickets are required to pass the railway station accounts examination which includes the issue of tickets.

### LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

#### *Number Operating on the Ward System.*

18. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) How many—

(a) municipal councils;

(b) road boards,

operate on the "ward" system in the sense that a "ward" is an electoral division of a local authority district?

(2) How many municipal councils and road boards do not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES replied:

(1) (a) 15 municipal councils.

(b) 113 road boards.

(2) (a) 6 municipal councils.

(b) 13 road boards.

### LAND SETTLEMENT.

#### *Adjustment of Original Assessed Commitments.*

19. The Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

Referring to the letter (file 3541/56) sent to me by the Chairman, Land Settlement Board, on the 8th September, 1958, and particularly to paragraph 5 thereof, if the consideration mentioned results in an adjustment of the original assessed commitment, will the amount of the adjustment be written off, or carried forward to a succeeding year; and if the latter, when will the settler be expected to clear it?

The MINISTER replied:

Each account is examined retrospectively at the end of each season to ascertain if the assessment in that case has been excessive; and when this is so, arrears are carried forward to the establishment stage.

Any arrears then existing as a result of falls in commodity prices will be adjusted, and the revenue debts written off.

### EXCESS WATER CHARGES.

#### *Position in Collie and Metropolitan Area.*

20. Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) What is the comparison of gallonage of water allowed each householder before excess is charged, between Collie and the metropolitan area?

(2) Are there any towns in Western Australia where a higher allowance is given than to other towns before excess is chargeable?

(3) What is the method used to assess the rateable value of land and what department controls the assessing?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Water Supplies) replied:

(1) Collie, 5,000 gallons; and metropolitan area, 11,400 gallons, in respect of each £1 of water rate levied.

(2) Yes.

(3) Net annual value, being the yearly rent at which the property might reasonably be expected to be let after deducting normal outgoings to cover maintenance, rates, taxes, and insurance. Assessments are made by the Public Works Department for country water supplies, and by the Metropolitan Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Department for the metropolitan area.

### COLLIE-MUNGALLUP DAM.

#### *Cost of Building, and Possibility of Extension.*

21. Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Water Supplies:

(1) What was the cost of building the Collie-Mungallup dam?

(2) In view of the Mungallup dam having clay walls, could the dam be extended?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Water Supplies) replied:

(1) £55,724 4s. 7d.

(2) Yes. However, it is very doubtful if further expenditure could be justified owing to the limited catchment area and the fact that any overflow is still within the catchment area of Wellington Dam.

### ELECTRIC POWER.

#### *Charges in Metropolitan Area and in Collie.*

22. Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Works:

What are the charges for electric power in the metropolitan area as against similar charges in Collie?

The MINISTER for MINES (for the minister for Works) replied:

The rate schedules applying to the two areas are as follows:—

The State Electricity Commission of Western Australia.  
Schedule of Charges for Electric Current.  
Metropolitan Area.

As from 15th September, 1953.

Table "A"—Lighting:

First	100 units per month	6-65d. per unit.
Next	500 "	6-15d. "
Next	4,400 "	5-15d. "
All over 5,000	"	4-15d. "

Table "B"—Industrial Power:

First	200 units per month	3-65d. per unit.
Next	4,800 "	3-15d. "
Next	50,000 "	2-65d. "
All over 55,000	"	2-05d. "

Table "C"—Domestic Power:

Private residences and purely residential flats only—(not hotels, boarding houses or residences partly used for business)—2.65d. per unit.

Table "D"—Combined Domestic Lighting and Power:

For domestic purposes only—(does not include flats, boarding houses, hotels or residences used partly for business.)—For every 100 square feet of basic area  $2\frac{1}{4}$  units per quarter ( $\frac{1}{4}$  unit per month) are charged at the lighting rate; all the balance at the domestic power rate.

A fee of 7s. 6d. for inspecting, making plan and determining the basic area, to be paid on applying for this rate.

Table "E"—Combined Commercial Lighting and Power:

Lighting and power for shops, offices, warehouses, theatres, public buildings, State and Commonwealth buildings and hospitals, or where light and power mains are not separate—

First	50 units per month	7-65d. per unit.
Next	950 "	6-65d. "
Next	1,000 "	5-15d. "
Next	3,000 "	4-15d. "
Next	50,000 "	3-15d. "
All over 55,000	"	2-05d. "

Floodlighting—4.15d. per unit.

All consumers to be charged one or another of the above rates. Each and every point of supply shall be taken separately for assessment on the above rates.

No master meter rents charged.

Minimum Charge—A minimum charge of 3s. 4d. per month (10s. per quarter) will be made.

The State Electricity Commission of Western Australia.

South-West Power Scheme.

As from 21st September, 1953.

First	24 units per month	7.31d.
Next	24 units per months	4.31d.
Next	4,352 units per month	3.31d.
All over 5,000 units per month		2.31d.

Minimum Charge—3s. 4d. per month.

No master meter rents charged.

Sub-meter rental charge: 6d. per meter per months.

All accounts rendered quarterly.

# MIDLAND HIGH SCHOOL.

*Incoming and Outgoing Students, 1959.*

23. Mr. OLDFIELD asked the Minister for Education:

In regard to Midland High School, what number of students is estimated as to the following for 1959:—

- (1) First year intake?
- (2) Third year intake?
- (3) Outgoing (aggregate)?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) 406.

(2) No new intake but enrolment is expected to be 325.

(3) 580.

# RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK.

*Establishment of Branch at Wyndham.*

24. Mr. RHATIGAN asked the Minister for Lands:

Because of the lack of adequate banking facilities and the inconvenience caused thereby to the residents of Wyndham, would he give consideration to the establishment of a Rural and Industries Bank at that centre?

The MINISTER replied:

Although the commissioners are sensible of the fact that as a State bank the "R. & I." is not represented in the North-West, Wyndham does not warrant a branch. The town is already served by the agencies of the Commonwealth Savings Bank and the Bank of New South Wales Savings Bank.

# EDUCATION.

*Delay in Payment of Exhibitions.*

25. Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON asked the Minister for Education:

(1) In general practice, how long after the publication of the names of those who have won exhibitions, is the prize money actually awarded?

(2) What has been the delay, if any, in the last two years?

(3) What was the cause of the delay?

(4) Is there any reason why the money award cannot be made immediately the results are known?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Under the former scheme students claimed on the department at the end of each term, but under the new scheme the exhibition will be paid over immediately after publication of results.

(2) I know of no delay after the receipt of the claims from the students by the Education Department.

(3) Answered by No. (2).

(4) Answered by No. (1).

### DRIVERS' LICENCES.

#### *Check on Ability of Licensees to Handle Motor-vehicles.*

26. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Transport:

What check is made under the present system of renewing drivers' licences, regarding the continued ability of licensees to safely handle motor-vehicles?

The MINISTER replied:

Generally speaking, under the present system, which has been in operation for a considerable number of years, a person to whom a driver's licence has been issued is not required to undergo any further test prior to the renewal of such licence.

Occasions do arise, however, when it is believed or known that a person's physical or mental state is such as to render it undesirable for him to be driving a motor-vehicle. Then that person is called upon to furnish proof of his continued ability to control a motor-vehicle—either by a test at the hands of a police officer; or, if warranted, by producing a certificate from a medical officer.

### RAILWAY FREIGHTS.

#### *Quotes Outside Rate Book.*

27. Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

Further to question No. 19 on the 9th September, part (2), will he give details of quotes made outside the rate book for the six months ended the 31st August last, and also of these special quotes that are still operative?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT replied:

As the railways are common carriers, it is deemed inadvisable to disclose such information.

### PENSIONER FLATS.

#### *Overriding of Local Authorities' Building Standards.*

28. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) With reference to the answers given to the hon. member for Victoria Park on the 4th September, 1958, regarding flats for pensioners, is it not considered undesirable for a Government instrumentality to override local authorities in respect of standards required for buildings?

(2) Do the answers he gave to the hon. member for Victoria Park imply that had the Perth Road Board and the Melville

Road Board refused permits, the Government would have gone on with the buildings regardless of this refusal?

(3) Would the flats conform to the Uniform General Building By-laws recently tabled?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No. On the contrary, there has long been a necessity for many local authorities to revise their outmoded building by-laws to conform to modern requirements and concepts.

(2) Yes.

(3) Yes.

### DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY.

#### *Establishment in Western Australia.*

29. Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

Has the Government formally advised the Commonwealth of its interest in the establishment of the Dow Chemical Company in Western Australia, and its desire that Western Australia be protected at least equally with other States in respect of matters over which the Commonwealth has control?

The PREMIER replied:

Correspondence has passed between myself and the Prime Minister. There is no reason to think the Commonwealth Government would place any one State at a disadvantage with other States in this matter.

### THOMAS STREET SCHOOL.

#### *Future Use and Playing Area.*

30. Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Education:

With the proposed extension of Perth Modern School taking up portion of the present site of the Thomas-st. State school—

(a) Will the Thomas-st. school be continued as a primary school?

(b) Will the playing area for the children, approximately 360, be increased or decreased?

The MINISTER replied:

(a) Yes.

(b) When the whole plan is completed the playground should be approximately the same in area as at present.

### EMPIRE GAMES VILLAGE.

#### *Site and Competition.*

31. Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is the State Housing Commission to build an Empire Games village in readiness for the Empire Games?

(2) If so, where will it be built?

(3) Will he seek the co-operation of the Government with a request that a competition be held for the best design of the proposed village?

(4) If so, and if successful, will he confine the competitions to this State and seek Government support to offer a substantial trophy?

The MINISTER replied:

No firm decisions have yet been made.

### RURAL AND INDUSTRIES BANK.

*Source of Items of Equipment for Perth Building.*

32. Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Works:

(1) With reference to the items of equipment for which tenders have been called for installation in the proposed R. & I. Bank Perth building, will he advise which of these will be—

- (a) of local manufacture;
- (b) imported from the Eastern States;
- (c) imported from abroad?

(2) Are there any alternative items of equipment of local manufacture which could be substituted; and if so, what are they?

The MINISTER FOR MINES (for the Minister for Works) replied:

- (1) (a) Pre-cast exposed aggregate facing panels.

Ceramic facing blocks.

Incinerator.

Lift car super structures.

Car doors, shaft doors and frames.

All fabrication of duct work and general installation for air conditioning and mechanical ventilation.

- (b) Lifts.

Pneumatic tube conveyor system.

Air conditioning and mechanical ventilation prime equipment.

Flat roofing material.

- (c) Gearless winding machines for lifts.

Guide rails for lifts.

These items are not manufactured in Australia.

Tenders have also been called for curtain walling and aluminium windows. These can be manufactured in Western Australia; but, until tenders are received, a decision cannot be made.

(2) No.

### POLICE ACT.

*Penalty in Section 124.*

33. Mr. EVANS asked the Minister for Police.

Is it considered desirable to retain in Section 124 of the Police Act, the words, from the word "labour" in line 28 down to the word "cane"?

The MINISTER replied:

The matter of penalties rests solely with the judiciary. I do not know of any case where this penalty has ever been inflicted. I know no reason why this should be deleted from the Act.

### PROPOSED BEACH TRUST.

*Rates and Amount Payable, Metropolitan and Country.*

34. Mr. I. W. MANNING asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Does he agree with the method suggested by the hon. member for Wembley Beaches (Mr. F. Marshall) of financing the activities of the proposed beach trust by the striking of a rate in the £ on all metropolitan and country properties?

(2) What rate has been suggested to the Government by Mr. Marshall?

(3) What amount would be payable annually by the owner of a property with, say, an unimproved value of £600, £800 or £1,000?

(4) How much is it expected to yield from—

(a) metropolitan properties;

(b) country properties?

(5) Is it intended that any rate so levied shall apply for a defined period or will it apply indefinitely?

The MINISTER replied:

Discussions in connection with a proposed beach trust, as suggested by the hon. member for Wembley Beaches, are still in the process of debate.

### SWIMMING POOLS.

*Government Assistance, Technical Advice, etc.*

35. Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) In how many and what centres have swimming pools been provided with financial assistance from the Government?

(2) How many centres have applied for assistance?

(3) On what basis is assistance made available?

(4) Is expert technical advice made available by the Government for the erection of such pools?

(5) What charges are made for use of pools so provided, or in what way is revenue derived from them by the authorities controlling the pools?



The **MINISTER FOR MINES** (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) The Government has provided financial assistance for pools which are in use at the following eight centres:—

Merredin	Northam
Cunderdin	Bruce Rock
Narrogin	Goomalling
Kelmscott	Bullfinch

(2) In addition to the towns listed in No. (1), requests for financial assistance have been received from seven centres.

(3) The Government contributes one-third of the total cost, with a maximum contribution of £10,000, for pools situated more than 35 miles from the coast. Other applications for assistance are treated on their merits.

(4) Yes.

(5) These charges are not fixed by the Government, but are the responsibility of the various authorities controlling the pools.

### UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

#### *Erection of Buildings and Cost.*

36. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) With reference to the answers given on the 14th August, 1958, regarding buildings erected at the University, is he still satisfied that the Estimates for the work have not in fact been exceeded, or will not be exceeded?

(2) Who provides the finance for these buildings and on what basis?

(3) If the actual costs are in excess of the Estimates, who will be responsible for paying the excess?

(4) Will such excesses affect the overall cash allocation available to the University either from its own sources or from State and Commonwealth sources?

The **MINISTER FOR MINES** (for the Minister for Works) replied:

(1) Yes. The answers to questions Nos. 3 and 4 of the 14th August still stand.

(2) (a) Engineering School—

An amount of £287,000 will be provided by the State. Of this sum £250,000 will be borrowed by the University and will be repaid by the State Government over 15 years. The balance of £37,000 will be a State grant.

Under the State Grants Universities Act, 1958, the Commonwealth will contribute £208,000—making a total of £495,000.

(b) Bio-Chemistry—

Under the State Grants Universities Act, 1958, the Commonwealth will provide £56,000.

The State will provide by grant £44,000, and £90,000 will be provided from Medical School funds under the control of the University—total £190,000.

(3) This would be a matter between the State and the University.

(4) See No. (3).

### FACTORIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

#### *Number Out of Production.*

37. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Industrial Development:

(1) What factories in Western Australia have ceased production during the last 12 months?

(2) What was the principal nature of production of such factories?

The **MINISTER** replied:

(1) Darbyshire Pottery 1956 Pty. Ltd.  
Watson Pure Products Pty. Ltd.  
(Receivership.)

Wagin Brick Company.  
Gibson and Paterson Pty. Ltd.  
Smithdraulic Implements Pty. Ltd.  
Esperance Salt Company.  
Belmont Ready Mixed Mortar.  
Soundhouse Pty. Ltd.  
Gem Meat Products (Fremantle.)  
Selby and Bryden. (Furniture.)  
South Belmont Timber Company.  
(Receivership.)

Lancelin Products.  
Rivervale Structural Steel Pty. Ltd.  
(Receivership.)

These were small locally registered manufacturing companies which went into liquidation, and ceased production, or their activities were taken over by other concerns. Their activities ranged from food processing to wireless goods and brick making.

However, no major factories permanently ceased production in the last 12 months. In fact, factory registrations under the Factories and Shops Act 1920-1957, have risen by 93 in 1957, the last year for which complete figures are available.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

### LABOUR DAY PROCESSION.

#### *Use of Government Vehicles.*

38. Mr. WILD asked the Premier:

(1) How many Government-owned vehicles were used as floats or for other purposes in the last Labour Day procession?

(2) What was the total cost to the Government for materials used in the preparation of the floats, petrol, drivers' wages, etc.?

(3) Will he list the Government instrumentalities which had floats in the procession?

The PREMIER replied:

The information required is being prepared and will be available on Tuesday next.

### PRINCESS ALEXANDRA'S VISIT.

#### *Itinerary Arrangements.*

39. The Hon. D. BRAND asked the Premier:

(1) What action has the Government taken or what action does the Government propose to take to have Western Australia included in the itinerary in the event of Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra visiting Australia next year?

(2) If Western Australia is included in the itinerary, will he give an assurance that in its preparation consideration will be given to the claims for a visit to districts which have so far not been so favoured, such as Geraldton and surrounding towns?

The PREMIER replied:

These matters will receive consideration.

### QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE.

#### UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

##### *Commonwealth Aid for Western Australia.*

1. Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

Arising from the answer given to question No. 9 today:

(1) Has the Government agreed to make its contribution to qualify the University of Western Australia for its full entitlement of Commonwealth assistance?

(2) Other than general provisions of the Commonwealth legislation, that is, the State Grants Universities Act, 1958, is any restriction or qualification imposed on the University by the State Government in the spending of the Commonwealth portion of the assistance?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) To the best of my knowledge, off-hand, no.

#### DOW CHEMICAL COMPANY.

##### *Establishment in Western Australia.*

2. Mr. COURT asked the Premier:

Arising from the answer given to question No. 29, does the announced arrangement between Goodrich Tyre Company and Ampol for a factory in Victoria affect the prospect of negotiations with the Dow Chemical Co. for that enterprise to establish in Western Australia?

The PREMIER replied:

I should not think so.

### RAMS.

#### *Import from the Eastern States.*

3. Mr. NALDER asked the Premier:

In his efforts to support the use of local products, will he investigate and give details to this House concerning the report that the Agricultural Department has imported 130 Romney Marsh rams from the Eastern States, when rams of this breed are available locally?

The PREMIER replied:

Yes. I will also ask each individual member of Parliament to be very careful himself in all the purchases he makes from time to time; and to be sure that he, as an individual citizen of Western Australia, is doing the right thing in purchasing Western Australian goods, and not Eastern States goods.

### NEW INDUSTRIES IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA.

#### *Amounts and Increases Negotiated before the 30th June, 1953.*

4. Mr. ROBERTS asked the Premier:

In view of his comments in relation to the first part of my question—No. 15 on today's notice paper—do I understand that he is going to convey a further answer to me at a later stage?

The PREMIER replied:

I thought I had clearly indicated that; the answer to this later question is "Yes."

### CANCER COUNCIL OF WESTERN AUSTRALIA BILL.

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

### ACTS AMENDMENT (SUPERANNUATION AND PENSIONS) BILL.

Read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

### LAND TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

#### *Third Reading.*

THE HON. A. R. G. HAWKE (Premier—Northam) [5.10]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a third time.

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

#### Ayes—24

Mr. Andrew	Mr. Marshall
Mr. Brady	Mr. Molr
Mr. Evans	Mr. Norton
Mr. Graham	Mr. Nulsen
Mr. Hall	Mr. O'Brien
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Potter
Mr. Heal	Mr. Rhatigan
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Rowberry
Mr. Jamieson	Mr. Sewell
Mr. Johnson	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Kelly	Mr. Toms
Mr. Lapham	Mr. May

(Teller.)

## Noes—16

Mr. Bovell  
Mr. Court  
Mr. Crommelin  
Mr. Grayden  
Mr. Hearman  
Mr. Hutchinson  
Mr. W. Manning  
Sir Ross McLarty

Mr. Nalder  
Mr. Oldfield  
Mr. Owen  
Mr. Perkins  
Mr. Roberts  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Wild  
Mr. I. Manning  
(Teller.)

## Pairs.

Ayes.  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. Lawrence  
Mr. Bickerton  
Mr. Gaffy

Noes.  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. Thorn  
Mr. Cornell  
Mr. Brand

Majority for—8

Question thus passed.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**BILLS (2)—RETURNED.**

1. Legal Practitioners Act Amendment.
2. Reciprocal Enforcement of Maintenance Orders Act Amendment.

Without amendment

**LICENSED SURVEYORS ACT  
AMENDMENT BILL.**

Received from the Council and read a first time.

**WOOL PRICES.***Stabilisation.*

**THE HON. A. F. WATTS** (Stirling)  
[5.5]: I move—

That in view of the vital influence that a profitable price for wool has on general prosperity, employment and business in this State, and as such price has declined to a level which is causing grave public concern, this House requests the Government to ask for an urgent meeting of the Agricultural Council to consider making an early submission to the Commonwealth Government for action to be taken to stabilise wool prices under such conditions as will ensure the successful continuance of this national industry.

I offer no apology for moving this motion at this time. As every member of this House will be aware, there have been, over the last few months, continual references in the Press and elsewhere to the position that is coming about in Australia as a result of the continued decline in the return for wool in this country.

As is well known, the impact of this decline has been most noticeable in the continued incidence of import restrictions and in the decline of taxable incomes and therefore the anticipated decline in the Commonwealth revenue, which obviously has prevented any concessions, which I feel would otherwise have been made, being made to taxpayers in this community, and resulted for the first time for many years in the Federal Treasurer budgeting for a very substantial deficit.

Australia is the leading wool-growing country in the world. According to statistics which are available in the Australian Year Book, it produces approximately 28 per cent. of all types of wool. The British Commonwealth produces 50 per cent. of all the wool of the world and the greater part of that is produced in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa—three countries which in times past have co-operated in regard to this problem of wool marketing without success.

It must be borne in mind that Australia produces 50 per cent. of all the finer quality merino wools of the world. It is therefore in a very important position in the world in regard to the production and use of wool. We must remember too, that only about 7 per cent. or 8 per cent. of the production of wool is used by Australian manufacturers at the present time.

Therefore by far the greater part of it is exported from this country overseas; and in the export, of course, lies the fact that it has made the major contribution of a very substantial proportion indeed of Australian overseas income with which we are able to pay for the necessary importations that have to be made into this country.

Let it not be thought for one moment that this question of the wool industry is of importance only to those, on the one hand, who grow wool; and on the other hand, to those who are importers of goods. It has far wider effects than upon those two sections of the community; because when there is a diminution in the national income to the extent that there has been of recent times because of the reduction in wool values, there comes about a state of unemployment and certainly in many industries if not retrogression at least stagnation, because it is impossible to maintain full employment and continual progress in a community which is unable to provide the necessary funds to make available to itself the necessities it requires for the continuance of its industries.

That is more and more becoming the position in this country, although at present there are still some substantial overseas balances as a result of savings or collections during the time when these export prices were much better than they are today. Nevertheless, as is evident from Press reports from day to day, those balances are declining; and they will certainly continue to decline if the price of wool does not improve from where it stands at the present day.

I shall point out to hon. members in this House how the wool price at present is probably less in real value than it was in 1939. In that year, as everybody knows, the agricultural industries in Western Australia, and the wool industry in particular, were not in a very happy frame of mind. It is true that they were a little better off

than they had been in the depths of the depression; but they were not in a satisfactory position.

The average price of wool for the year 1939-1940 is given in the statistical register at 12.91d. The average price of wool at the sales which have just been completed was approximately 43d.; and that was a decline from the figures that existed in May last of between 48d. and 49d. So there has been a decline of approximately 6d. per lb. in the short period from May last; and, compared with the previous year, the decline is more in the vicinity of 30d. than 6d.

It is very much open to question that the price of wool today, in real value, is worth as much as it was in 1939. At that time the basic wage was £4 2s. 8d., and at present it is £13 12s. 3d. If one relates the price of wool to the alteration in the basic wage one will find that in 1939, as against the figure of 12.91d. per lb., it will work out at approximately 12.2d. Therefore, in actual fact, if these figures can be relied upon—and I have no doubt that they can because I have given them some careful attention—there is a difference against the wool grower today, when the difference in costs and the value of money is taken into consideration, of about .7d. per lb.

If that state of affairs is to continue, and there is no actual indication at the moment that it will not do so, it will put this industry, and Australia and its people back very considerably; and it behoves all of us, if we have the real welfare of this country and its people at heart, to take what interest we can in helping at least to find out if there is any remedy for this extraordinary situation which arises in regard to our staple industry from time to time.

If one looks at the prices over the intervening years, one finds that there have been tremendous fluctuations; and the fluctuations in more recent times have certainly been in bigger figures. However, fluctuations in lesser figures have taken place all through the years. I suggest it is virtually impossible at the present juncture, the same as it has been throughout the history of wool growing in the last quarter of a century, for anybody to budget in advance of his returns because he has not the faintest notion what he is likely to get for his wool, even though he can substantiate, to his own satisfaction, the quantity of wool he is likely to produce.

He might find himself, as growers did in 1951, getting an average price in the vicinity of 15s. a lb.; or he might find himself—which is a much more frequent occurrence—getting an average price of 43d. per lb., which, as I have said, is below the equivalent figure of 20 years ago. So there can be no question in my mind that everyone in this country should be concerned to inquire as to what can be done to solve this problem and to stabilise this industry; and to bring about a state of

affairs where it can, as the motion suggests, be carried on successfully in the national interest.

I say that because there is no question that it is now, and has been for many years past, the industry which is keeping Australia in a position to develop and progress. There is no other industry which can compare with it; there is no other industry which has been able to bring into this country the amount of money in a year, and over a period of years, that the wool industry has contrived to do.

There have been times, however, when the growers of wool have been in an extremely parlous and almost desperate position; and from the only interest I had in farming properties about 1937-38 I can remember that the production of the property was built up from 33 bales to 77 bales over two or three years of intensive effort. But that 77 bales of wool was sold at a price which clearly demonstrated that the more wool the property produced, the more money its proprietors lost.

That state of affairs could be returned to if we are not very careful; and the object of my motion is to try to have formulated, by those who are able to manage and understand this business, a scheme, a method, or a plan which will, we hope, put a period to the state of affairs which has prevailed from time to time, in the manner I have indicated, over a very long period of years.

It is perhaps just as well to remember that the industry itself has done wonderful things in the way of production. For example, the average weight of wool shorn per sheep in Australia has increased from 8.57 lb. in 1938 to 10.39 lb. in 1955-56; while for Western Australia the figures are 8.53 for 1938, and 11.33 lb. per sheep for 1955-56.

There is no question about it: Those who are engaged in the industry have applied themselves to its development in a most conscientious and successful manner. But they cannot contend, and continue to contend with costs that are perpetually rising and are uncontrollable, so far as they are concerned anyway, and a market which is in a position similar to that to which I have just referred.

Several efforts have been made to put a period to this state of affairs. For example there was what was known as the post J.O. scheme for the marketing of wool. As is probably well known to hon. members the Joint Organisation scheme was a system which was developed after the last war to dispose of the surplus wool which was in existence at the conclusion of the wartime agreement, and was set up by the Governments of the United Kingdom, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and the Dominion of South Africa. So it will be noticed that all Governments agreed; and it was under the title of "U.K. Dominion Wool Disposals Ltd."

But the Australian section of the Australian Wool Realisation Commission disposed of all the stocks of wool held; and shortly afterwards, in about 1951, went into voluntary liquidation. Australia's share of the profits arising from the operations of J.O.—as it was called—amounted to approximately £93,000,000, including interest. Subsequent to that, and as a result of many years of work and negotiation in which a Western Australian gentleman by the name of Mr. F. E. Hitchins took a very prominent part, a minimum reserve price plan to continue reserve price operations on the termination of the organisation to which I have referred was completed by the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the United Kingdom in May, 1951. This plan was evolved, as I said, following long negotiations in which the wool-growers' organisations in the three dominions participated.

It provided for the establishment of an organisation to recommend reserve prices to the participating Governments; to buy wool at these prices when commercial buyers were not prepared to do so; and to arrange for the later re-offering of wool so purchased. The scheme was to operate initially for five years from 1951-52. The necessary funds to operate the plan were to be provided by each country, whilst the Governments of the three dominions agreed to provide guarantees if the initial capital should become absorbed in the purchase of wool.

In Australia the initial funds were to be provided by the wool-growing industry. To raise this money the Commonwealth Government imposed a levy of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. on sales of wool in the 1950-51 season, and from this levy about £45,000,000 was obtained. The completed plan was endorsed by the Commonwealth Government subject to its approval by a referendum of wool growers. This referendum was held in August, 1951.

In Western Australia that referendum was carried; but, of course, as is necessary in all cases, in my opinion, where such a proposal as this is being considered, it had to be carried on an Australia-wide basis; and on an Australia-wide basis there was not a majority in its favour and, in consequence, it lapsed. I have no doubt whatever that the failure to obtain an Australia-wide majority for it was substantially due to two things. Firstly, the referendum was conducted at a time when the price of wool was at an all-time high and, naturally, any apprehensions which existed for many years before—and which unquestionably exist now—had disappeared in a wave of optimism.

The second reason was that because of the inter-Governmental arrangements that had to be made there was a suggestion that there would be some measure of Government control in the organising of the scheme. That was very greatly used by the opponents of the plan to claim—I think

rather untruthfully—that Government control was what was aimed at by the scheme; and they put it over the large number of persons engaged in the growing of wool.

I am convinced that those two circumstances contributed very strongly to the rejection of this scheme on an Australia-wide basis, though not in Western Australia. So we have reached a position today where, as I have said, apprehension is again in evidence in the minds of wool-growers, and indeed, in the minds of all thoughtful people. Unquestionably, the possibility of the orderly marketing of wool has been explored in many quarters following the adverse vote on the scheme to which I have just referred.

The orderly marketing of primary products is today a familiar aspect of Australian commercial life; and, whilst the organised marketing and sale of each commodity has presented its own big problems, producers, in every case, have managed with outstanding success to create and direct their own authorities and to direct them from their own ranks.

I have no doubt that given proper control, and what legislative authority was necessary to enable them to function, the producers of this country could function just as well in regard to the wool industry as they have in regard to many others. I must say, however, that quite frankly I do not know at the present time exactly what proposal would be the one that might succeed in solving this problem. I know perfectly well that there are several at the present time under consideration. One has, of course, been put forward by our own Farmers' Union in this State.

Another one, which I think could be called a co-operative buying plan, has been put forward as a result of a meeting of wool growers held in Northam a few weeks ago. The one that was submitted by the Farmers' Union will undoubtedly have to be taken into consideration because, among others—and there are others in the Eastern States—it has been submitted to the Wool Federation of Australia for consideration. The scheme put up by the Farmers' Union of Western Australia is that wool brokers are to become receiving agents for the Wool Selling Board; the agents' job to be to have all wool appraised and catalogued according to its types and quality, and the needs of the buying trade. The wool brokers are to receive similar payments as at present; and their business needs and operations need not alter.

Under this scheme all growers would get the same payment according to the quality and yield throughout Australia each year; and the study of wool tables each three months would get a fairer idea of the world price than that at present fixed by wool buyers and speculators. They suggested that an Australian Wool

Board be constituted on lines similar to the Australian Wheat Board, and become the sole selling agency for Australian wool. The Wool Board would fix a firm price for wool according to its type every three months.

The price is to be arrived at in conjunction with the agency throughout the world. A separate pool is to be constituted each year with four payments and a final payment, and finance is to come from the Commonwealth Bank on the same lines as for other produce boards. As we all know, the Australian Agricultural Council was constituted in 1934. I have here a short resume of the constitution and terms of reference as it were, or the powers, of the Australian Agricultural Council. It consists of the Commonwealth Minister for Primary Industries and Territories and the State Minister for Agriculture, with power to co-opt other Ministers. Its principal functions are these—

1. Promotion of the welfare and development of the agricultural industries.
2. Exchange of information on agricultural production and marketing.
3. Improvement of quality of agricultural products and balanced production.
4. Organised marketing.

The first and last of these—the promotion of the welfare and development of agricultural industries and organised marketing—are obviously those which cover the proposal for consideration, which is in this motion. It therefore seems to me to be quite obvious that if we are to make any rapid progress in this matter, we should immediately secure the co-operation of the Agricultural Council and of those departmental officers and other people who are available to it to assist in going into these proposals and working out one which is most likely to contribute to the stabilisation and future welfare of this great national industry.

I know of no place to which we could go better than the Australian Agricultural Council for that purpose. If the Government of this State, as requested in this motion, were to ask for an urgent meeting of that Agricultural Council, then surely co-ordinated action would be taken to investigate and plan in this matter. If it is left in its present position where the several organisations of the primary producers in the various States are working on separate proposals, a long time will elapse before their various views can be co-ordinated; whereas co-ordination could be much more rapidly achieved by such an organisation as the Australian Agricultural Council. I suggest that there is reason to believe that time is the essence of the contract in this case.

Mr. Bovell: Who would be the representative from Western Australia?

Mr. WATTS: The Minister for Agriculture; but others can be co-opted under the constitution of the Agricultural Council. I suggest that no time should be lost in this matter.

I read in the paper the other day that some gentleman interested in the wool industry from the buying side made some observation that wool was on the way back. Within a few days of his making this statement the price fell by about 7½ per cent. I do not know where wool was on the way back to; perhaps on the way back to the position it occupied financially during the years I referred to—more than 20 years ago. If that is the position, then it is still more important that we should take some action in this matter.

Those engaged in the primary industries are entitled to have some say in the disposal of their own product. They are about the only people who, in the absence of organised marketing authorities, are unable to have some say in what they shall receive for the goods they have to sell. Anybody else is entitled to say to his customer, "I want so much for that." His price is thus stated and is based on what it cost to produce, plus some reasonable margin of profit.

However, in the absence of such institutions as the organised marketing boards, which cannot exist without statutory authority, the primary producer, especially of our major products, is put in the position where he is at the mercy of everybody else. He is not in a position to state what he thinks, in a reasonable way, he should receive for his produce.

I have here a copy of an address given by the president of the Employers' Federation of Western Australia on the 23rd October, 1957, which indicates the unfortunate view that that gentleman—and perhaps others; probably many others who think like him—holds in regard to the operations of these marketing authorities which I think, in many instances, have been the only salvation and the only opportunity for some fair say in the disposal of the products of the primary industries. He said, *inter alia*—

The consumer suffers consequent restrictions. He cannot range around for the best bargain; he has to accept the standard of product decided on by the board. These are not principles of sound competitive business in the form healthiest for the community. They are part of the regimented police state, etc.

On this point about the consumer being able to range around to get the best bargain, I know of no selling organisation in the City of Perth where if I saw a thing marked 7s. 11d. I could say, "I will give you 3s. 6d. for it."

Mr. Bovell: You could; but you would not get it.

**Mr. WATTS:** So the consumer ranging around is a delightful proposition from the point of view of the primary producing industries; and if that is the position, and the consumer is ranging around in that fashion, no wonder that the difficulties exist to which I have just referred!

I read in the paper the other day a long article—it was published in "The West Australian"—which was most interesting. It was written by some gentleman from Victoria whose name, for the moment, escapes me. He said that the difficulties of the wool industry, in his experience—and he appeared to have experience of the difficulties—was due to the restrictive operations of cartels.

**Mr. Bovell:** I think his name was Mr. P. P. Rogers.

**Mr. WATTS:** Yes; I think that was his name. I do not know whether what he said is true or not; but if it is true, it is high time someone took steps to stop it. I think even that point alone provides ample opportunity for an investigation by the Agricultural Council of this country.

I would like to say, before I conclude, that such schemes as that put forward by the Farmers' Union do not for one moment decry the work and endeavour put in by the wool brokers in this country. They provide first-rate facilities for the marketing of wool, but they cannot provide the price stability. The scheme of the Farmers' Union makes every provision for the services of the wool brokers to be retained, and quite properly; because I venture to suggest that the disposal and handling of the wool could not be tackled for one moment without their assistance. They are entitled to a scheme providing remuneration in regard to these services; and I should think they would be as pleased as the growers to see some successful price stability become an accomplished fact. There must be tremendous fluctuations in the returns. One realises this when one looks at the tremendous fluctuations in wool prices, not only in recent years, but over a long period of years.

It is quite clear to me that their services should be retained and that any scheme must be on an Australia-wide basis. I believe I have said sufficient to indicate that the position of the wool industry is of paramount importance to Australia, and that its present situation is causing grave public concern; that there are a number of proposals which ought to be investigated—one of which has been put forward by the Farmers' Union in this State; and that the Agricultural Council should co-operate and co-ordinate an investigation into such proposals so as to hurry on, if possible, the finding of some method by which the future of this industry may be better safeguarded than it has been in the past.

**Mr. Bovell:** Any proposal should have the consent of the growers.

**Mr. WATTS:** I am certainly not suggesting, for one moment, that it should not. It is the policy of the party to which I belong that the majority of the growers must decide this matter. But a proposition has to be put to them before they can decide, and that proposition has to be soundly based and investigated. The Post J.O. scheme took six or seven years to build up and develop, because it was not possible to interest governments in that until long after it started. My point is that governments should be interested now, and our only way to interest them is to get this Government to act in the matter.

On motion by the Minister for Lands, debate adjourned.

## WAR SERVICE LAND SETTLEMENT ACT.

### *Amendment of Regulation No. 24.*

Debate resumed from the 27th August on the following motion by the Hon. A. F. Watts:—

That new Regulation No. 24, made under the War Service Land Settlement Act, 1954, as published in the "Government Gazette" of the 23rd November, 1955, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 24th November, 1955, be amended as follows:—

By deleting paragraph 2 (c) thereof, and inserting in lieu the following paragraph:—

2. (c) One member to be nominated by the Central Council of War Service Land Settlers' Associations Incorporated.

**MR. NORTON** (Gascoyne) [5.42]: The motion moved by the Leader of the Country Party has one objective, which is to place on the War Service Land Settlement Appeal Board a member of the Central Council of War Service Land Settlers' Associations Incorporated; and in putting forward his motion he submitted two arguments. The first was that he likened this appeal board to other appeal boards which operate in the State—and with this I agree. But in making his point he was, in my opinion, a little off the beam, because he said—

An employees' representative appointed in each case by the union of which the employee appellant is a member.

As I understand these boards, what is required is that it shall be an employees' representative, not necessarily a member of the appellant's union or of the union which is appealing to the board—in this case the War Service Land Settlers' Appeal Board. The member who is appointed is a member of the R.S.L. or an ex-serviceman, and therefore he comes within the category of employees' representative. I think that answers the point raised, in that instance, by the Leader of the Country Party.

The other point he raised was that that organisation which was wholly representing the war service land settlers should be the organisation which had a member on the board. What hon. members have to decide is who is going to be the best person to represent the war service land settlers. Is it the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Imperial League, as at present, or a member of the Central Council of War Service Land Settlers' Associations Incorporated? As hon. members have to judge that, I think it is only fair that I should give the House some idea of the set-up under which the R.S.L. has worked for ex-servicemen for many years.

As every hon. member knows, the R.S.L. is a Commonwealth-wide organisation. It has a restricted membership, we agree; but for its principles and objectives it has service to all ex-servicemen, irrespective of their eligibility to join the R.S.L. or not. That being so, we can say that it would be eligible to be on this board and represent any settler under the war service land settlement scheme. The R.S.L., throughout the Commonwealth, had a membership of 239,862—for the year ended 1957—and Western Australian enrolments in that organisation last year totalled 16,248. It will therefore be realised that an organisation such as this, which is Commonwealth-wide, and which has very large numbers of members, is able to make representations, not only to the various State Governments but also to the Federal Government, to obtain for its members and others whom it represents, considerable benefits which are not able to be obtained by smaller organisations. Each State has its own executive, elected by the sub-branches once a year and from these State executives other sub-committees are set up to look after the various aspects with which the R.S.L. deals.

Among those matters are land, housing, pensions, immigration, the North-West, Legacy and homes for the aged and, as the R.S.L. has such a large membership, it is able to have on those committees members who are well versed in the topics dealt with by the individual committees. I do not wish to go into detail in relation to the many committees, but to deal specifically with the land committee.

The R.S.L. Land Committee was formed in 1921, when war service land settlement first commenced. It has functioned right through until today and it was from the recommendations of that committee—both State and Commonwealth—that we have today the present Act, which has functioned so well and is functioning so successfully. One might almost ask oneself can the War Service Land Settlers' Association make the representations to either the State or the Commonwealth as well as can the R.S.L.? If they cannot, they cannot serve the settlers as well as can the R.S.L.

It is interesting to note the personnel which forms the R.S.L. Land Committee. Whilst it is not my intention to give the names of the various members—there are 11 men on the committee—I would point out that four of the present members are active farmers, one of whom comes from Waroona, one from Quairading, one from Tammin and another from Gnowangerup. It will be seen that the active farmers on that committee represent a wide area of the State. Five other members of the land committee are ex-farmers, with many years' experience, and some of them were farmers under the old war service land settlement scheme, which originated after the first world war. The other two members who are on the committee are not farmers but are appointed purely in an advisory and an administrative capacity. So it can be seen that the committee is well balanced with members who have a wide knowledge of all sections of farming and a wide experience.

Let us review those members who have been appointed to the appeal board. So far there have been only two, because the regulation has been in force for a short time. The first member was Mr. W. Overheu of Corrigin, who is an active farmer and a man with wide experience. His deputy at that time was Mr. Cashmore of Wooroloo. The present member on the board is Mr. J. Milne who is an ex-farmer with 30 years' experience; and he also has Mr. Cashmore for his deputy. Members will realise, therefore, that the qualifications of the R.S.L. representatives on the board are beyond doubt.

Mr. Nalder: How many meetings have they attended?

Mr. NORTON: In what capacity?

Mr. Nalder: As representatives of the War Service Land Settlement Appeal Board.

Mr. NORTON: I was going to speak on that later; but actually there have been only four appeals. Last year the R.S.L. dealt with 150 cases at Anzac House. These cases were mostly of prospective farmers who came to Anzac House to obtain advice and guidance on war service land settlement. In many instances these farmers were in a quandary in regard to their leases or other aspects of war service land settlement. They had been told to obtain advice and assistance at Anzac House and, as a result, many of them were able to avoid appearing before the appeal board.

Apart from this, the land committee also handled a further 88 cases which were referred to them in writing by various sub-branches. Without the advice of this land committee many of these war service land settlers would have had to put their cases to the appeal board and conduct them more or less on their own. As I said just now, only four appeals have been heard by the War Service Land Settlement Appeal Board and in each case



these have been relative to the lease or covenant. As the farmers had breached the lease or covenant in every case, very little could be done to assist them.

In making his speech, the Leader of the Country Party said, in referring to the War Service Land Settlers' Associations Inc.—

They all contend that the only person who can effectively represent them and bring proper knowledge to the board, as the third member of the board on this subject, is one who is nominated by them.

I would like to cite to the house the details of one case which was submitted to this association. In August of last year, a farmer from Perillup was in trouble, and the branch of the association at that centre got in touch with its central council secretary and asked that an advocate be provided to put forward this farmer's case. After looking through the details of his case, the secretary of the central executive advised this farmer to go to the R.S.L. to obtain its advice and assistance on the question and secure the services of an advocate. The R.S.L. did not hesitate to take the matter up, and it obtained an advocate for him in order that his case might be properly presented; but unfortunately this farmer did not turn up at the appointed time for the appeal board.

From that, it is obvious, in my opinion, that even now this association has not the qualified men available to assist those farmers who are in trouble; whereas the R.S.L., which is a large organisation, has a paid staff who are well qualified and well versed in these and other matters to give service and advice between the hours of 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. to any ex-serviceman who may need it. It is the duty of those officers, and it is their privilege, to assist any ex-serviceman who may approach them for guidance. Except for the R.S.L., where would these war service land settlers be able to obtain any help if they came to Perth in search of it?

For the year ended the 30th June, 1957, 979 applicants have been placed on farms under the war service land settlement scheme, and I believe there are still 271 men who are interested in obtaining farming properties. I have had some difficulty in ascertaining the strength of the War Service Land Settlers' Associations' Inc. Nevertheless, as late as this afternoon, I was in touch with the secretary of the central council; and although he was unable to give me any exact figures, he told me that there were 10 active branches in this State, most of which appeared to be situated in the Great Southern area.

I asked him how many members there would be in each of these branches and he said that the number of financial members in each branch varied between 10 and 20. So if we could strike an average from that information we would arrive at a

figure of only 150 financial members in this association. If such an association is to have any strength it must have a full quota of financial members so that they may be well represented and may obtain the necessary finance with which to work. As can be seen from the information I have put before the House, by having only a small number of 150 members, it does not appear to be a very strong organisation.

Mr. Nalder: That is no argument. What about the percentage of returned ex-servicemen who are members of the R.S.L.?

Mr. NORTON: They would number far more than 150. The point is that the R.S.L. is willing to help an ex-serviceman. It has a well established organisation and the funds with which to assist its members and other ex-servicemen, and it has carried out its work ever since the end of World War I, and I am sure it will continue to do so for as long as its organisation remains in existence.

I think hon. members can well realise, from the information I have put before them, that there is no reason why any alteration should be made to this regulation to permit this War Service Land Settlers' Association Inc. to have a nominee on the board in preference to an R.S.L. representative. I oppose the motion.

On motion by Mr. Nalder, debate adjourned.

#### ABATTOIRS ACT.

##### *Disallowance of Regulations Nos. 2A and 2B.*

Debate resumed from the 27th August on the following motion by the Hon. D. Brand:—

That new Regulations Nos. 2A and 2B made under the Abattoirs Act, 1909-1954, as published in the "Government Gazette," on the 15th August, 1958, and laid upon the Table of the House on the 19th August, 1958, be and are hereby disallowed.

**THE HON. L. F. KELLY** (Minister for Lands—Merredin-Yilgarn) [5.58]: Although I can hardly believe it, I feel that the Leader of the Opposition is apparently unaware of the position in regard to the abattoirs and their operations. I find it very difficult to reconcile any thought that he would have put forward a motion of this kind without the knowledge he must have acquired as a member of the previous Government at which time this board came into existence. Of course, with that thought in my mind I find it all the more difficult to try to understand why he should put forward a motion for the disallowance of these regulations, which are entirely necessary if this board—as is the case with many other boards—is to continue functioning satisfactorily and to continue playing its part in the affairs of the State.

As members are aware the abattoirs are Government instrumentalities financed by loan funds through the Treasury. All Government institutions, boards and commissions are required to keep their funds, which they are empowered to operate, in a common account; that is, the fund of the Treasury. That has always been the case, and there has never been any variation or deviation in the past.

I feel the position would be ludicrous if all boards with a credit balance—that is the reason why this particular board is desirous of having an alteration to the status quo—were permitted to transfer their accounts to private banks. It would be equally unwholesome if only the accounts of boards with debit balances were to be retained by the Treasury. That circumstance would defeat the organised operations of the State and would mean virtually government through Parliament. All members know that is a circumstance which could not be permitted, even if the present Opposition were on this side of the House.

It is the lifeblood of a Government to have the control of its funds in any shape or form. It would be too silly for the Government to carry the bad debts, and to allow those instrumentalities which showed a profit to please themselves. All Government funds, whether they be revenue or trust funds, have been kept in the Treasury at all times. That is the financial centre from which all Government instrumentalities, all Government works, and every undertaking performed by the Government receive the cash to carry out their different functions. In other words it is a common fund. As such, it is the "Father Christmas," to put it in that manner, of Government undertakings.

Funds of Government departments, public utilities, and boards are changing from day to day; and that is the case in this instance concerning the Abattoir Board. The pooling of resources throughout enables cash requirements to be met without embarrassment to the Government. It would be a very difficult position if any of these instrumentalities which have fluctuating accounts with only a few pounds credit in the bank, were, through some unforeseen circumstances or unexpected expenditure, not able to meet its commitments; and the bank would not, could not or was unprepared to allow an overdraft. An organisation of the kind under discussion, or any other Government instrumentality, would then have to fall back immediately on the Government. What a silly position would the instrumentality be in!

Mr. Court: Did the board in question ever refuse to transfer its account to the Treasury?

Mr. KELLY: Yes.

Mr. Court: I understand not.

Mr. KELLY: Yes, the board did.

Mr. Court: The board may have opened another account. I do not think it refused to transfer its account to the Treasury. The board was trying to make sure that its funds were preserved. That is what I understand the position to be.

Mr. KELLY: That is not so. At 11.30 a.m. on the 30th of July I received a letter from the Abattoir Board through its chairman and one other member, indicating that it had taken certain action. I was handed the letter, which was dated the 29th July, in which the board indicated what it had done. At 11.30 a.m. on the 30th July those members did not come to me to seek advice or permission for their action. They simply said that at a meeting the board had decided to open the account. What a position for the Treasury or Government to get into if such instances were multiplied! A difficult situation could arise if instances similar to the present one were allowed to continue.

Mr. Court: Did you ask the members not to open the account and to transfer the account back to the Treasury?

Mr. KELLY: Yes, subsequently.

Mr. Court: Did you there and then ask them to do that?

Mr. KELLY: I told them that before any action of that kind was contemplated, they should have at least seen the Under Treasurer. They said it was no use seeing him because he would have refused permission. They knew what the position was, and there is no doubt about that. And of course that is what transpired. They took the action and then advised me; and it was not until the Treasurer picked up the corresponding action that had been taken by virtue of the bank's advice to the Treasury that they were even acquainted with what had happened.

Mr. Court: Surely this was the result of some argument or discussion?

Mr. KELLY: I am making a speech and I am making it my own way.

Mr. Court: This is important information.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KELLY: The hon. member can get that by asking for it at the right time. I am not going to be sidetracked by him or anybody else in this House.

Mr. Court: You should tell us the full story.

The SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. KELLY: To my way of thinking there is no good reason why the Abattoir Board should bank with a private bank to the detriment of the Government. I think I have made that very clear in the remarks I have passed up to the present time; and I think it is very important, too, to remember that the State Government has an agreement with the Commonwealth Government whereby the Commonwealth Bank

is the banker for all State instrumentalities; and that again has been the position ever since we have had a Commonwealth Bank in this State.

Mr. Court: Back in July they had an account with the Commonwealth Bank.

Mr. KELLY: And this is the only reason that this situation arose. The Abattoir Board resented the annual profits going into the Consolidated Revenue Fund. There are plenty of other boards showing a credit balance; but they have not shown this peculiar resentment. They are satisfied to conform to the old-established custom and proceed in the only way that any State operates—not only Western Australia. But no, it was not good enough for the Abattoir Board! It wanted to be something separate; it wanted to handle the whole of its affairs itself.

Mr. Court: It is a sore point with all State Trading Concerns that their profits are confiscated.

Mr. KELLY: I do not think the Deputy Leader of the Opposition could show any one instance where this Government refused to accede to requests by this trading concern for assistance.

Mr. Court: I do not think you can quote a case on that one.

Mr. KELLY: The hon. member cannot quote any case where the Government in office at that time ever granted one single request in this regard.

Mr. Court: Look at the State Electricity Commission and you might get a surprise!

Mr. KELLY: I am informed that was done by Parliament, not by action of this kind. Another point, too, is that Western Australia is a claimant State, and the Commonwealth Grants Commission has complete and full access to all transactions that are carried out within this State; and if we are going to continue to receive support from the Grants Commission, an essential requirement, now and at all times, is that the profits of the State utilities should be taken into Consolidated Revenue funds. There is no getting away from that point; and this State would be in a bad position if we were to allow an alteration in the method that we have followed so successfully for so many years.

Of course, if the Government neglected to take that course, there is no doubt whatever that the State would be penalised; and it could quite easily arise that the State would suffer a reduction in the amount of money that would come to it by virtue of the Grants Commission if these funds were handled in any other way than as at present, through the Treasury. The State Treasury has made available all the necessary funds to finance the Abattoir Board; and it is an undertaking of considerable value to the State with a large

amount of finance tied up in it. If it had not been for State funds being made available, it is a certainty that the Abattoir Board as such would not have been able to claim the attention of private banks to the tune that is has. It has never been kept dangerously short of funds for expansion, and there have been times when huge amounts of money from the Treasury—from loan funds—have been made available; and that is what the whole set-up at the Midland Abattoir has been based on—Government money.

As soon as the board gets into the position of being able to show a credit balance, it immediately wants a different method to be adopted. It reminds me somewhat of the old adage that I heard—that it does not pay to pull the lion's tail while your head is in its mouth; and that applies in this case.

Mr. Court: Must have been a bit of an acrobat!

Mr. KELLY: I think the House would be unwise to tinker in any shape or form with a suggestion of this kind; and that would be the position, of course, if the House agreed to the motion by the Leader of the Opposition for the disallowance of the regulations.

I feel that there are sufficient sane hon. members in this House—even on the Opposition benches—to show a sense of responsibility and in no uncertain manner reject this motion in its entirety.

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

MR. I. W. MANNING (Harvey) [7.30]: While I appreciate the points made by the Minister in connection with this motion to disallow new Regulations Nos. 2A and 2B of the Abattoirs Act, I have been impressed with the successful way in which the Midland Junction Abattoir Board has conducted its affairs. In fact, so successful has the board been, that, in addition to carrying out very considerable improvements, it has also shown a good profit on its operations. I understand, too, that the board has plans for further additions and improvements, all of which will improve efficiency and cater for increasing business.

I do not think there is a doubt in anyone's mind that the board is conducting the abattoir in a very efficient manner; and, if it continues to achieve the results in the future that it has had over the past two or three years, it will have a first-class set-up at Midland Junction; and it will also be able to make a substantial reduction in some of its fees and charges. Any reduction would reflect to the advantage not only of the traders but also the producers and the buying public. A drop in the price of meat brought about by a reduction in costs would be most acceptable to everyone.

The introduction of these regulations, and the enforcement of the principle involved, would, I believe, destroy the enthusiasm of members of the Abattoir Board and banish the incentive which they now have to make a real success of their task of administering the abattoir. Where we have a semi-governmental instrumentality which is solvent, and the business affairs of which are efficiently managed, plus the fact that its activities are in every way satisfactory, it should not be discouraged but should be given an incentive and encouraged to increase efficiency, thereby permitting a reduction in its costs and charges. We see so few of these boards meeting their expenses, let alone showing a profit; and it is refreshing to hear of one which is making a profit and at the same time talking of reducing its charges.

One of the greatest problems with which semi-governmental boards, trusts and commissions are faced, is to get them successfully managed and efficiently run even to the stage where they cease to be a drain on the public purse. To force the Abattoir Board to hand over its funds to the Treasury, and therefore into the oblivion of consolidated revenue, would mean that none of the money could be expended without Treasury approval. It might be difficult for the board to obtain its own money if the Treasurer had already expended it on something in which he was more interested.

What is more, the additions and improvements which the board plans for Midland Junction would have to be carried out with money obtained from loan funds, and no Minister ever seems to have any loan money. This could very easily be the end of the board's plans for improvements and additions at this stage. Therefore, is it any wonder that the members of the board are very much opposed to this change? They can see the source of revenue for their improvements and additions disappearing and the availability of that money denied to them.

When the Bill to create the board was under discussion in this Chamber there was no mention of forcing the board to lodge its funds with the Treasury; it was intended that the board should have its own account; and therefore the introduction of these two new regulations completely contravenes the intention of Parliament.

Mr. Kelly: Why did it not take this present action a long time ago?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The position up till now has been entirely satisfactory.

Mr. Kelly: They have had profits for several years now.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The board had some initial difficulties when it was first created, but over the last two or three years its functions have been most satisfactory.

Mr. Kelly: But you are not answering the query I put to you.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: They have built up reserves.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The board, through its activities, has shown a profit and built up reserves.

Mr. Kelly: Why didn't they come to this point some time ago instead of waiting until now?

Mr. I. W. MANNING: The board has built up reserves.

Mr. Kelly: Why did not they take this action some time ago?

Mr. Court: Because you have promulgated the regulations only in the last few weeks.

Mr. Kelly: They have never had an account of their own, other than through the Treasury, and they have been making a profit for years.

Mr. Court: We will comment on that in a minute.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I will leave that to my Deputy Leader.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. I. W. MANNING: I see no legitimate reason for introducing these two regulations which will dry up the source of revenue available to the Abattoir Board, and with which it proposed to carry out extensive additions and improvements at Midland Junction.

The meat section of the Farmers' Union approached me on this matter, and the president of the section told me that his members are dismayed at the move taken by the Treasury to curtail the activities of the board. The producers of meat see in the activities of the board, and the present policy, a big likelihood of a reduction in fees and charges because of the efficiency with which the abattoir is managed and the profits which those activities have shown over recent years. Because of the efficiency of the board, and because of its success as a semi-governmental body, I ask the Minister not to restrict its activities at this stage.

We are expecting a reduction in fees and charges if the rate of profit being made at present is continued. Also the board, if it is allowed to handle its own profits, will make additions at the abattoir to cater for the increasing business which, as time progresses, must come. I do not think that the board should have to wait for Treasury approval in the granting of loan funds before it can carry on with the work it has in mind, because the organisation is showing sufficient profit to carry out that work with its own funds.

The profit that it makes is paid into Consolidated Revenue and it disappears into oblivion so far as the board is concerned and would not be readily available to it for the purpose of making any

extensions to its premises or enlarging its activities. I support the motion as moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

**MR. COURT** (Nedlands) [7.41]: I feel that the Minister has failed to answer the case put forward by the Leader of the Opposition and, in particular, has failed to give the necessary information to the House to demonstrate that the relationship between himself as the Minister in charge and the board concerned, has been a satisfactory one. Somewhere behind the scenes there must have been some strong feeling between the Minister and this board; otherwise it would not have gone to the limits that it has done to try to retain control of its funds.

The Minister did not, even in answer to interjections or in his own statement on the motion, explain to the House the whole of the background leading up to this difference of opinion resulting in, firstly, the Abattoir Board having its account with the Commonwealth Bank closed as a result of ministerial direction; and, secondly, as a result of that direction the transfer of its account to a trading bank.

**Mr. Kelly:** I was just as frank in my statement to the House as is your misleading of the House.

**Mr. COURT:** The Minister is trying to read my mind because I have only dealt with my introduction and have not got down to any detail. I am trying to give an indication as to how I feel about the matter, but the Minister has not told us frankly and fully the relationship between himself and the board. This is a responsible board, and I cannot imagine that it would lightly try to get its funds placed under its own control, as distinct from the control of the Treasury, unless there had been some very serious quarrel between the board and the Minister.

**Mr. Kelly:** You know that is not right!

**Mr. COURT:** I do not; because the Minister has not given us much information. During the Minister's speech on the motion he emphasised that the board wanted to go to a private bank. In point of fact, the first bank it went to in order to get away from Treasury control was the Commonwealth Bank; and I think the sequence of events was that in the first week of August, the Commonwealth Bank had to give notice to the board that its account was being closed, and the board, in an attempt to try to keep control of its funds, opened an account with the trading bank.

I suggest to the Minister that what was worrying the board was the problem of trying to get an assurance from the Government that the funds standing to its credit, in accordance with the provisions of the Act, would be available to the board as and when it wanted to carry on with extensions to the abattoir.

**Mr. Ross Hutchinson:** What made the Commonwealth Bank refuse to keep the board's account open?

**Mr. COURT:** As I see the position—the Minister has not told us, and in the final analysis, perhaps it might have been better for us to have had the papers tabled—the fact is that the Commonwealth Bank had a direction from the Government that it had to cease operating with the board and the board in trying to retain control of its own funds—presumably in the absence of an assurance from the Government that it would have access to the funds for a developmental project—had an account opened at the trading bank to delay further the transfer of the money to the Treasury.

**Mr. Kelly:** Your case is pretty wide of the mark.

**Mr. COURT:** With such a board of responsible men, it would not take that action lightly. It would not do it just for fun. It is quite obvious that, at some point of time, it had reason to be concerned about the availability of funds. We find that as far back as the 30th January, 1958, this announcement appeared in the Press—

#### **£80,000 Plan for Saleyards.**

Plans to increase the capacity and the efficiency of the Midland Junction saleyards are being prepared by the Abattoirs.

No estimates have yet been prepared but the work is expected to cost about £80,000.

Extensions were made to the yards in 1946 and 1947.

The meat executive of the Farmers' Union has appointed a committee to discuss the latest proposals with the Abattoir Board. The union wants the work hastened.

Then it goes on with details about the proposed extensions and improvements. At that point of time, that was a plan for the expenditure of about £80,000, and subsequent Press announcements give the impression that even more money is intended to be invested according to the latest plans of this board.

The situation which confronts this Abattoir Board is not unlike that which confronts other government instrumentalities. In fact, I would say that one of the most discouraging features in running a Government concern must be the method of accounting that is employed. For instance, if one were running the State Saw Mills and one had received £1,000,000 of loan money from the Government, a charge would be made against the accounts for interest and sinking fund to service the advance. If one were then lucky enough to continue to make profits year by year and one had, for the sake of argument, accumulated a profit of £250,000 over ten

years, as manager of that concern one would have the discouraging experience of having had that money confiscated to Consolidated Revenue.

One would then go along to the Treasurer of the day and say, "We just have to replace a timber mill which is antiquated." The Treasurer would agree and let one have £500,000. As a result, one would get on the merry-go-round all over again with interest and sinking fund charges. So what inducement is there to a Government instrumentality to try to make a profit? I suggest that some of these gentlemen who are operating these boards and trading concerns are sorely tempted—I am not suggesting they do—to adopt certain schemes of accounting which would have the effect of keeping the profits down and not disclose officially to the Treasury such profits as might have been disclosed by ordinary accounting methods, knowing that whatever amount they disclose will be confiscated to Consolidated Revenue.

I think the whole crux of this argument on these regulations is not so much around the legal rights of the Government in this matter as around this principle of interference with the operations of a board which is trying to do a good job; a board which evidently is conscious of the fact that if it can keep its operating costs down—and one of the costs is the interest and sinking fund charges—it can, in turn, give an improved service without increasing charges; or, alternatively, can reduce charges. And one of the objects of this board is to reduce charges, bearing in mind that any reduction in such charges has a direct effect on the cost of living through the price of meat.

It is quite evident to me, from the constitution of the board, that the Parliament of the day intended it to operate as a business body. If we look at the constitution of the board, we will find that it was set up to be one comprising men with specialised knowledge of its particular industry and with a wide knowledge of business methods. Subsection (2) of Section 12 of the Act reads—

The board shall consist of three persons appointed by the Governor as members, of whom one shall be a Chartered Accountant and shall have regard to the interests of consumers of meat; one shall have regard to the interest of butchers; and one shall have regard to the interest of producers of meat.

Let us have a look at the provisions of this Act in respect of the fund. It says—

There shall be a fund called the Midland Junction Abattoir Fund. The fund shall be kept and operated in the manner prescribed by the regulations.

Of course, until now, there were no regulations; but Regulations 2A. and 2B. have been introduced. They are briefly as follows:—

2A. The Fund shall be kept at the Treasury and all moneys belonging to the Fund shall be placed to the credit of an account at the Treasury to be called the Midland Junction Abattoir Fund.

2B. The Fund shall be operated in the same manner as money in the public account.

Bear in mind that the Minister did not see fit to bring down these regulations until very recently; in fact; not until August of this year, when, apparently, the difference between the Minister and the board became so great that he felt he had to take action under this Act, and accordingly promulgated regulations with the intention of gaining complete control of the board's fund.

Mr. Kelly: That is a complete falsehood.

Mr. COURT: Why else did the Minister do it?

Mr. Kelly: Never mind why else! What you have said is a complete falsehood, and you know it!

Mr. COURT: I do not know it. Does the Minister say that just out of thin air he brought down these regulations, after all this time?

Mr. Kelly: What you have said about my gaining control of the board's fund is a complete falsehood.

Mr. COURT: When they go to the limit of establishing one fund at the Commonwealth Bank; and, when this is closed by ministerial direction, they open another account at another bank to get complete control, it does not look like harmony to me. Section 17 of the Abattoirs Act says—

The Fund—(a) shall be kept and operated in the manner prescribed by the regulations.

(b) It shall comprise—

- (i) money derived from the management of the Midland Junction Abattoir;
- (ii) fees, charges, rents, tolls, and other payments received by the Board;
- (iii) money in reserves vested in or established by the Board and maintained by the Board;
- (iv) property and investments in which money is invested by the Board;
- (v) money derived from that property and those investments;
- (vi) money derived from transactions relating to that property and those investments;

- (vii) such money as may from time to time be appropriated by Parliament to the funds of the Board;
- (viii) money advanced to the Board by the Treasurer; and
- (ix) such other money as is prescribed by the regulations.

It further says —

- (3) (a) Where at any time the Board is unable to meet its commitments from the Fund the Treasurer may advance to the Board the amount required in order to enable the board to do so.
- (b) The amount of an advance made under paragraph (a) of this subsection with interest at such rate as the Treasurer determines from time to time shall be a first charge upon the Fund and repayable out of the Fund on demand by the Treasurer.

There is in the next section power to invest. I suggest that gives a very definite indication that it was the intention of Parliament that this board should have control of its total fund, and the suggestion that it could even have power to invest with the approval of the Minister also foreshadows that it was empowered to keep intact its funds for future projects, which, to me, seems quite sound.

The Minister has made much play of the fact that Governments of all colour have the habit of confiscating the accumulated profits of these trading ventures. We know that on a strict interpretation a Government can, if it wants to, confiscate those profits to Consolidated Revenue regardless of the fact that the concern in question has to meet its total commitment for interest and sinking fund.

When dealing with the Metropolitan Transport Trust the Minister for Transport made a great deal of play on the degree of autonomy that was to be given to the trust; and it is interesting to see what Section 55 says. It reads as follows:—

The profit made or loss incurred by the Trust in each financial year, shall, when ascertained, be treated in such manner as the Trust determines and is hereby authorised to determine, but any profit which is made by the Trust under this Act and which is available in cash after making full allowance for interest, and sinking fund contributions; and depreciation, obsolescence, and maintenance, of vehicles and plant; and after providing for any accrued losses and after payment of all current liabilities due and payable by the Trust is not required by the Trust for carrying out its functions, shall be paid to the credit of the Trust into the Account.

That is a very clear statement of what the Minister for Transport explained to us when that particular measure was before the House. He went to great lengths to assure us that this trust would not find itself in the position of having its profits confiscated as soon as it made a few pounds. He said it would have a great degree of determination in what was the profit available to the Treasury.

If we turn to the State Electricity Commission Act we will see what provision there is in that measure in respect of the commission's funds. Section 50 is specifically devoted to the question of the application of the funds. This will be of interest to the House, because I think it is a point that has been overlooked by the Minister in answering interjections made earlier this evening. Section 50 of the State Electricity Commission Act states—

Any profit from the business carried on by the Commission under this Act at the end of any financial year which is available in cash after making full allowance for interest and sinking fund contributions, and depreciation, obsolescence and maintenance of plant—

and these are the important words—  
and which, in the opinion of the Commission—

not the Treasurer, but in the opinion of the Commission—

—is not required by the Commission for its purposes under this Act shall, subject to the approval of the Governor be paid to the credit of the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

That is a very clear indication by Parliament that in spite of this so-called golden rule that the profits of these undertakings are confiscated to the Consolidated Revenue Fund, these profits were not to be available until the State Electricity Commission had determined that they were not required for purposes for which they had been formed.

Mr. May: Who would pay the losses?

Mr. COURT: Quite obviously if this commission, or board, or trading concern was in need of funds as a result of its losses, it would go to the Treasurer. Who else should it go to? Just because it makes losses that does not mean that it must make financial demands on the Treasurer. Let us examine this situation; because I think the debate around it is important, not only in relation to this particular board but in our approach to the normal form of Government account keeping.

If we take the Auditor-General's report in respect of the year ended the 30th June, 1957, we find at pages 184 and 185 that for the year ended the 30th June, 1957, this board absorbed interest on capital to £41,589. It absorbed sinking fund contribution of £5,126; it absorbed depreciation

of £36,977 and it absorbed a debit for demolished assets written off in its profit and loss account of £3,931. It absorbed in its profit and loss account provision for accrued repairs and maintenance of £11,533.

After absorbing all those items the profit for the year was £2,395. Let us bear this in mind: that for the previous year its profit was £33,013. The Treasury had actually taken from the previous year £28,207 which was standing to the credit of the profit and loss account at the end of June, 1956; so the previous profit had been taken out of the board's account by the Treasury. However, in spite of the fact that the profit this year is only shown to be a book profit of £2,395, the amount of cash standing to the board's credit at the Treasury and on hand was £60,586. That was as at the 30th June, 1957.

I bring this forward to illustrate that a body such as this could have cash and have no demand on the Treasury although making losses. This of course, is not always the case; in many cases it could still have cash and not make any demand on the Treasury, but not be making a profit, because some of the items that it absorbs into its profit and loss account before striking its profit, for example depreciation, is not actually found in cash in that particular year. It is a book entry to amortise the depreciable assets and does not have to be found in actual cash during that year. I instance that to answer the query as to how they would get on for cash if they made a loss.

Mr. Kelly: How much had they at the end of the financial year?

Mr. COURT: At the 30th June, 1957, they had at the Treasury, £60,586.

Mr. Kelly: That was unexpended loan moneys which had been advanced to them for certain projects. You did not say that.

Mr. COURT: I did not say that at all. The hon. Minister is trying to put words into my mouth which I never uttered.

Mr. Kelly: You said the board had a credit at the Treasury amounting to £60,000 odd at the end of June, 1957, which of course it did not have in actual profits. The board had loan funds to that extent.

Mr. COURT: I suggest that the Minister is getting right out of his depth. He wants to look at these accounts. What he means to say is that the Auditor-General's report is not worth two bob.

Mr. Kelly: I said the money they had at the Treasury was not out of profits but out of loan funds, and unexpended loan funds.

Mr. COURT: I have for the last five minutes been trying to explain to the House how the board can have funds without making profits: because in its accounts for this year the board has absorbed a debit item for depreciation alone of £36,977,

or near enough to £37,000, which it did not have to find in cash. It stands to reason that if the board made neither a profit nor a loss, the board could have that much in the bank in respect of that item alone; that is a capital expenditure made in times gone by. In the course of using those assets to earn income the board has now to absorb a debit in its profit and loss accounts, but it did not have to pay out any cash in that particular year; hence it can have accumulated cash progressively over the life of the plant.

Here we can see the alarm of the board. It is publicly committed—and I think with ministerial approval—to extensions which would vary between £80,000 and £125,000 in cost, and it is not sure that it will have the funds available to undertake that work. Just how discouraged can the board be if it wants to do the job and the Treasurer declares, "I will allow you to do the job and give you £125,000, but that is a new advance. It is to be on a sinking fund and interest basis." In the meantime the Treasurer has had the use of the moneys that the board itself has built up at the Treasury through its activities, but it gets no credit for that. I suggest that if one of us were running this concern on behalf of the Government in a businesslike manner, he would be discouraged 'f he was put into the financial strait jacket in which the Government seeks to place this board.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I do not know whether this is a fair question relating to the profits of £2,000 which you mentioned and the profit of £30,000 for the previous year. Do you think the reduction in profits is because the board wanted to ensure that the Government did not take away its profits, and for that reason it used book entries?

Mr. COURT: That, of course, is a very leading question. I would not like to pronounce judgment on that point without having done the audit of that enterprise. That practice is one to which I referred earlier. If one were running a concern of this nature and knew the profit was going to be confiscated to Revenue, he would be tempted to do that sort of thing.

Mr. Kelly: Not if he was strictly honest.

Mr. COURT: One would not be dishonest if one tried to be over-conservative in one's accounting of the charges for maintenance and repairs, items which strictly should be charged to capital.

Mr. W. Hegney: They would all be subjected to audit.

Mr. COURT: The Minister for Labour is a qualified accountant and auditor; he knows that conservatism is one of the attributes of the average accountant. If he sees conservatism being practised in accountancy he very rarely complains; but when he sees inflationary entries cooked up in the books he complains.



If we take this particular set of accounts we find one item in the profit and loss account making provision for accrued repairs and maintenance of £11,533. I suggest that is a rather unusual item to appear in a set of accounts like this. I do not blame the board. If the position is as we all think it to be I would be all in favour of that entry.

Mr. May: Do you say it is not dishonest?

Mr. COURT: It is not. It is a full disclosure of the facts and the Auditor-General has approved the account. I said it was a rather unusual item, but certainly not dishonest. The full disclosure, in any case, takes out any suggestion that the entry is in that category. That is as far as I can go in answer to the member for Cottesloe. I do not happen to be the Minister administering this particular department.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The Government members were the ones who said it was dishonest.

Mr. COURT: This particular board is in the position of being subject to the Minister, but I would point out to the House that it is not subject to the prior approval of the Minister. That is a very important point.

Mr. Kelly: Then you should not blame any Minister for whatever happens in that case. According to you he has no authority.

Mr. COURT: That is stretching the long bow.

Mr. Kelly: You cannot have it both ways.

Mr. COURT: That is stretching the long bow because the Minister has now taken action—no doubt the Crown Law Department advised him he could do so lawfully—to hit these people. He has now stretched out his net by bringing forward regulations. The Minister has, in effect, said to the board, "You have not done what I want you to do, so I am bringing down a law in the form of regulations, if I am able to get it through Parliament, to make you boys dance to my tune."

The points on which I want the Minister to be specific to the House are two in number. Firstly, has the board deliberately and flatly refused to have its funds at the Treasury, bearing in mind that before this regulation was brought down the board was entitled to have the fund wherever it wanted to? Because the Act clearly sets out what the fund shall be, but it does not say where it shall be kept.

The Act provides, of course, for the form of accounts to be kept, they being accessible to the Auditor-General and so on. The Act does not say that this fund must be at the Treasury. It was not until the Minister brought down the regulations that there was any legal compulsion on the board even to consult the Minister about this particular fund and as to where

it should be kept. The Minister did not answer the question specifically as to whether there had been a flat refusal on the part of this board to have its fund kept at the Treasury. My understanding is that the board did not refuse to have the fund at the Treasury.

The second point is that the board sought an assurance from the Minister that its funds would be available for expansion purposes, instead of the board having to come back to the Treasury to borrow money, and then start the hurdy-gurdy of interest and sinking fund all over again, bearing in mind the provisions of this particular Act. The Minister did not answer the point as to whether he had failed to give the board an assurance that its funds would be available to it as requested. He never even suggested he had made a compromise proposal to it. For that reason I think the board was entitled to put up a show on this particular matter.

The Minister will realise that this is the first chance we have had of getting to grips with this matter; because not until he brought this regulation down could we tackle it. In accordance with the power of this Chamber, a motion has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition for the disallowance of this regulation.

Mr. Kelly: Why didn't the previous Government, when it was in power, insist on these people having a separate account?

Mr. COURT: No-one ever asked for it; and I suppose that during that time the board hoped that it would have access to its funds. It seems to be only a recent idea of this Government to interfere with this board.

Mr. Kelly: They were not making a profit then, but as soon as they make a profit they want complete control.

Mr. COURT: As I understand the position, this difference between the Minister and the board would never have arisen and the account could have stayed at the Treasury until kingdom come if it were not for this argument as to what was going to happen to the board's funds. It could see the newly constituted Metropolitan Transport Trust having special powers in respect of its funds, and it knew the position in respect of the S.E.C.

This board is obviously trying to do a businesslike job in running the abattoir as a business concern and it feels this squeeze will not allow it complete freedom in respect of its project. It is not as if it is a project of which the Minister will not approve. Surely the Minister approves the work it wishes to undertake and will not deny it the right to handle its own funds rather than a new loan for which the Treasury will insist on interest and sinking fund! I support the motion moved by the Leader of the Opposition.

**MR. NALDER** (Katanning) [8.13]: I feel sure that the whole story with reference to the board at the Midland Junction Abattoir has not been told. We have only to look back over the history of this board to see that the present Government has not been behind that board. I will briefly relate its history to the House as I know it. The board was elected a number of years ago; and, as has already been stated—

**Mr. Kelly:** How many years ago?

**Mr. NALDER:** I think it was appointed in 1952. I may not be correct, but I think it could be six or seven years ago. The Minister can correct me if I am not right.

**Mr. Kelly:** You are not right.

**Mr. NALDER:** It was a number of years ago. I know that when the board was first elected three members were mentioned: one representing consumers, one representing farmers or producers, and the other the meat trade.

**Mr. Bovell:** The Act was passed in 1952.

**Mr. NALDER:** If the interjection of the hon. member for Vasse is correct, the Act was passed in 1952 and the board was elected a few months later. We will not argue about that point, because the facts are easily obtained.

In its first year the board faced many difficulties; but as a number of years went on, the profits of the board increased. Previously, the management at Midland Junction created quite a substantial loss on its workings. Therefore, the board was elected to carry out the work of the abattoir, having regard for the interests as represented by the members of the board. The board was required to carry out the work on a sound financial basis. Over the period the board has operated it has done so at a profit.

Two years ago the then Minister for Agriculture introduced a Bill to do away with the board. Apparently the Government realised that the argument it had put up to get rid of the board was not strong enough, and the Bill was not proceeded with. We came to the end of the session without anything more being heard of the Bill.

A period elapsed last year and the board was not reappointed. Then apparently some pressure from somewhere was brought to bear on the Government. I understand the Farmers' Union was perturbed about the matter.

**Mr. May:** You are doing a lot of guessing.

**Mr. Kelly:** There is a lot of supposition to it.

**Mr. NALDER:** The Minister appointed a new board, but we have heard nothing about it from him. I think this House should be told the whole story. Apparently, as suggested by the hon. member for

Nedlands, there must have been some feeling created between the Minister and the board or the department. If that is the case, let the Minister tell us. If he is convinced that that is not the case, let him give us the whole story. Then he might be able to convince hon. members on this side of the House that the regulations he introduced are quite in order.

**Mr. Kelly:** I have already told you that there is no difference between the board and the Minister.

**Mr. NALDER:** Now we have the Minister's assurance we will accept it. This board has operated to the satisfaction of all concerned. We only have to look up the facts to see that since it took over the management and running of the abattoir at Midland Junction both the butchers and the producers have been satisfied. Of course they are satisfied, because conditions existing today are so much better than they were a few years ago! At that time they were working under disgraceful conditions. There were strikes and stoppages; but since the board took over, peace has been reigning supreme at Midland Junction.

The management considered the interests of the men who were slaughtering and those who were taking part in the operation of the abattoir. They are a happy group of people because there now exists co-operation and understanding. One section of the board watches their interests in order to see that their conditions are as good as those in any other abattoir in Australia.

Why not give the board some leniency? The Act already states that it cannot spend more than £1,000 unless the Minister gives his approval. Therefore, the Government has all the security it needs. The position will not arise that by some mischance the board will have some members who are spendthrifts and likely to spend a lot of money unnecessarily. There is a brake in the Act at present and the Minister and the Government are well looked after from that point of view. As I previously pointed out, the board cannot spend more than £1,000 unless it has the permission of the Minister to do so. So why not allow some leniency and encouragement too? As has been said before, if a board—in this case with three members—is doing a good job, and taking a pride in its work, it is able to assist the State.

**Mr. Sleeman:** The workers must be doing a good job.

**Mr. NALDER:** They are doing a good job because they are encouraged by the board to put any case they might have to their representatives; and we find that there is a wonderful understanding. It has been proved; we have not had any stoppages up there. The meat supply has been coming in regularly over a number of years; we do not hear screams and cries from the

producers; and we have not heard the consumers' representative making any noise, because everybody concerned is satisfied.

Why try to throw a spanner in the works, as it were? Why not give this board some leniency; why not encourage it? Consider the job it is doing—relieving the Government of a financial burden! The Minister just mentioned that he had never heard of such a thing as a State trading concern spending its profits. Anyone listening to the Minister would have thought this board was going to run amok and bring about the downfall of the Government and bankrupt it. We have never heard anything like that before.

Mr. Kelly: That is a total exaggeration on your part. Sheer imagination!

Mr. NALDER: The Minister was trying to use his imagination when he had the opportunity. I mentioned these things because this particular board has been doing a creditable job, and why the Government should try to hinder it is beyond my comprehension. It looks as though the Government wants to get rid of the board; and I think this House would be well advised to allow this board some leniency and give it credit where credit is due. It should be one of the highlights of any Government to encourage efficiency where it is being shown; and so I appeal to the Minister, if there is another side to the story, to let us hear it. I support the Leader of the Opposition and hope that the House will disallow these regulations.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [8.23]: I wish to support the motion. It is very difficult for us to get to the bottom of this matter and understand from the Minister's remarks just what is behind it all. One thing is perfectly obvious, and that is that for some reason or other there is a wet blanket being thrown over what we might call the fire of business acumen that is being shown by the board. Why should it be? There is something behind it that we are not being told. But we would expect when a concern established by Parliament has been operating in such a successful way—producing profits and providing a satisfactory service to everyone—that the Minister would be the first one to seek to encourage it. Surely if it is a successful institution it should be encouraged. But what do we find? We find the Minister for some reason or other trying to suppress the board and discourage it.

Mr. May: You have a very suspicious mind.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: The Minister has not told us the reasons for it; but we find that a lot of the trouble is that the Minister objects to any concern that is making a profit, having control of its funds, because he would not know what to do about those concerns showing a loss. He wants to finance the concerns that continue to

make a loss from those making a profit. What encouragement is that to those who are making a success of the venture? We should encourage them to the fullest extent to enable them to continue to show a profit.

If the losing concerns are given the idea that those making a profit can finance them, it is no incentive for them to try to improve their position; and those who continue to be on the debit side should be forced to fall on hands and knees to get their losses financed, and feel miserable about it. If someone else is making a profit to cover their loss, it is no encouragement for them to improve.

Mr. May: Who said that?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I am saying it.

Mr. May: Who do you think is going to believe you?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I feel that whatever is behind the promulgation of these regulations it is something which is not to the advantage of the Abattoir Board or to the State. We ought to know more about it; but while we do not know everything, we know sufficient to object to these regulations.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [8.27]: I do not think the Minister sounded at all convincing in the explanation of the Government's attitude which he gave to the Chamber. It has become more and more obvious that there is a difference of opinion between the Minister and the Midland Junction Abattoir Board. It will be up to the Minister, I think, to prove that is not so. The Midland Junction Abattoir, of course, is playing an increasingly important part in the economic life of the State by catering for the metropolitan meat trade requirements, and suggestions have been made from time to time that it might be used as part of an organisation for the export of meat as well.

I realise that it may be some time before this can eventuate; but obviously, if we are going to have a complete reorganisation of the meat trade both for internal consumption and export, it would be desirable that stock should be killed at Midland Junction for export as well as for the metropolitan or State trade. That, of course, would mean the provision of additional freezing facilities there, as well as the freezing works at Robb's Jetty.

If those facilities were available—and they have been recommended in the past by a Select Committee of this House—it would then be possible for graziers to consign stock to Midland Junction and to specify that if their stock was not of export standard it could be killed for local consumption and would set a definite floor price to what stock should bring in the Midland Junction saleyards.

That being so, I think it should be clear to hon. members that the efficient running of the Midland Junction Abattoir is very

important indeed, for both the consumers and the producers of the meat in Western Australia. If the board is going to carry out that duty properly, as the hon. member for Katanning has said, the function that it is fulfilling is a very important one indeed; and it is highly desirable that it should be given the maximum elbow room and be free from what I might refer to as pettifying controls from the Government.

The Minister said, in his reply to the speech by the Leader of the Opposition who moved for the disallowance of these regulations, that it was entirely normal procedure for such funds as the management of the Midland Junction Abattoir received to be kept at the Treasury. I suggest that that is not a normal procedure, and I did not feel that the Minister made a convincing case on that particular point. Normally a body such as the Midland Junction Abattoir collects the ordinary fees payable to it from week to week or from day to day, and one would expect them to be paid into a bank account and the ordinary disbursements paid from that account.

I feel that if the Midland Junction Abattoir Board is showing a profit, such profit should be used for the improvement of the facilities available at Midland Junction. I think it is undesirable that the board should have to be subjected to the dictates of the Government to any greater extent than is necessary in the operation of the abattoir. It seems to me—and if this is not so the statement should be corrected by some member of the Government—that this will be a very cumbersome procedure because the money will be paid into the Treasury and any settlement of the debts which the board incurs would have to be met direct from the Treasury. That is not a normal procedure for an instrumentality such as the Abattoir Board.

In this instance one would think that normal banking practice would be followed and that the board would have a banking account at Midland Junction upon which it could operate as and when it required. I do not feel that the Minister has made out a convincing case as to why the practice of maintaining a banking account at Midland Junction should be discontinued, and the board's funds held at the Treasury. I feel sure that if one examined the affairs of all the other State Trading Concerns one would not find that all their funds were paid into the Treasury; but apparently, in this particular instance, because the Midland Junction Abattoir Board has built up a surplus, that is an attraction to the Government to force those funds to be kept at the Treasury so that they are available for Government use.

I think the onus is definitely on the Government to prove that the change in procedure is necessary. The Minister was

inclined to say that we have not made out a case as to why this particular system of holding funds at the Treasury should not be followed.

Mr. Kelly: There is no change of procedure at all and you know it.

Mr. PERKINS: I do not know it at all.

Mr. Kelly: Yes, you do. If you don't, then you are talking in the dark about this, as usual.

Mr. PERKINS: My information is that previously the Midland Junction Abattoir Board had a separate bank account.

Mr. Kelly: It has never had a separate bank account.

Mr. PERKINS: That is the information I have.

Mr. Kelly: Your information, like a lot of your other information, is wrong.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister has not made the position clear, although he had the opportunity of doing so when speaking to this motion.

Mr. Kelly: It is the normal practice.

Mr. Court: The board has had two banking accounts, one at the Commonwealth Bank, and one at the Bank of New South Wales.

Mr. Kelly: Then it is only recently, when they took the matter into their own hands.

Mr. Court: But you said they had never had a banking account.

Mr. Kelly: They have never operated on one.

Mr. Court: They have operated on these accounts.

Mr. Kelly: No, they have not. You want to make certain of your facts.

Mr. Court: I am certain of my facts.

The SPEAKER: The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. PERKINS: Surely these exchanges across the Chamber, between the Minister for Lands and Agriculture and the hon. member for Nedlands, highlight the point I am making—that the Minister has not made the position clear. Various hon. members on the Government side of the House have been saying that the Midland Junction Abattoir Board has not had a separate bank account.

Mr. Kelly: That is correct.

Mr. PERKINS: But I gather from these exchanges across the Chamber that the board has had two banking accounts.

Mr. Kelly: It has had nothing of the kind.

Mr. Court: It has.

Mr. Kelly: You are endeavouring to twist something that is not in the argument at all.

Mr. PERKINS: The Minister has framed these regulations—

Mr. W. HEGNEY: And you are trying to frame the Minister.

Mr. PERKINS: —in order to force the Midland Junction Abattoir Board to follow the principle of maintaining its funds at the Treasury. The Minister has not made out a convincing case and I maintain that the onus is on the Government to prove that the procedure it suggests is vitally necessary, and that it is unsound to follow the system, which the Abattoir Board has been following, of having a separate bank account at some convenient point so that it can carry on the vital service which it is providing for both producers and consumers of meat in this State.

On motion by Mr. Ross Hutchinson, debate adjourned.

### INDUSTRIAL ARBITRATION ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 27th August.

THE HON. W. HEGNEY (Minister for Labour—Mt. Hawthorn) [8.38]: Before the second reading is put I would like to make a few remarks on this Bill and, at the outset, I would say that it is one of the most reactionary measures that I have ever been faced with since I became a member of this Chamber.

Mr. Heal: He is a reactionary member.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Either the hon. member for Nedlands is an industrial simpleton, or he thinks he is as cunning as a fox.

Mr. Jamieson: Both.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am inclined to think on this occasion that he is an industrial simpleton.

Mr. Court: I suppose you are going to explain why this is reactionary.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am going to explain why it is anathema to the industrial labour movement—

Mr. Court: That is no reason for opposing it.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: —and to the industrial union movement of this country. I shall endeavour to explain how this is an attempt on the part of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, representing the Liberal Party and those for whom the Liberal Party stands, to try to weaken the Western Australian trade union movement.

Mr. Court: It is nothing of the sort.

Mr. Bovell: Rubbish!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am drawing the fire all right.

Mr. Bovell: It is not a fire.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I hope, before I resume my seat, to indicate why the Government will have none of the two principles contained in this Bill.

Mr. Court: You are opposed to conscientious objection?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I will deal with conscientious objection and the objector who has just interjected.

Mr. Nalder: Dictatorship.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The first principle contained in the Bill has reference to a political fund and political objects. Members on this side of the House, who have had experience in the trade union movement will realise how outmoded the second provision is because it says that no worker shall be prejudiced in his employment because he is not a member of a union. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition hopes to insert the word "not" after the word "is" in reference to a member of a union. Members on this side of the House know the implications of that and I will deal with that aspect in a moment in a little more detail. I would like now to refer to some of the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act.

When I read these sections of the Act, I would like it to be understood that they were some of the provisions that were written into this legislation by the passing of the 1952 amending Bill which was introduced by the present members of the Opposition when they were on this side of the House.

Mr. Potter: That is why they are in opposition.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Yes; and I think they form an ideal Opposition, too. The provisions of the Act relating to the registration of unions—it is as well to quote these—include Subsection (4a) of Section 9. I intend to quote a portion of this Subsection (4a) to demonstrate how hypocritical our opponents are in regard to this matter. This subsection reads—

Rules relating to elections for office—

(a) shall provide that the election shall be by secret ballot; and

(b) shall make provision for—and so forth. Further down, Subsection (4b) reads as follows:—

Without prejudice to the operation of Subsections (4f) and (4g) of this section, the rules of a society applying for registration, or of an industrial union, relating to elections for office may provide for compulsory voting.

That amendment was inserted in 1952, and by an Opposition which says that it does not believe in compulsion of any form.

Mr. Court: The two points have no relation whatsoever.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I will now refer—

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: I think you have the wrong Bill.

Mr. May: He has not the wrong Bill!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: —to Section 9 (4f) at this stage. I would like the hon. member for Nedlands, if he is interested, to get his statute out and look up this section.

Mr. Court: I have it!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Subsection (4f) provides—

The Court may, upon its own motion or upon application made under this section, disallow any rule of an industrial union which, in the opinion of the Court—

and that is the Arbitration Court—

—(a) is contrary to law, or to an award, order or industrial agreement;

(b) is tyrannical or oppressive;

That is far-reaching enough! Continuing—

(c) prevents or hinders members of the industrial union from observing the law or the provisions of an award, order or industrial agreement; or

(d) imposes unreasonable conditions upon the membership of a member or upon an applicant for membership,

and a rule so disallowed shall be void.

Under that provision there is ample scope for any person who believes that there is a rule in the constitution of the union which is tyrannical or oppressive or is unreasonable or imposes hardship on any member. It would be on that ground that he could approach the court for a disallowance of the rule. As a matter of fact Subsection (4g) provides—

A member of an industrial union may apply to the Court for the disallowance of a rule of the industrial union on any of the grounds specified in Subsection (4f) of this section.

These were the amendments that were inserted in 1952 by members of the Opposition.

Mr. Court: You cannot relate that to the Bill.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I have not started yet. Continuing—

(4h) The Court may, in its discretion, instead of disallowing the rule, direct the industrial union concerned to alter that rule, within a specified time so as to bring it into conformity with the requirements of this Act and, if, at the expiration of that time, the rule has not been so altered, the Court may then disallow the rule and the rule shall be void.

Other provisions then follow; but I will turn now to Section 29. This provision is very illuminating too. I am quoting these sections of the Act to indicate how hypocritical is the amendment of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, and to indicate the numerous provisions which now exist in the Act to overcome any real or imaginary objection or obstruction put up by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Court: How was it that Warder Thorne could not overcome them?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Deputy Leader of the Opposition thinks that is a prickly one, but I will get over it all right. Section 29 provides—

(1) An industrial union may apply to the Registrar in the prescribed manner for a cancellation of the registration thereof, and thereupon the Registrar, if satisfied that the cancellation is desired by a majority of the members of such union, and after giving 'six weeks' notice in the Gazette can cancel such registration.

(2) If it appears to the President on the application in the prescribed manner of any industrial union or person interested, or of the Registrar—

(a) that an industrial union has been registered erroneously or by mistake; or

(b) that the rules of an industrial union are not in conformity with the requisitions of this Act or have not bona fide been observed; or

(c) that the rules of an industrial union or their administration do not or does not provide reasonable facilities for the admission of new members or impose or imposes unreasonable conditions upon the continuance of their membership or are or is in any way oppressive; or

(d) that the proper authority of an industrial union wilfully neglects to provide for the levying and collection of subscriptions, fees, or penalties from members of the union; or

(h) that for any other reason the registration of an industrial union ought to be cancelled.

Those are the main rules which govern the registration of industrial unions. I submit that every union must have its rules registered according to the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act. Those rules are perused by the registrar and any other organisation can inspect them and lodge objection against the registration of the union. Provided the registrar and the

president are satisfied that the rules conform with the law—particularly the section which I have just read—those rules are duly registered and the union, whether it be an industrial organisation of employers or employees, receives its due registration and the executive of its governing body is entitled to have those rules observed. Further, where any member of that union transgresses the rules of the organisation he is entitled to be dealt with accordingly.

Mr. Court: Are you going to tie this up with the Bill?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I will tie up the hon. member in a minute.

Mr. Court: That's what you would like to do!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I would like at this stage to deal with some of the points of the first amendment. I would say now, quite unreservedly, that this amendment is intended to cripple the A.L.P. in this State.

Mr. Court: Nonsense!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That is my opinion.

Mr. Court: It cannot be based on a firm foundation.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It is based on a firm foundation, probably, than another organisation I have heard about, because it is built on humanitarian principles, and it is for those principles that we are prepared to contest these matters to the limit. We find that proposed new section 32A says—

No funds of an industrial union shall be applied or charged directly or indirectly in support of any political object except where such application or charge is . . .

(a) in accordance with the rules of the union.

That is all right.

(b) approved by a majority of the members of the industrial union.

I cannot imagine the A.W.U. getting over that one.

(c) made wholly from or on a political fund of the industrial union.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition did not say one word on affiliation fees from the industrial union to the Australian Labour Party.

Mr. Court: There is no need to.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Does he mean that affiliation fees will be a political levy?

Mr. Court: You read out what "political object" includes.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The hon. member for Nedlands does not say "political object means"; he says "political object includes", which is different altogether. The word

"includes" is far more restrictive than the word "means". I will read Subsection (2) of proposed new Section 32A—

(2) Political object includes—

- (a) anything done to assist a candidate for any election or any political party assisting a candidate or candidates for an election;
- (b) the holding of meetings or the publishing by any means of any matter written or verbal in support of a candidate or an election;
- (c) the maintenance of any person who is a candidate for any election or who is a member of Parliament;
- (d) anything done in respect to the registration or enrolment of electors or the selection of candidates for election.

As I see it, we could have an organisation like, say, the Master Bakers' Association. I understand it is an industrial union of employers registered at the Court of Arbitration. The position could arise where 100 per cent of its members decide they would like their secretary to represent them in Parliament. He could stand as a conservative or as an independent or as a representative of the Labour Party, but the Master Bakers' Association would not be able to provide any funds for him.

Mr. Court: Yes they could. You read it!

Mr. W. HEGNEY: We will now turn to the position of the secretary of an industrial union of workers. Such a secretary is selected by a ballot of the Labour Party as Labour candidate for a particular constituency, and he is carrying on his work as a union secretary. Would he be entitled to draw funds from the union?

Mr. Court: Yes, if he conformed to the rules.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Which rules?

Mr. Court: Those rules you were reading.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Let us take the case of two Labour candidates who are officials of the A.W.U. The ramifications of that union extend from Wyndham in the north to Esperance in the south-east. Would it be reasonable to expect a majority of members of the union to approve?

Mr. Court: Why not?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The hon. member should take time off to see why not. The hon. member for Nedlands does not say "A majority of the members of the union exercising a vote at a properly-constituted ballot." He says, "A majority of the members of the union." It would be practically impossible for the governing body of the union to have a majority of them as members.

Mr. Court: If we amended it to meet your suggestion would you support it?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I would like to see the amendment, and scrutinise it very closely before I committed myself. So far as political objects are concerned, when unions are having their rules compiled with a view to registration, they would be advised by the registrar of the court, or others, before those rules were duly registered. If there were any definite political objects in a union rule it would be dangerous, because, on page 30 of the Industrial Arbitration Act as reprinted with notations to the 31st of March, 1956, we find the following:—

The insertion of political objects is legal though of doubtful wisdom. Their inclusion would have a direct bearing on the question of "convenience" (Section 21) and may well cause the registrar to refuse to exercise the discretion vested in him by that section, in which case political minorities would obtain registration as independent industrial unions, with the result that the usefulness, and the existence, of the old union would be seriously jeopardised (C. Dwyer, P., in *Jarvis v. W.A. Timber Workers' Union* (1933) 13 W.A.I.G. 275.).

Mr. Court: You are battling.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: No I am not. I am merely indicating that the insertion of political objects in this measure is entirely unwarranted and unnecessary. The provisions of the Act are already in existence; and before a union can maintain its registration, or any new union obtain registration, it must conform to the requirements of the Industrial Arbitration Act. I do not propose to dwell on that aspect of the Bill; but before passing on I would like to make brief reference to the Hurseys, who were mentioned by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am advised that the two Hurseys were knocked back by the lumpers of Hobart, not because they would not pay the political levy but because they were not financial.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Did you say "knocked back" or "knocked about"?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: They did not pay anything for 1957; and in February, 1958, the waterside workers declined to work with them, not because of their failure to pay a 10s. levy, but because of their non-payment of union dues.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: The union would not accept their dues.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am merely answering the assertions made by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Court: I think you have taken that out of the communist pamphlet.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Federal Rule 7 of the Waterside Workers' Federation provides that—

any member who at the beginning of January each year fails to pay contributions or fees or fines when they

become payable in that year shall at the end of such twelve months cease to be a member of such union.

The federation's rules are registered with the Commonwealth Court of Arbitration and were accepted by the Hurseys when they joined the federation. They would be required to accept those rules when they joined.

The port order covering the engagement of labour in Hobart provides that no non-unionist shall be sent to work while unionists are available. In August or September of 1957, F. Hursey was asked to pay his union due of £8 which excluded the levy. He said at the time that he would only pay £7 17s. 6d., but he has not paid anything.

Mr. Court: You know why. I am surprised that you do not get your facts from reliable sources.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I am saying something in contradiction to what the member for Nedlands has put up.

Mr. I. W. Manning: From where did you get your story?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I did not get it from the Hurseys, but I have heard many stories from the hon. member. I do not propose to go into details regarding the attitude of wharf labourers. I understand that a few years ago when Hursey senior met with an injury which caused him to be incapacitated and to be placed on compensation for some time, he applied subsequently to the authorities for registration on the wharves. He was turned down on more than one occasion, but the watersiders came to his aid and threatened to cease work unless he was re-employed. He was afterwards re-employed.

I am not going to dwell on the amount of money which the Hurseys got from the Sydney newspaper "The Daily Telegraph." I understand it was in the vicinity of £6,000. I only mention that because that point was raised by the member for Nedlands. I am aware that he has followed a certain pattern of action since he has adorned this Chamber with his presence. Every opportunity he gets to work on behalf of his party he does the work assiduously to try to spike the guns of Labour and the industrial union movement of this country.

I now pass to the second amendment. This prompted me to say at the outset that the hon. member was an industrial simpleton or was cunning as a fox.

Mr. Court: I thought you were going to tell me about the £6,000.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: No, I shall leave the hon. member to make the inquiries. He might check on some of the donors to that fund and find among them some very prominent Liberals in the Eastern States.



Mr. Court: That might be so. They appreciate that a man has a right to defend himself.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I shall deal with the second amendment. I said that the Deputy Leader of the Opposition who initiated this Bill might be as cunning as a fox. I should alter that statement and say that the mouse knows much, but the cat knows more. I think we on this side of the House know a little bit more than the Deputy Leader of the Opposition gives us credit for. He has tried, by the insertion of a couple of words in a vital section of the Act, to upset a measure which affects so many people in this State.

In 1912—that is, approximately 46 years ago—a provision was inserted into the Industrial Arbitration Act; namely, Section 135. Older members on this side of the House will know more about that than the younger members, including myself. If we read the history of the trade union movement we will appreciate the background of this legislation. I shall read out Section 135 of the Act at this stage. I might say that the following section, No. 136, is similar except that it relates to employers in place of workers. Section 135 states—

No employer shall dismiss any worker from his employment or injure him in his employment or alter his position to his prejudice by reason merely of the fact that the worker is an officer or member of an industrial union or association or of a society or other body that has applied to be registered as a union or association or is entitled to the benefit of an industrial agreement or award.

We know why this provision was inserted into the Act. You, Mr. Speaker, have had experience of the difficulties which confronted active trade unionists in the earlier years. There are hon. members on this side of the House, and probably one or two in the Opposition, who realise the background to that particular section. Why was it put into the Industrial Arbitration Act? Was it put there for any specific purpose? Was it put there without effort, fight, and struggle? What is the purpose behind that section? The reason is that in this country, when the industrial unionists were fighting for a foothold, some were put in gaol because they were unionists. When, by political action they were strong enough in the public halls and Parliaments of this country, they were able to write this provision into the Act. That briefly is the reason behind Section 135.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, on behalf of the Liberal Party, wants to introduce a seemingly innocuous phrase—namely, “or is not a member of an industrial union”—into the provision. How would the clause then read? In these times when industrial associations and unions are the accepted custom in Western Australia,

the introduction of the words proposed would mean the beginning of industrial disputation from one end of the State to the other.

Mr. Court: You are letting your imagination run away with you.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: My imagination is not running away with me.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: How do you make that out?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: If the hon. member will give me a moment I shall explain. The reason for putting Section 135 into the Act was the desire to protect the active trade unionists in this country; when it was a crime in the eyes of some employers in this and other States there were many men and women who were too frail to stand up to the employers. By degrees we were able to get that section into the Act. The Labour movement was opposed very strongly. That provision was included in the Act for a specific purpose.

The Liberal Party now wants to come along—I shall deal with preference to unionists in a moment—and say in effect that no worker shall be prejudiced in his employment by reason of the fact that he is, or is not a member of an industrial union. Can you visualise, Mr. Speaker, the reaction of the shearers, the tradesmen at Midland Junction Workshops, in the railways, and elsewhere, scattered throughout the length and breadth of this State, when 95 per cent. of the workers are paying into trade unions registered in the Arbitration Court which fight for reasonable provisions and industrial protection, while 5 per cent. of the workers remain out? Can we say industrial peace will continue?

Mr. Heal: No.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Of course not! We have had industrial peace in Western Australia for the past five years. Why?

Mr. Heal: Because we have a Labour Government.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Not only that, although that is one of the major factors. It is because the trade union movement has been active. I can say this: Industrial peace will be forced out and there will be industrial disharmony throughout the length and breadth of this State if this particular amendment in the Bill is passed.

Mr. Court: That is pure imagination.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I leave that point for the time being. I now wish to deal with the arrant hypocrisy which is behind the amendments contained in the Bill. During the course of his remarks the Deputy Leader of the Opposition made great play about a Mr. Thorne and about certain employees of the State Brick Works. Although there is no preference to unionists clause in the industrial agreement operating at the State Brick Works, I would say that the particular union is not affiliated

with the A.L.P. The two men concerned in that case had their services terminated, but that was not the only place where men were stood down. Within a mile or so, at the Metropolitan Brick Works at Cardup a similar situation arose.

Mr. Court: It did not. Tell the full facts.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I shall tell the facts, briefly, as I believe them to be.

Mr. Court: See how correct you are.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: At the Metropolitan Brick Works at Cardup, three men who had been members of the union—in this I am open to correction—gave requisite notice, and the manager or employer indicated to them at the finish that if they did not continue to be members of a union their services were to be terminated.

Mr. Court: That is not so.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: One withdrew his resignation and two had their services terminated. That is the position as I am advised.

Mr. Court: These men resigned.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: One withdrew his resignation from the union.

Mr. Court: I suppose he is still there then.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Their services were terminated because of the fact that they were non-unionists.

Mr. Court: Two resigned from the union, but the employer did not terminate their services. In fact, he told the employees he would not be bulldozed into it.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: What happened?

Mr. Court: If the men resign, the employer cannot stop them.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The men discontinued their employment.

Mr. Court: That is their business.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: Their services were terminated.

Mr. Court: The employer treated them differently from the Government.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: My information is that one resigned and two were dismissed. I am open to correction, but that is what I was advised.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You are not too sure of your facts.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The point is that those who were non-unionists did not continue in employment. I have a letter here that might be worth reading. It is from the Australian Dutch League, and is dated the 5th August, 1958, and addressed to the State Executive of the A.L.P., Trades Hall, Beaufort-st., Perth. It reads as follows:—

We have the honour to inform you that the action of some members of the Free Reformed Church in Armadale and Albany against the Unions has been investigated by us.

We consider this action as being irresponsible and want to emphasise that we regret and condemn the behaviour of some people of this very small minority of the Dutch community.

In order to take away any thoughts about Dutch people being against membership of the Trades Unions we may point out that the Dutch people in general know too well the very important work the Unions did and do all over the world to obtain better conditions for the working people.

Mr. Lapham: Have you a copy for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: That was the opinion forwarded to the Government of what the Dutch people think of trade unions.

Mr. Court: Who was the letter from?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It is signed by a Dutch person named Jan J. M. Bazen. I do not know him.

Mr. Court: What community did he represent?

Mr. W. HEGNEY: The Australian Dutch League. I do not want to delay the House in regard to this matter, but I now come to the crux of it. The second amendment is the very crux of it. During his remarks, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition emphasised religious objections. He went to great pains to impress upon the Chamber that conscientious objectors should be allowed to go their own way; but his amendment does not say that. To that I say, a mouse knows much but the cat knows more. The amendment is all-sweeping. This Government introduced a preference-to-unionists policy 31 years ago.

Mr. Court: Now you have made it compulsory.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: It has been upheld ever since. If there is going to be any amendment to the Industrial Arbitration Act in regard to conscientious objectors, it will be harnessed to a preference-to-unionists policy, and we will see where the Opposition stands then; we will see how sincere they are in regard to conscientious objectors. What would be the attitude of the Opposition if we said, "Preference to unionists in employment with a proviso that conscientious objectors should be exempt provided they placed sufficient proof before the court"? Would the Opposition agree to that?

Mr. Court: There is already a preference power in the Act.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I know the attitude of the Liberal Party and the Employers' Federation. They want to break the trade unions; they want this amendment so that they will be free. It is entirely contrary to the Industrial Arbitration Act, which

from beginning to end implies negotiations between bodies of employers and bodies of employees—not individuals. An individual cannot approach the Arbitration Court; and if arbitration is going to be an accepted industrial policy of the community of Western Australia there must be obligations and responsibilities imposed both on the employers and the workers of this country.

The Deputy Leader of the Opposition is trying to put in this escape clause so that it will not matter, on a particular job, whether a person belongs to an industrial union or not. As far as we are concerned, I say quite unequivocally that we stand for preference to unionists. If there is to be any modification in that policy it will be through the Industrial Arbitration Act or the Government.

In his reply, I would like the Deputy Leader of the Opposition to indicate why he has not put something specific into his amendment in regard to a conscientious objector's clause. Why try to sneak an all-sweeping clause into the Industrial Arbitration Act? He will not get away with it so far as I am concerned. I think all members on this side of the House will realise how hollow and hypocritical the amendment is. I do not think the Leader of the Opposition is in agreement with the amendment.

Mr. Court: He is 100 per cent. behind it.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: I think these words are worth repeating, as they will give an indication of what is in the minds of those on this side of the House. They are as follows:—

Dave was an ox-team driver and was quiet but clever

For his whip with startling crack would hit whatever he had set eyes upon.

Driving his team one day he saw a fly on the roadside fence

One crack and the fly was dead.

Another and a lizard lost his head.

A bright-eyed squirrel from the herb-age rose

The fatal flash just got him on the nose

A cove named Charlie saw and asked for one more test

"Try that, Dave," he said and pointed to a hornet's nest.

Dave at once the situation sized

"No fear," he said, "I am not a mug  
Those chaps are organised."

MR. WILD (Dale) [9.18]: That was a funny finale to a ranting speech; a speech that was hardly on the Bill submitted by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. I am going to confine my remarks this evening to the question of the conscientious objector—the Minister scraped over it lightly—mainly because it concerns some

men who reside in the electorate of Dale. It seems to me that the rules of the Minister and the party he represents here must be very different from those applicable to his senior men in another place.

As far as these Dutch people are concerned—but irrespective of whether they are Dutch or Ukrainian, Hungarian or whatever they are—they were brought to this country by successive Commonwealth Governments and given to understand that we had in this country many freedoms. In the particular case of these Dutchmen—members of the Dutch Reformed Church—I do not think anybody could deny that they are in the minority. But be that as it may, they are a religious body; and I want to tell the House that never before have I seen people attend church so religiously as do the members of this Dutch Reformed Church in Armadale.

Mr. May: Does that make them Christians?

Mr. WILD: That is entirely beside the point. There may be plenty of us who follow our particular religion, but we may not necessarily be Christians. But the point I am making is that these people in Australia—in Armadale, anyway—are the most conscientious people I have ever seen when it comes to attending their place of worship.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: They must have strong beliefs.

Mr. WILD: Exactly. As the hon. member for Cottesloe says, they must have strong beliefs. Some time ago—about five years, if my memory serves me rightly—when the first of them came to Western Australia, they brought very soon afterwards their own pastor; and they were in the habit of hiring the supper room at the Armadale hall. However, their numbers grew; and, I understand, grew to somewhere in the vicinity of 400, and the supper room could not hold them. However, the point I want to make is that I have never seen a body of people such as this who were more conscientious in following their religion by a constant attendance at their place of worship.

These members of the Dutch Reformed Church do not all agree with the attitude that has been adopted. Some of them said to me, "We think they have carried their principles too far." But the point is we have two men at Armadale, and three at Cardup—and I understand there are one or two others about—who have adopted the same attitude as far as unions are concerned; but collectively they are only a small minority. They have indicated it is against their religious beliefs to belong to a trade union; and for the benefit of the House I would like to read an extract from the letters that were written by the two men who were the subject of the case that was recently before the Arbitration Court, in which they indicated that they were

unable to continue to be members of the union, and also what they were prepared to do.

The two letters were exactly the same and referred to the same passage in the Bible. The following is a copy of the letter sent to the Westralian Brickyard, Pottery, Porcelain and Roof Tile Fixers Employees' Union of Workers, on the 14th February:—

Dear Sirs,

I, A. Hordijk, herewith resign from my membership of the Westralian Brickyard, Pottery, Porcelain and Roof Tile Fixers Employees' Union of Workers, and give three months' notice as from today.

- The reason of my resignation is that I have conscientious objections against the said Union. My religious convictions in this matter have grown so strong lately that they led to my decision to end my membership.

The principle of my objection is that I believe that the Lord forbids me in His Word to join the Union, as He said: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers." 2 Cor. 6:14. Moreover, Jesus Christ said: "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." St. Math. 6:33.

I therefore cannot continue to be a member of any Trade Union.

The two men then had a discussion with Mr. French and Mr. Hollebrandse—

Mr. Evans: Who influenced those letters?

Mr. WILD—at the brickworks, indicating to them that they did not mind the 1s. a week they had to pay to the union, and went so far as to say they were prepared to pay double that fee to a body such as the Red Cross, Spastic Children's Centre, Cancer Appeal Fund, or whatsoever. This was to indicate that the objections against the union were serious, but not from the financial angle.

As all hon. members know, those two men were virtually locked out and finally sacked. I just want to remind the Minister and his colleagues on the other side of the House that his friends in another place in Canberra did not see quite eye to eye with that; because only in 1956 the present Federal Minister for Labour, Mr. Holt, saw fit to introduce in the Federal House an amending Bill to the Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1956, and it was on similar lines to the Bill now before us with regard to conscientious objection in regard to unionism.

I would just like to read to the House the extracts of the speeches of the three main men who responded on behalf of the Opposition; and they did not pull any punches about it. The first speaker was Mr. E. James Harrison (Blaxland), on the

6th June, 1956, and in Federal Hansard for that date, at page 2834, he is reported as having said—

We offer no objection to the amendment proposed by the Government. We take the view that people who have a genuine conscientious objection to joining a union . . .

Mr. Evans: Yes, a genuine one!

Mr. WILD: The speech continues—

. . . should be given some relief. The Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr. Harold Holt) has indicated that the corresponding decision in New South Wales was a Parliamentary decision. As a matter of fact, the proposal was put forward by the party to which I have the honour to belong.

Then later on, the next speaker for the Opposition in the Federal House was Mr. J. R. Fraser (Australian Capital Territory), and he had this to say—

I should like to make a few observations on the proposed sub-sections before the committee. I say at the outset that I am an enthusiast for compulsory unionism, which has prevailed in my profession, journalism, for more than a quarter of a century, certainly in relation to employment on the metropolitan dailies which have representatives covering the activities of this Parliament; but I contend also very strongly for the right of conscience, and I believe that that is a right which this Parliament must act to protect. That is a very difficult problem to solve, and I congratulate the Minister for Labour and National Service (Mr. Harold Holt) and his officers on having made an attempt to provide protection for those people in the community who feel themselves impelled by conscience to belong neither to a trade union nor to an employers' association.

Then the king of the Labour Party, Dr. Evatt, at page 2838, had this to say—

This is a very important amendment. It has been discussed by the Opposition which reached the conclusion that it should not be opposed. One can easily understand how a political party which has been largely founded on the sacrifices of trade unionists must approach this question carefully, lest what appears to be a concession and recognition may be subject to abuse. I believe that what has won the day, so to speak, in this particular case, as has already been indicated by my colleague, the hon. member for the Australian Capital Territory (Mr. J. R. Fraser), is the obvious sincerity of the gentlemen who made representation in connection with the matter, not only to the Government, but also to members of

the Opposition. They are obviously sincere men, and they have their conscientious beliefs.

So it is evident that the Labour Party in another place finds that there is room for a man who has conscientious beliefs.

Mr. Evans: Genuine ones.

Mr. WILD: I think there is possibly another line that could be taken. We live in a free country, and during my time, and I think during the time of most hon. members in this House, we have been engaged in two world wars. Yet we have seen fit, during both of those world wars, to excuse men who have conscientious beliefs from fighting for their country. We all know that in recent years young fellows have been called up for national service. Yet in 1953 the Commonwealth Government saw fit to amend the National Service Act of 1951 by inserting in it the following section:—

A person whose conscientious beliefs do not allow him to engage in any form of naval, military or air force service is, so long as he holds those beliefs, exempt from liability to render service under this Act.

If it is good enough for this country to exempt men who have religious beliefs from fighting for the very things that we live for—the freedom of Australia—surely it is good enough for those same men who have conscientious religious beliefs, and it can be proved, to be exempt from joining a union!

Mr. Potter: So that they can ride on the backs of their mates.

Mr. WILD: If they are riding on the backs of their mates, what about the men who claim exemption from fighting for their country? Who is doing the riding there?

Mr. May: They are on their own backs.

Mr. Rowberry: They still serve.

Mr. WILD: There is no parallel at all. If it is good enough for a man to get exemption from fighting for his country because he has conscientious religious beliefs it is good enough for him to be able to get exemption from joining a union, particularly when it is realised that these men were not worried about the money, because they were prepared to give the equivalent of their union dues to the Red Cross, the cancer appeal or to some other worthy cause.

Mr. Lapham: It is a terrible thing to be a member of a trade union!

Mr. WILD: The Minister rose in his seat singing to high Heaven about what would happen to the unions if this Bill were agreed to. Yet Dr. Evatt, in Canberra, said that he wholeheartedly agreed with an amendment of this type. I fully support the second reading of the Bill introduced by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition.

MR. ROWBERRY (Warren) [9.35]: The other evening, when speaking to the second reading of the State Government Insurance Office Act Amendment Bill the Deputy Leader of the Opposition referred to Gilbert and Sullivan. If I could describe this Bill in Gilbert and Sullivan's words I would say that it was "a thing of shreds and patches introduced by a wandering minstrel from Nedlands."

During his speech the Minister for Labour dealt with the constitutional aspects of this measure, and what effect it would have on the Arbitration Act. But there are a few points that he did not elaborate on and to which I wish to refer. To my mind Section 135 was inserted in the Act as a tacit admission that unions had a most essential part to play in arbitration, because that section protects members of a union, and officials as such. We have also had a tacit admission from the hon. member for Nedlands that unions are necessary, because he said that an individual could not approach the court but that such an approach could only be through an accredited representative of a union.

That alone indicates that there is a crying need for unions, and it is one of the reasons why the section was placed in the Act. The hon. member's amendment will have the effect of applying to a person who is or who is not a member of a union. That would interfere with the principles of hiring and firing—one of the oldest principles in the Arbitration Act, and one which the court has stood by steadfastly. If the Bill is agreed to it will mean that an employer cannot sack a man because he is not a member of a union; in other words, if he was not a member of the union he could not be sacked. That alone condemns the amendment.

We have heard a considerable amount of sentimental hysteria in regard to conscientious objection on religious grounds. I agree with the Minister that if this Bill is passed it will cause more discord and disharmony in the industrial movement of this country than anything has ever done before. I have taken a lifelong interest in unions. I joined the miner's union at 14 years of age and I started work the day afterwards. Since coming to this country I have represented the A.W.U. on road gangs and I have been a union official from the time I arrived until I was elected to Parliament.

Most of the trouble in unions is caused by the fact that the men resent their fellow workers who do not join the union, not because of religious beliefs but for the fear of parting up with a few bob. Those men must have come from the same country as I did; if not, they exhibit the same traits. If the hon. member for Nedlands desires to promote harmony in the industrial field he should withdraw this Bill altogether.

I should now like to touch on the question of conscientious objection on religious grounds. No-one in his proper senses would deny anyone exemption from anything if he had a conscientious objection to doing it. But that can be carried to infinity. Suppose we had a conscientious objection to obeying the Traffic Act. What would happen to us then? Suppose we had a conscientious objection to obeying any Act. What would happen to us in that event? We now pass to those people who base their conscientious objections on religious grounds. If I can read this print I will quote this to the House—

Mr. May: What book is it?

Mr. ROWBERRY: It is the Bible; and the quotation is from the fifth chapter of St. Matthew. One could almost call this the policy speech of Jesus Christ, for those who aspired to follow him. Verse 25 of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew reads as follows:—

Mr. Court: You want to be careful or the Minister for Labour will recite it for you.

Mr. Kelly: And put a few extras in, too.

Mr. ROWBERRY: The quotation reads—

Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Verse 26 continues as follows:—

Verily I say unto thee, thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

There is an analogy there between those who went to the judge with the union as their adversary. If they had read this chapter of the Bible beforehand they probably would have thought again. Verses 38 to 42 of the fifth chapter of St. Matthew read as follows:—

38. Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

39. But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also.

40. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

41. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

Mr. Sleeman: Read to the Opposition about Jesus throwing the money-lenders out of the temple.

Mr. ROWBERRY: We have departed slightly from the principals of religion as laid down by the apostles. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, when introducing this amending bill, said that we should have a real test, but he did not indicate the nature of such test. I submit to the House that this is the real test: whether these men, in their belief, can measure up to what is set, as an example, by their Master and the men who inaugurated the principle of religion.

So we deal with the hysterical outburst which demands that because a man demands to be exempted from fighting for his country, he should be exempted from joining a union. There is a great difference here. The principle of exempting a man from fighting for his country is not because he does not want to fight. It is because he does not want to take life. That is the real reason; reason, which is based on true religious convictions. The Leader of the Christian religion showed that by his own example. Before he would take life he allowed his own to be taken. That should be the real test of any conscientious objection on religious grounds.

The man who has a conscientious objection against fighting for his country has to go to court and prove to the judge that he is a legitimate objector, and then he is allowed to serve his country as a non-combatant to prove he is not a coward. I say to the member for Dale that he is on the wrong track altogether when he claims there is an analogy between refusing to join a union and refusing to take life, even although it does not mean fighting for one's country. One can still fight and yet not take life.

I will now deal with the Hursey case which, according to our friend the Deputy Leader of the Opposition, rocked Australia. He does not indicate whether it rocked Australia with merriment or with some other emotion. However, I have a newspaper here which I intend to read to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition with your permission, Sir. Of course, one cannot believe anything that is printed in the newspaper save the date, and even that is suspect; but still, this extract reads as follows:—

The Hurseys were present at the meeting which decided on the levy, but did not speak or vote against it.

The Hurseys were offered the opportunity of paying the 10s. levy to any political party, including the "D.L.P." or to any charity they named. They refused.

Mr. Cosgrove, in his speech to Parliament, accused the Stevedoring Industry Authority of trying to provoke a general wharf strike by rostering the Hurseys ahead of financial unionists.

Mr. Cosgrove emphasised that the late Australian Prime Minister, Mr. J. B. Chifley, had struck as a railwayman in support of the principle that unionists should not work with non-unionists.

"If the Stevedoring Industry Act had been applied in the manner it was intended to apply, the dispute would never have taken place."

Those were the words of Mr. Cosgrove, Tasmania's Labour Premier.

Mr. Court: Which newspaper is that?

Mr. ROWBERRY: I will give the Deputy Leader of the Opposition a copy of it.

Mr. Court: Can you tell us which one it is because it reads like a paper the communist party sent to me after I introduced the Bill.

Mr. ROWBERRY: It does not matter where the truth is printed, it still remains the truth. This newspaper is "The New Standard," published in Brisbane on Friday, the 29th August, 1958; registered at the post office as a newspaper.

Mr. Court: Who is it published by?

Mr. ROWBERRY: If the hon. member does not believe what is published in this newspaper because it has a communistic or Labour origin, I will quote to him what "Pix" has to say on the matter. Surely the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would not say that "Pix" is a labour organisation, would he? The extract from "Pix," dated the 12th July, 1958, and which covers a conversation with the Hurseys, reads as follows:—

Pix: What were your political beliefs before you joined the D.L.P.?

Mr. Hursey: I was an A.L.P. man all my life until last August.

Did you ever previously pay levies through the union to the A.L.P.?—Yes, of course, several times.

Then you don't object to the principle?—I do this time. I am a D.L.P. man now.

Mr. Court: That is the milk in the coconut!

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: What is wrong with that?

Mr. ROWBERRY: Nothing at all.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You are trying to make out that there is something wrong with it.

Mr. ROWBERRY: Who, me? The hon. member must be a thought-reader. But he is not a very good one.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You had better make your point.

Mr. Bovell: I hope the member for Warren knows what he is talking about. We have yet to learn.

Mr. ROWBERRY: The newspaper report continues—

Did you vote against this latest levy at the stopwork meeting?—No. Earlier at that meeting, I had spoken on another matter, and I was counted out from one to 10. Then this question of the levy came up and I kept my mouth shut.

Mr. Paddy Williams, then Chairman of the Branch, reports—and other waterside workers present verify—that when Hursey got up to speak on the issue of midnight shifts, a very small section of the audience began to count him out, because they resented what they considered to be his anti-labor activities.

Chairman Williams insisted that they give Hursey a quiet hearing. They stopped interrupting and Hursey was able to speak without any difficulty.

He could have done the same on the issue of the political levy, but instead cast no vote in opposition to the 10s. levy for the Labour Party in the Tasmanian State elections, and remained silent when the Chairman declared the motion carried unanimously.

According to the Deputy Leader of the Opposition he was very brave. To continue—

Pix asked Hursey why he had not paid the 10s. levy to any political organisation or charity they chose, as the union had told them.

Mr. Hursey (as reported by Pix): I am not paying that 10s. It stays where it is, but I am prepared to give £1 to charity.

Pix: Then why haven't you?

Hursey: Because the union hasn't nominated it.

On the contrary, the Hobart Branch of the Waterside Workers' Federation officially informed Hursey that he could pay the 10s. to the Crippled Children's Society, the Old Age Pensioners' League or any other charitable institute.

I have several copies of this paper, and if any members of the Opposition would like to see me in the Members' Room I could arrange to supply them with copies.

Mr. Court: I have received several copies from the most extraordinary sources.

Mr. ROWBERRY: Members of the Opposition fall in love with the Arbitration Court if it agrees with their ideas. When the Industrial Arbitration Act does not run parallel to their views, then it is a different story.

Mr. Hearman: The same applies to you. You go on strike if you do not agree with it.

Mr. ROWBERRY: That is a good one. The State of Western Australia has had a wonderful record so far as industrial strife is concerned.

Mr. Heal: The member for Blackwood would not have a clue.

Mr. ROWBERRY: We have this wonderful industrial record in this State because of the co-operation of the officers, both high and low.

Mr. Nalder: Even in the Midland Junction Abattoir?

Mr. ROWBERRY: Yes. The only thing the members of the Opposition did not tell us about when dealing with that motion was what the animals thought of it. The hon. member for Katanning waxed eloquent on how beautiful everything was and I almost asked him what the animals thought about it all. I think I have said enough to indicate that there is no necessity whatever for this Bill. It would only cause discord and confusion.

As one who has worked as an official and who, for 35 years, has been on the basic wage, I claim I know what the men are thinking about. That is the essential difference between us and members of the Opposition. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition said he was born into a home of good trade unionists, but that he left it when he was very young. All I can say is that his ideas about trade unions remain in the infant stage.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville) [9.55]: I feel it necessary to say a few short words. In particular I intend to refer to the intentional dishonesty of the hon. member for Dale in making reference to a debate in the Federal House.

Mr. Court: I do not think that is fair.

Mr. JOHNSON: He indicated that the amendment which was then before the Federal House was similar to the particular Bill with which we are dealing.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You cannot misquote words.

Mr. JOHNSON: The similarity is about equal to the similarity that exists between myself and the hon. member for Nedlands. There is a considerable difference.

Mr. Court: I did not know we were so closely related.

Mr. JOHNSON: I have done some research, and it took some effort to discover what the hon. member was referring to, because there was nothing in the Act which looked anything like the proposal the member for Nedlands had introduced. But on referring to the pages of Hansard, and on checking the matter there, I found that the subject under discussion was Section 16AG of the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Act, No. 44 of 1956. This deals with power to grant preference to members of organisations.

It will be remembered that the Commonwealth Court has power to grant preference and it does so, though perhaps not quite as often as I think it should. I think it should always do so. Section 16AG reads as follows:—

(1) The Commission may, by an award, or by an order made on the application of an organization or person bound by an award, direct that preference shall, in relation to such matters, in such manner and subject to such conditions as are specified in the award or order, be given to such organizations or members of organizations as are specified in the award or order.

I might say that if the hon. member for Nedlands produced an amendment in terms similar to that, he would find little objection raised from this side of the House. Subsection (2) of Section 16AG reads—

(2) Whenever, in the opinion of the Commission, it is necessary for the prevention or settlement of an industrial dispute, for ensuring that effect will be given to the purposes and objectives of an award, for the maintenance of industrial peace or for the welfare of society to direct that preference shall be given to members or organizations as provided by the last preceding sub-section, the Commission shall so direct.

I draw attention to the word "shall" and not "may." We have had arguments in this House on the difference between those words on previous occasions, and I feel we will do so again on the subject of the basic wage. Subsection (3) reads—

(3) Where—

(a) the Commission has, under subsection (1) of this section, directed, by award or order, that preference shall be given to members of an organisation which is an association of and employees; and

(b) a person, upon application made to the Registrar in the prescribed form and manner, satisfies the Registrar that the person's conscientious beliefs do not allow the person to be a member of such an organisation;

the Registrar shall, subject to subsection (5) of this section, issue to the person a certificate to the effect that, while the certificate, or a renewal of the certificate, is in force, an employer bound by the award or order is not required, by reason of the award or order, to give preference to members of the organisation over the person, and the certificate has effect according to its tenor.



(4) A certificate under the last preceding subsection remains in force for such period, not exceeding twelve months, as is specified in the certificate, but, subject to the next succeeding subsection may be renewed from time to time by the Registrar for such period, not exceeding twelve months as the Registrar thinks fit.

(5) The Registrar—

(a) shall not issue a certificate to a person under subsection (3) of this section in relation to a direction under subsection (1) of this section unless the person has paid to the Registrar such amount as would, in the opinion of the Registrar, be payable by the person to the organisation specified in the direction in respect of entrance fees and subscriptions if the person became a member of the organisation on the day on which the certificate is to be issued and continued to be such a member for the period during which the certificate is to remain in force; and

(b) shall not renew the certificate unless the person has paid to the Registrar such amount as would, in the opinion of the Registrar, be payable by the person to the organisation in respect of subscriptions if he were a member of the organisation immediately before the renewal of the certificate and continued to be such a member for the period during which the renewed certificate is to remain in force.

(6) The Registrar shall pay amounts received by him under the last preceding subsection into the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

(7) In subsection (3) of this section, "conscientious beliefs" means any conscientious beliefs whether the grounds for the beliefs are or are not of a religious character and whether the beliefs are or are not part of the doctrine of any religion.

To describe that as something similar to the propositions of the Deputy Leader of the Opposition put up with the intention of destroying both the industrial unions and the A.L.P. in this State, is to describe something other than as it really is.

Mr. Court: That is an exaggeration.

Mr. JOHNSON: I feel it is unnecessary for me to deal with the subject matter of the Bill as presented by the Deputy Leader of the Opposition. It has been covered very well by previous speakers on this side. However, I do wish to refer to some of the

matters he raised. He said nothing much about the Bill itself, although he cried considerably about a number of things which were a smoke screen to disguise the objectives of the Bill. After all, to take a phrase from the textbook used by the hon. member for Warren, "by their fruits shall ye know them"—the fruit which we have before us is the Bill, and not what the hon. member for Nedlands said about it. He may say that the fruit is a fig; he may say it is a lemon; but I would say it is a thistle.

Mr. Heal: It may be a raspberry.

Mr. JOHNSON: It may be that. We should have some thought on the subject of democracy because the right to belong to a minority is one of the rights of democracy. The hon. member for Nedlands makes some play about the rights of minorities in democracies, but the play he made was the rights of minorities not in a democracy but in an anarchy. He is an advocate of the anarchist doctrine of the right of everybody to do just what he pleases. He wants people not to obey majority decisions.

We in this House act in a democratic manner. We do give a minority—that is the Opposition, including the Liberal Party—the right to object, the right to be heard, and the right to argue. They have the right to do those things, and the same right exists, and should exist, in trade unions. In this Chamber we have heard arguments, even earlier this evening, about a certain matter being a decision of Parliament. The decision of a majority is the decision of Parliament, and the decision binds all of us. It binds us as members of Parliament and it binds us as citizens of this State. Inside a union the same right exists—the right of a minority to be heard, and the right and duty of the minority to be bound by duly arrived at majority decisions.

Mr. Court: The analogy is not good because a person does not have to belong to Parliament. He comes here of his own free will and accord. You are bringing forward an analogy with a man having to belong to a union by compulsion. That is an entirely different set of circumstances.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am not dealing with the matter of compulsion at all. I do not know from where the hon. member for Nedlands gets the idea. I am dealing with the rights of trade unions. Trade unionists have the right to argue. They have the right to be in the minority; but they have a duty to obey major decisions, just as the hon. member for Nedlands has to. To give people who belong to the minority the right to do other than obey a majority decision is the policy of the anarchist. It is a completely outmoded thought although it does resemble the thinking of the advocates of free enterprise.

Mr. Court: I do not know where you got your philosophy from. Usually these things can be followed with reason.

Mr. JOHNSON: My remarks can be followed by any logical person. I do think this is a matter on which we should be clear in our thinking. If we are to believe in democracy we must remember that it is not only the right of the minority to oppose, but it is also their duty to obey majority decisions. That exists in unions. No union can continue if minority groups are not to obey union decisions. That is in a democracy.

If it be the policy of a union which has gone to a great deal of trouble to establish and to maintain with finance conscientious beliefs, that its members should not work with non-unionists, except perhaps in cases covered by Federal legislation, then I think everybody concerned should be bound by the decision not to work with non-unionists.

I can remember a great scream coming from the hon. member for Nedlands because a certain person was appointed to a position when he was not a member of his particular association and was not an active member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Mr. Court: That was only because the statute said he should be. There is no compulsion in that organisation. I can assure the hon. member of that.

Mr. JOHNSON: There was a lot of compulsion behind what the hon. member for Nedlands was concerned with because there was no doubt about that person's qualifications. He was qualified, but he was not in financial good standing. It was for reasons that lay between him and the association that he was not in good standing. The big point was that he was qualified for the position and the hon. member for Nedlands on that occasion was the advocate of compulsory membership of a body remarkably like a trade union.

Mr. Court: There is no compulsion in that body either to become a member in it or to practise.

Mr. JOHNSON: Compulsion was what the hon. member for Nedlands wanted. He wanted a man to lose a portion of his income because he was not in good financial standing with the Institute of Chartered Accountants.

Mr. Court: Because he would not conform to the law.

Mr. JOHNSON: That was quite different from the stories which he has put up recently about the rights of minorities, compulsion and so on. He has not been consistent. I notice, for instance, a proposition put up earlier today by the Country Party which sought something in the nature of a trade union to protect farmers in their right to dispose of their products.

The product of the worker is his labour, while the product of the wool grower is his wool. The two are closely analogous.

It is quite obvious that once a decision is taken by the majority of wool growers that they should all form a union and that they should do certain things, there will be some degree of compulsion on the minority. I feel that any proposition which arises out of the earlier debate will need compulsory handling of the product of the wool grower. There will be some who have conscientious objections to belonging to a union or some body in the nature of a union. They have a perfect right and they have a remedy. That is the remedy which all people who have a conscientious objection should take. That is the remedy in the farmer's case: stop growing wool and grow turnips or something different, or give up being a farmer. In the case of conscientious objection to belonging to a trade union, any person with a conscience would naturally object to receiving the fruits of the union which their conscience prevents them from joining.

Mr. Perkins: Your analogy of wool was a poor one.

Mr. JOHNSON: That shows the hon. member is going to do some "double think."

Mr. Perkins: The Commonwealth Constitution provides that when a Government acquires property it does so at a just price.

Mr. JOHNSON: A unionist works to get a just price for his product; that is, his labour. It is what the Arbitration Court is for, and I think the analogy is fairly easy to follow unless one has a desire not to do so. I feel I can foreshadow any thoughts that the hon. member for Roe may have and can say in advance that they will require a great deal of "double think." There is no doubt that there is a considerable degree of similarity between the two thoughts.

There is just one other point I would like to refer to in regard to my own personal experience and it deals with, "Injury in Employment. No employer shall injure in his employment an employee because he belongs to a trade union." It was my experience to be injured in my employment, not because I belonged to a trade union, but because I followed the cause of the trade union and belonged to the Labour Party.

My experience was this: I complained about it and received no redress. I was doing a certain job in the office of my employers at the bank. This job was not on the establishment—military people will understand that term—and was not authorised by head office. It was created during the growth of the office, and the powers that be in Perth wanted it made a permanent position. I was developing it along lines set down by the then accountant.

After much time and argument back and forth the job was created, given a title, and a rise in salary; and an office was provided, which required structural alterations. Despite the fact that I was carrying out the duties for some six months the job did not come to me; it went to a man who was junior to me in age and experience. He was given the office, the rise, and the responsibility.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Promotion on ability, I suppose.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is a nice interjection. The point I was coming to was that I was instructed to teach this man the job.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: That is your account.

Mr. JOHNSON: That was the point, and I naturally complained. I complained in writing, and said that I had been injured in my employment because someone had been promoted from beneath me into a job which I had created, and I was instructed to teach him the duties. His training at that time, and since before the war, was in a different department; and he did not know "B" from a bull's foot about this particular part of the work. It was a long time, despite my attempts to instruct him, before he really got any grasp of it. I was told in writing that I had not been injured in my employment and that there were other opportunities.

When I confronted the big chief we had an argument for about an hour, and I was told something different. I was told this: "Mr. Johnson, the bank could not possibly trust a man of your political opinion." That was why I did not get the job. However, that is not in writing, but it is a point which has made me very sore and made me completely understand the need for Acts to protect workers who are members of unions.

Mr. I. W. Manning: And the need to shut banks on Saturday morning.

Mr. JOHNSON: That is a matter of convenience and justice.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Are you sure?

Mr. JOHNSON: Nobody made it a political matter until the Opposition came into it. If it were examined on its merits, it would not become political at all. I must say that the opposition to that measure by the Liberal Party has been educational politically to a large number of people, and I thank the Liberal Party for making that education available.

Mr. Potter: So has this Bill.

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member for Nedlands said very little about the realities in the Bill. He did advocate anarchy; in fact, the whole of this thoughts were anarchy. He showed no knowledge or appreciation of democracy as a way of life; he showed no realisation of industrial life.

However, he did show a desire to fragment trade unions for the benefit of employers. My experience which I quoted is so recent as to show that the leopard has not changed his spots and the employer will exploit the worker. The hon. member for Nedlands would like to see the unions fragmented.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: How would this destroy or fragment the unions?

Mr. JOHNSON: Owing to the complete lack of imagination of the hon. member for Cottesloe, I will tell him a thing or two. The hon. member for Cottesloe had an objection to belonging to the teachers' union when he was a teacher.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Not a bit of it.

Mr. JOHNSON: He was one of those who sought to curry favour with his employer by refraining from being a member. If he were in private employ, I would be certain of it. We know that promotion or advancement is at crawling pace, and I feel sure that the hon. member for Cottesloe would have got along at that pace remarkably well.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You have quoted the wrong union. How would this Bill fragment unions?

Mr. JOHNSON: Take the plum out of your mouth and express clearly what you are trying to say. Your thoughts are very mysterious and need clarity of expression. I notice that quite a number on all sides of the House agree.

Mr. Perkins: You should be a member of the Kindergarten Union.

Mr. JOHNSON: I am treasurer of the Kindergarten Union.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You would not have been a star teacher in the kindergarten.

Mr. JOHNSON: When I was interrupted so many times by the hon. member for Cottesloe I was trying to describe in words of one syllable just what happens. In any form of employment where there is promotion available, it is at crawling pace, and the employee who desires to progress does so by crawling to the employer.

Mr. Court: You are insulting a lot of workers in this State.

Mr. JOHNSON: The employers who speak through the hon. member for Nedlands show they are not in favour of unionists; so it follows from the thoughts expressed by the hon. member for Nedlands that to make progress it is preferable that one should not be a member of a trade union.

Mr. Court: That is not so. I never said anything like that, either.

Mr. JOHNSON: The hon. member might not have said it, but he produced the Bill in that form. I am concerned with what he does.

Mr. Court: I was always a trade unionist and believe in unionism.

Mr. JOHNSON: Like fun!

Mr. Court: I am still a life member and they are not likely to take that away from me.

Mr. JOHNSON: It would be necessary to prove first that the hon. member for Nedlands had life, because life requires a heart. The whole idea is to make it a benefit to the employee, or some of the employees, to refrain from belonging to unions so that the unions' power will wane. We know numbers of employers are trying to create tame-cat unions. It is encouraged by many employers.

This is an objectionable piece of legislation supported by the Opposition with thoughts expressed that have very little relation either to fact or the Bill before us and certainly not very well defended by quotations from things which have occurred in another place. As members may have guessed, I oppose the legislation.

On motion by the Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

*House adjourned at 10.23 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 11th September, 1958.

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