

Legislative Assembly,

Tuesday, 27th August, 1940.

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

ADDRESS-IN-REPLY.

Presentation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I desire to inform the House that, in company with the member for Pilbara (Mr. W. Hegney), I attended upon His Excellency, the Lieut.-Governor, yesterday, and presented the Address-in-reply to His Excellency's Speech. His Excellency replied in the following terms:-

Mr. Speaker and Members of the Legislative Assembly: I thank you for your expressions of loyalty to His Most Gracious Majesty the King and for your Address-in-reply to the Speech with which I opened Parliament.

ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor received and read notifying assent to the Supply Bill (No. 1), £2,500,000.

BILL—CIVIL DEFENCE (EMERGENCY POWERS).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

MR. McDONALD (West Perth) [4.35]: This is a Bill which I am sure will meet with the support of the House. It makes provision for an organisation that is unfortunately absolutely essential to meet the conditions with which the State is now confronted. As the Minister said when moving the second reading, two States have already made provision for civil defence—Tasmania by an Act of last year entitled the Civil Defence (Emergency Powers) Act, and Victoria by an Act of last year entitled the National Security (Emergency Powers) Act. The Victorian Act is a very short

measure; it goes into very little detail. Its main objective is to set up an authority having power to enforce regulations made by the Governor of Victoria to ensure the safety of the people and the protection of property from damage in the event of hostile attack. The Tasmanian Act is fuller; it gives a great deal more detail as to the class of subject upon which the Governor may make regulations for civil defence. The Tasmanian Act also has a schedule setting out clearly the obligations imposed upon the State. The schedule shows that by arrangement with the Commonwealth, the function of the Commonwealth is to make adequate provision for the defence of Australia against enemy attack in any form, and the function of the State and the instrumentalities created by the State is to provide for the safety and care of the civil population from the consequences of enemy attack. We see by the agreement between the authorities mentioned by the Minister that the States have accepted the definite responsibility of protecting the people and the property in their respective areas against enemy attack from the point of view of what might be termed civil defence. This Bill is intended to meet the responsibility that Western Australia, in common with the other States, has accepted.

In England the matter of civil defence has been the subject of consideration for a comparatively long time. In 1937 the House of Commons passed its first measure, the Air Raids Precautions Act, in which it empowered and enjoined the local authorities to prepare schemes for the defence of their areas against hostile attack. That was the commencement of air raids precautions in England. Last year—after the war broke out, I think—the House of Commons passed a comprehensive Act called the Civil Defence Act, 1939. That Act will necessarily be the subject of most careful study by the Civil Defence Council to be set up by the Bill now before this House. One cannot read the English Act of 1939 without feeling admiration for the skill with which that measure has been drawn. In the Bill now before us we are compelled, because time presses, to pass a measure which merely enables the Governor to legislate by regulation. In England the House of Commons has passed an Act which confers the minimum of power to make

regulations. The authorities and powers of local bodies and factories, as well as public utilities and owners of commercial buildings, are set out in great detail there. In the English Act provision is made to meet the cost of the various precautions for civil defence. It is laid down, for example, what proportion, in a great many respects, of the cost will be the responsibility of the local authority and what proportion will be met by grants from the Government. In some cases the Government undertakes to find seven-tenths of the cost and the local authority has to meet the remaining three-tenths. Provision is also made by which the local authority is enabled to strike a rate for the purpose of meeting portion of the expenses involved; and in order to protect ratepayers, or to give some guide to the various local authorities, the amount which can be struck by way of rate is to be inside certain specified limits. In addition, provision is made for financial assistance by way of loan from the local authority to enable owners of factories and commercial buildings, and others on whom any responsibility is laid, to undertake the necessary expenditure involved by these precautions. It is quite conceivable that an obligation may be imposed upon the owner of a building or a factory; or some place where many people congregate in the course of their work, to set up air raid shelters and other precautions which may involve an expenditure that it might be embarrassing for the proprietor to obtain, which conceivably it might not be possible for him to obtain. Provision is made in the English Act by which advances may be made by local authorities to people on whom an obligation is laid to meet the expenses involved by that obligation.

I mention those provisions of the English Act because it would have been preferable if we could have had an Act setting out in more detail precisely what the obligations of local authorities and various people are, and how far they have to rely upon their own funds and how far they will be entitled to receive assistance from the State or the Commonwealth. However, I am prepared to appreciate that in England the matter has received, by force of circumstances, a great deal more expert study than it has received in Australia, and that no doubt we have not been able or have not felt the incentive, to give the subject the detailed study that has been given it in

Great Britain. I raise, therefore, no objection to a Bill which is almost entirely an authorisation to the Governor to legislate on these matters by regulation. The matter of civil defence, it is needless to say to hon. members, really is one which involves important, far-reaching results. The present Bill attempts to make provision for some of these results. For example, it may be that a tenant has an obligation to repair a building in case of any damage. If that building is crashed or perhaps destroyed by enemy action, the obligation to repair thrust upon the tenant might do him a grave injustice. In England provision has been made to prevent injustices in that connection, and in a number of other cases. Here we have not yet got to that stage, but we set up this authority, which is charged with the responsibility of framing provisions to take precautions against hostile acts, and also precautions which this Bill enables the authority to take in a considerable degree to meet the consequences of hostile acts, though we may hope that the Civil Defence Council to be set up by the Bill will provide a framework to meet the situation which may arise, and which may later become the subject of a further Bill to be brought before this Chamber.

The present measure is more comprehensive than the Acts which have been passed by the other two States. It contains power to compel the provision of certain precautions in the way of air raid shelters by local authorities and other people. It contains compulsory powers—among others power to compel local authorities to borrow, if money is required to be borrowed for the purpose of carrying out obligations imposed by the Act. If a local authority or other person—and this will compel private individuals as well as local authorities—is under an obligation to carry out certain precautions under the direction of the Civil Defence Council and fails to do so, then the Government may carry out that obligation and recover the expense from the local authority or person who should have carried it out in the first place. These are extensive powers. I am not objecting to extensive powers being granted. This is a time when we have to be prepared to agree to extensive powers, and a time when we have to be prepared for a large measure of government by regu-

lations, both in the Federal sphere and where this class of legislation is concerned in the State sphere, because events may happen so quickly that the ordinary procedure of Parliament would be quite insufficient to meet the emergency which may arise.

By the Bill there is to be a Civil Defence Council to administer the measure, and the Council is to be composed of not fewer than five members. There is no limit, the Minister explained, to the number of members; but there must be not fewer than five. It will, I take it, in the first place be a responsibility of the council to investigate and make recommendations to the Government as to the form in which the regulations should be framed. The council will do that from time to time as it makes its researches and as it becomes convinced of the nature of the various matters which will be covered by the regulations. There is nothing in the Bill to determine by law who shall be members of the council. I think the Government would be certain to appoint on the council at least one member who might be regarded as representative of local governing authorities; and in the amendment which I propose to put on the notice paper to enable members to discuss the matter, I shall suggest that at least one member of the council should be a representative of such authorities.

I am going to submit for the consideration of the House a further amendment which is taken from the Victorian Act. This amendment is that if any regulations are made—as they no doubt will be from time to time when Parliament is not sitting—then, if any ten members of the Legislative Assembly or any 20 members of both Houses of Parliament present a petition to the Speaker of the Assembly or to the President of the Legislative Council asking that Parliament be called together, Parliament shall be called together accordingly.

The Premier: That is rather drastic and without precedent.

Mr. McDONALD: It is rather drastic but not without precedent, because I have lifted the clause almost verbatim from the Victorian Act of last year. After all, these times are different from usual times. In the case of the Federal Parliament,

where there is a great deal of government by regulation from time to time, that Parliament meets almost continuously. At the present time—during the war period—two months would be the longest period between sittings of the House. If therefore any regulations are made by the Federal Government, an early opportunity is given for Parliament to pronounce upon them. That is a valuable safeguard. But in Western Australia—without suggesting that the Government would not make regulations except in the very best of good faith—our Parliament may rise in December and not sit again for a lengthy period. It may be that far-reaching powers will be conferred by this measure for government by regulation, and that regulations may be framed as to which there may be a legitimate difference of opinion. While I personally am agreeing to the Bill to provide for this proposed wide measure of government by regulation, which will affect or may affect so many people, either as members of local authorities or as private individuals, and which may entail upon them great expenditure, at the same time it would, in my opinion, be proper and reassuring to the general public if we followed the precedent of the Victorian Parliament and provided that if a reasonable number of members of Parliament—acting no doubt at the request of those interested—thought they were justified in asking for Parliament to be called together to consider any legislation, then the Government should call Parliament together accordingly. As to the number of members that should decide any petition to call Parliament together, that is a matter of comparatively minor importance.

The Minister for Mines: Victoria provides for a quorum.

Mr. McDONALD: The Victorian Act provides that Parliament shall be called together on the petition of not fewer than 20 members of the Legislative Assembly or 30 members of Parliament. In the amendment I have framed, I reduce the numbers by suggesting 10 members of the Legislative Assembly or 20 members of Parliament. My reason for the reduction—I am not wedded to it—is that Victoria is a small State and members are much more in touch with each other, whereas in Western Aus-

tralia during recess our members are scattered perhaps all over the State. Therefore it might be reasonable to reduce the number on whose petition Parliament may be called together not only because they are scattered throughout the State, but also because the number of members of Parliament in this State is, I think, considerably less than the number in Victoria. I think there are 65 members of the Assembly in Victoria.

The Minister for Mines: Twenty is the quorum there.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes. I have no objection to fixing it here at 17, if members consider that number is reasonable. In this way Parliament would have an opportunity to discuss any regulation with a fair amount of promptitude. After all, if we had more time and could follow England's example, we could make all the provisions by Act of Parliament. But we have not the time; we propose to delegate this power to legislate over a far-reaching area. I think the Victorian provision is well worthy of adoption.

The Premier: Why not have a provision that the regulations should not be enforced until Parliament was called together?

Hon. C. G. Latham: That might be dangerous.

Mr. McDONALD: It might be.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The regulation might be very urgent.

Mr. McDONALD: That is so.

The Premier: The House might be called together at the Speaker's request.

Mr. McDONALD: We have to meet a rather peculiar circumstance of this State, where normally Parliament adjourns for a lengthy period. As the Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, the regulation might be extremely salutary and of vital urgency, and we should not be compelled to wait until Parliament meets at the ordinary time.

The Premier: A request might be made that the regulation should not be enforced until Parliament had had time to deal with it. To give ten members the power to call Parliament together is unheard of.

Mr. McDONALD: To my mind it is an excellent provision. Would the members of the Federal Parliament consent to the regulation-making powers now conferred on the Federal Government if Parliament were in recess for eight months? I am quite certain

they would rise as one man and say that such a power should never be conferred on the Government if Parliament were in recess for so long a period.

The Premier: The Federal Government sits only four or five weeks at a time and has to rush too much to do effective business.

Mr. McDONALD: But it has sufficient time to deal with regulations. If the regulations are perfectly in order this clause will be a dead-letter. However, it will be somewhat reassuring to the public to know that in the event of very extensive and drastic powers being conferred under Government regulations, Parliament can be called together for the purpose of reviewing them if there should be a public demand for such a review presented through, say, 17 members of the Legislative Assembly.

The Bill provides for a very drastic penalty to be imposed on those who contravene or fail to comply with any provision of any regulation. The penalty is £500 or imprisonment for 12 months. Exactly the same penalty is included in the Victorian Act and the Tasmanian Act. When the Bill is being discussed in Committee, some attention should be given to the wording of the clause because, as it stands, it might render liable to a penalty any person who unintentionally failed to comply with a provision.

The Bill proposes to confer upon the Government power to make regulations which would normally be imposed through 20 or 30 far-reaching Acts of Parliament laying very heavy obligations upon local authorities and other people. Nevertheless, the emergency of the times justifies the House in supporting the measure, and I hope it will soon be placed on the statute-book. I support the second reading, but at the Committee stage I propose to submit the two amendments I have mentioned.

MR. WITHERS (Bunbury) [5.4]: As one who has taken some interest in air-raid precaution work since its inception in Western Australia, I welcome the Bill, and I do not share the fears of the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) regarding regulations to be made. Local governing bodies which have already taken air-raid precautions in their districts perceive the absolute necessity for the Bill because they appreciate that they have been carrying on without any

authority. It is pleasing to notice the number of people anxious to serve in some way in what might be termed this fourth arm of defence. They include men who took part in the last war and many of those unable to join the forces for service in this war. The number who have expressed a desire to take part in this work since its introduction in Western Australia less than 12 months ago is remarkable. At that time the possibility of attack from the air by bombs or poison gas or invasion in any other form was considered remote, but there were those who thought that we should be prepared for any eventuality and the passage of time has not dimmed their ardour. As the war has progressed, we have all realised the growing need for air-raid precaution work. It has been found necessary for civil defence measures to be thrust upon the State Government and the local authorities who are thus called upon to do their part by assisting the Commonwealth authorities. Air-raid precaution work in England has been brought to a very effective standard.

Mr. Marshall: So have the air-raids!

Mr. WITHERS: Literature has been distributed on the subject in England, and those participating are very well prepared. England, however, may be said to be at the very seat of the war, and millions of pounds had to be spent in financing precautionary measures. In Australia, on the other hand, all the work so far has been done by volunteers. As the Minister pointed out, the Government of this State was fortunate in securing the services of Professor Bayliss to fill the position of Chief Warden. The State was also fortunate in that the Commonwealth Government made available the services of Captain Dean to instruct classes, particularly in the metropolitan area. That instruction has been given for nearly 12 months, and air-raid precaution work has been carried out in Geraldton, Northam, Collie, Albany and Bunbury. From my own experience I know that the local authority with which I am connected incurred a certain amount of expenditure—admittedly not very large—for which provision is made in the Municipal Corporations Act. I do not think that any municipality—even the Perth City Council—would wish to take advantage of this measure by raising any more money than is absolutely necessary

to undertake essential defence work. The training of men to undertake the duties of wardens has been carried out voluntarily, but some expenditure may be entailed when men from some other avenues are required for service in demolition or decontamination squads. The commandeering of vehicles—if the term can be used—may seriously incommode persons who have been generous enough to make them available for use in the evacuation of people from danger zones. It may so interfere with their business activities that the owners will desire to be reimbursed to some extent. The local authorities will need money for such purposes. Other expenditure will be incurred, but the amounts will not be such as to cause any alarm.

I desire to compliment the Minister on the manner in which he introduced the Bill. I do not suppose he had the practical knowledge of air-raid precaution work such as is possessed by some of us who have been closely engaged on it for some time, but he did a wonderful job and placed the Bill before hon. members in such a manner as to commend it to the House in every respect. I hope, however, that the Minister will not rush the Bill into Committee to-day, because the member for West Perth has pointed out that he intends to move some amendments.

Mr. Marshall: Only simple ones.

Mr. WITHERS: Hon. members may not have given the measure the serious thought to which it is entitled. They heard the Minister's speech, but when the member for West Perth had concluded his remarks the whole matter may have had a different complexion. Possibly the details of the Bill have not been grasped sufficiently to enable the House to decide on the matter to-day. Personally, I am quite prepared to have the measure proceeded with because there is no doubt that its inclusion in the statute-book is desperately urgent.

The Minister made reference to the duties of wardens in connection with demolition and decontamination squads and auxiliary fire brigades. In the event of fires in the city area it would be possible for the chief officer to call to his assistance one or two suburban fire brigades. Should fires occur in more than one part

of a municipality which has only one brigade, however, the brigade would not be able to deal with all the outbreaks. In such an event it could concentrate on the major fire and the auxiliary firemen—that is those who had received training in air-raid precautions work and had a certain knowledge of how to control fires—could be called upon to deal with the minor outbreaks. The Bill confers a certain authority on men engaged in air-raid precautions work. The authority of a person possessing an ambulance badge is generally recognised; but although air-raid wardens have badges and armlets distinguishing them, the public may not be prepared to bow to their authority in the same way. That such authority should be possessed by a warden is, however, indisputable. He should be able authoritatively to tell members of the public what they should do in certain circumstances for their own benefit. The Bill will give wardens power to exercise such authority, which is very essential. I hope the measure will receive the sympathetic consideration of the House, and I commend it to hon. members.

MR. NEEDHAM (Perth) [5.14]: With the principles of the Bill one must entirely agree. I regret, however, that the measure gives so much power to the Government in the way of making regulations. Nevertheless, I do not perceive any way of avoiding that. I agree with the sentiments expressed by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald). The Parliament of this State may be in recess for six or seven months, but meanwhile we shall have given to the Government the exceptional powers set out in the Bill, if it becomes an Act. Whilst there may be objection to government by regulation in peace time, we must realise that in times of national emergency such powers as these are perhaps necessary. I see no way of avoiding the granting of these exceptional powers to the Government. It is true the Commonwealth Parliament is not in recess for as long as is the State Parliament and during this time of war the Commonwealth Parliament has been meeting even more frequently than was formerly the case.

There is one portion of the Bill I do not like, namely, the clause dealing with local governing authorities. They are to be given

power, under certain conditions, to borrow money if they find it necessary to do so, and will be called upon to bear the expense of certain operations that may be considered necessary. I am deeply concerned about more loan money being spent for defence purposes. The defence of Australia is a matter for the Commonwealth Government alone. If the States, working in concert with the Commonwealth Government, are compelled to take certain steps for the safety of the public, the cost of those operations should be borne not by the States, nor by the local governing authorities, but by the Commonwealth Government. In times of peace the Government of this State has acted as agent for the Commonwealth Government in the erection of public works. The cost of such works is borne by the Commonwealth Government, and some allowance, I think, is made to the State for the assistance rendered by it.

The defence expenditure is mounting up daily, and we are told by the Federal Treasurer that it will become even greater. I believe the first estimate for special defence expenditure by the Commonwealth Government was in the region of £60,000,000 for the year 1939. For the current financial year that amount will probably be trebled and will border on £180,000,000. Whilst I realise it is necessary for the State Government and State Parliament to work in co-ordination with the Commonwealth Government to protect this country from enemy invasion, I think the cost entailed should be borne by the Commonwealth authorities. Splendid examples of the lending of money free of interest by public-minded citizens have been given to us, and public bodies and various organisations have also given freely.

Mr. Marshall: Were any banks amongst them?

MR. NEEDHAM: I do not know that any associated bank has followed that good example, but I do know that the trade unions have contributed largely to the defence funds in free-of-interest loans. Possibly the Commonwealth Bank could not be expected to finance the whole of the expenditure connected with the overseas section of Australia's war effort, but I do think it could if it desired defray the entire cost of home defence, free of interest.

Whilst I support the second reading of the Bill, I should like to see Clause 10

amended in the direction I have suggested, to ensure that the cost of the precautions that are taken for the safety of the public in this State—the people for whom we are empowered to legislate—shall be borne by the Commonwealth Government through the Commonwealth Bank. We understand from the member for West Perth that every State Parliament in Australia is called upon to pass legislation of this kind. Notwithstanding the concerted action that may be taken by all the States in conjunction with the Commonwealth Government, I think the cost of those services should be borne by the Commonwealth Government. I am sure we all appreciate the example that has been set by public-minded citizens and various organisations in this State in lending to the Commonwealth Government money either free of interest or at interest so that our arms may be victorious; nevertheless, so far as home defence is concerned, I do not think any more money should be borrowed and that the Commonwealth Bank should take over the entire expense.

MR. MARSHALL (Murchison) [5.23]: I support the second reading, but must express the belief that far too much stress has been laid upon the necessity for legislation of this kind. Whilst I appreciate that an attack upon some part of this country is not an impossibility, I do not regard it as a probable event. Even if we removed the question of probability, and an attack were made upon some part of Australia, I would respectfully suggest that every care would be taken to ensure that such an attack was as effective as the enemy could make it. I assume that if an aggressor attacked Australia it would single out some of the most important spots upon which to concentrate an effective attack. From the Bill one can assume that there will be an indiscriminate attack either from the air or the sea, with a raining of expensive bombs and shells. All countries engaged in the conflict are scrambling to obtain an adequate supply of the necessary material for manufacture into munitions, so that they may effectively make upon their enemies the most concentrated and vicious attack that can be devised. I believe the Bill has something to recommend it, and will support it, but I am in agreement with the member for

Perth (Mr. Needham) on two points. I am of the opinion that under the cloak of war necessity, far too much authority is being given from time to time to certain groups of individuals. I do not say that on all occasions this is unnecessary, but wherever we look there have been not only attempts, but also effective action to grant unlimited power to groups of individuals. In this way we are creating at home the very thing we are sending men abroad to defend this country against. That is the trouble. While we all desire to give the necessary powers so that effective action may be taken in the event of a raid, my complaint is that we are being asked continually to increase authority to special groups and that by so doing we are robbing the individual of the last vestige of freedom he possesses. The member for Perth was quite right, although I would add that I have not the same fear of borrowing by local authorities as he entertains. I say this because of personal experience as a member of a road board. We found it difficult enough to borrow money in order to do the work essential for the development of our district. If I were a councillor or a member of a road board and this Bill became law, it would be quite ineffective so far as I was concerned because I would exercise none of the authority given to me under the measure. Putting it in other words, I say that if this Bill becomes an Act, it will not be obligatory upon local authorities to borrow money.

Mr. McDonald: Yes it will.

Mr. MARSHALL: If it will, then I can whole-heartedly support the member for Perth. Probably the Minister will clear up that point in the course of his reply. This Bill provides principally for the making of regulations. Little is contained in the Bill that would cause concern to any member, but there is the extensive and in fact practically unlimited authority to make regulations. I have pointed out that, wherever we look, individuals and groups of individuals are grabbing authority on the excuse that there is a war in progress. I admit that there is some need for legislation of this sort, and as Parliament has the last say in the matter of regulations, we have protection to that extent. Notwithstanding all the authority and power we

grant to individuals or groups of individuals, Parliament still has the last say when the regulations are tabled. If this legislation is necessary because of the war, I ask the Minister to tell us why it is proposed to continue the Act for six months after the war.

The Minister for Mines: There might be a lot of cleaning up to do.

MR. MARSHALL: I will go as far as any member in giving authority to ensure that the civil community is guarded and protected during the war, but I cannot go so far as to give authority to continue such legislation after peace has been declared. We as a Labour Party have to be very careful in this matter. If we support the granting of such unlimited authority as may be exercised under the measure by way of regulations, and grant it for six months after the conclusion of the war, then at some future time, if we are asked to pass legislation of a similar kind, we shall have no ground upon which to contest the proposal because we shall have agreed to it on this occasion. The Act should come to an end on the declaration of peace, because the whole reason for which the measure is required is that there is a war in progress. Very well, let us support the Bill. We can be careful as to the nature of the regulations that are tabled, and we can give the necessary powers for the care and protection of the people in the event of enemy raids occurring, but there the powers should cease. I do not agree that the powers and authority proposed to be conferred should be permitted to operate one day after the declaration of peace, which, may I say in conclusion, I hope is not far off.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [5.33]: I have no objection to the Bill: in fact I propose to support the second reading, but there is one point I wish to bring under the notice of the Minister. The damage caused by an enemy raid would probably be local and isolated. Therefore it seems very unfair that one particular body or one particular place should have to undertake work required by the central council and then foot the bill, perhaps to the extent of several thousands of pounds, while the rest of the State escapes scot free. This, of course, is supposition, but damage might be done to two or three of our towns, and I urge that when the Bill is being considered in Com-

mittee, we should formulate a scheme whereby the financial cost may be more fairly distributed. Of course I should like to see the Commonwealth providing the funds for the whole of Australia, so that wherever damage was done and expense was incurred, the cost would be met by the people as a whole. However, we cannot make that provision under this Bill, but we can provide that the State shall bear a proportion—perhaps 50 per cent.—of the burden while the local bodies bear the other half. That, I think, would be the fairest way of meeting the damage done in any locality. I represent a district portion of which is very close to the sea, and the opinion of A.R.P. workers there is that, in the event of a raid, much of the damage done will be sustained on the coast. The belief is that boats might shell coastal areas and do much damage. In such a case it would be very unfair if people in other parts of the State went scot free, while the people in Geraldton, Bunbury, Albany and suchlike places had to incur heavy expenditure for shelters and similar protective measures. The question should be considered from the point of view of the State or, if possible, of the Commonwealth bearing the cost. Subject to this qualification, I support the Bill.

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [5.36]: I support the second reading, although feeling in some degree that the view of the member for Perth (Mr. Needham) is the correct one, and that these funds should be supplied by the Federal Government. Further, I hold that in a state of national emergency all matters pertaining to that emergency should be on a Federal basis. It does seem unreasonable that a resident of Wyndham should be subject to one set of regulations, a man in Darwin subject to quite another set, and so forth; so that there might be six different sets of regulations for different sets of people who are all Australians and all affected by the same emergency. Therefore I deem it regrettable that the State should not act as agent for the Commonwealth in bringing into effect such regulations as the Federal Government might think necessary for the protection of the people in these circumstances. However, I presume that that is an aspect which has already been stressed by the State, and that the Federal Government would not take the responsibility on itself.

I also support the view expressed by the member for Claremont (Mr. North), because if we cannot have civil defence a nationalised matter it should at least be made a State-wide matter, and not one confined to local authorities. The Federal Government may determine to fortify a certain district, and as a result the people of that district will be liable to attack. Under world conventions, attack by air-raid is limited to military objects and fortified areas. From the aspect of military effectiveness, a district heavily fortified is peculiarly open to attack. The Midland workshops, for example, would invite attack; and bombs do not invariably hit the objects at which they are aimed. Thus Midland Junction might suffer severely. However, any expense incurred should be on a State-wide basis, and not on the basis of local authority.

MR. BOYLE (Avon) [5.39]: The previous speaker has largely anticipated what I intended to say. The Bill as it stands is one of those war-time measures which we are almost bound to accept. This particular Bill, however, opens the field to a principle which I have always opposed both in this House and outside it—the principle of government by regulation. In these times unfortunately we are compelled to accept government by regulation in connection with most war measures; but when it is realised that in this Bill the responsibility for declaring damage in particular areas is localised, we must acknowledge that the measure gets right away from the fact that the war is not a local war. The stress which the Bill lays on the taxing, shall I say, of special centres is to my mind a wrong principle. For instance, the measure provides that the Minister may order, or that the Governor by the Ministerial ukase may direct, that a district shall be levied on, and it may be compelled to borrow up to ten times its annual revenue. Let us assume that a town such as Kellerberrin—

The Minister for Mines: In what clause is that?

Mr. BOYLE: I am not allowed to quote clauses on second reading. The Minister knows that. I refer to the clause alluded to by the member for Perth (Mr. Needham). I may be wrong; I hope I am.

Mr. Doney: You did not yourself read that in the Bill, did you?

Mr. BOYLE: I went through the Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The member for Avon (Mr. Boyle) has the floor.

Mr. BOYLE: If my contention is correct, as I hold it to be, and if that power is given to the Minister, it will mean that people in some districts will be levied upon while people in other districts will go scot-free. That is a position which should be, and I hope will be, altered in Committee. The application of a measure of this nature should be State-wide. There is no reason why the Bill should have any particular local application. Another point is that the Federal Government is now, by means of taxation, borrowing and so forth, conducting the war; and therefore any damage done in a particular State or town or district should be the responsibility of the Federal authority. I shall support the second reading, but the Bill is one which requires a good deal of consideration in Committee. As members of this Chamber we should not be prone, because of war conditions, to accept anything that is put before us by any Government in power.

MR. F. C. L. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe) [5.43]: I agree with the previous speaker in saying that this is a Bill that needs a good deal of consideration in the Committee stage. I do not regard the measure as one which should be rushed through in a single sitting of the House. In my opinion it is a Bill which members should have a further opportunity to consider in relation to its provisions and the incidence of those provisions. I agree also with this morning's "West Australian" in the statement that we have never before had a piece of legislation such as this, implying so much and containing so little. As members are aware, the Bill proposes to confer great powers on the Government to govern by regulation. It might be suggested that when we are asked to confer powers of such a nature and extent, we should not view the matter from the standpoint of the nature and extent of those powers but of the composition and structure of the governing body upon which the powers are to be conferred. We may be satisfied with the composition and structure of the Government, but I understand the Bill pro-

vides for the establishment of a council, the members of which will make inquiries into the necessities of any situation that may arise. I understand there are necessities that arise not only from the exigencies of the circumstances in which we find ourselves, but from some promises made by the State Government to share in the responsibilities associated with civil defence, which apparently fits into the whole scheme of national defence. It is very undesirable to confer such powers on an extensive scale. I feel that the Government will be moved to draft regulations to a very great extent upon the recommendations of the council that will be set up. I agree with those members who have expressed disapproval of some provisions of the Bill and particularly that which will allow or compel local authorities to raise loan moneys to give effect to the requirements of this legislation. If those requirements had been put forth as an imposition upon the funds of the State Governments, I think the representatives of those Governments would have indicated to the Commonwealth Government their strong opposition to any such proposals. I feel that because the buck is to be passed on to the local authorities, the State Governments have not raised the opposition that otherwise would have been lodged. I agree with the member for Claremont (Mr. North) that the provision to compel a local authority to borrow for the purpose of preparing adequate civil defences will bear with unequal incidence on sections of the community.

Mr. Boyle: That is the provision in Clause 10.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: In my opinion certain districts will require very extensive and completely adequate defences that will possibly be not only in the interests of those particular localities where they are established, but of the whole State. Consequently, the cost of such defences should be borne by the people of the State generally. Furthermore, while that authority is to be conferred upon local authorities, where those authorities are not prepared to act efficiently, or properly to enforce some regulation or other, the necessity to act will be forced upon them. Generally speaking, this power to raise loan moneys for the purpose of preparing civil defences will be conferred upon them. Naturally, under the emotional stress of war, we may expect some

local authorities to go to excessive lengths in connection with the defence preparations that they may undertake. On the one hand, while some local authorities may possibly be regarded as not going far enough in that direction, others may be considered as going too far.

Mr. J. Hegney: They may vie with each other.

Mr. F. C. L. SMITH: Yes, to make it appear that one is all out to prepare for civil defence, to an extent greater than its neighbouring local authority. The Bill contains several features that I regard as objectionable. To reiterate the point I have already made, the Bill requires further consideration and I trust it will not be forced through at this sitting.

MR. CROSS (Canning) [5.51]: I notice that Clause 10—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The hon. member is not in order in quoting clauses.

Mr. CROSS: I notice that the Bill makes provision for every local authority being, subject to the regulations—

Deemed to have power to make provision for the taking of precautions for the protection of persons and property within its district against injury or damage in the event of air raids or other hostile attack.

I do not know that such extensive powers should be conferred upon local authorities. I can visualise some overlapping. Should there be an air raid upon Perth, incendiary bombs will certainly be used. The outbreak of fires in the circumstances would be the main danger against which the public must be protected. At present the Fire Brigades Board controls all the fire-fighting activities of the State. The local authorities have no equipment and very little knowledge of what should be done in the event of a conflagration. They leave that task to the duly established and authorised body, which does its job effectively. Local governing authorities should have nothing whatever to do with fire protection, beyond paying their contributions towards the cost of the service rendered by the Fire Brigades Board. I am of opinion that in order further to ensure safety, steps should be taken, for at least the duration of the war, to procure extra fire-fighting machines, particularly for the greater metropolitan area. I have seen a number of films depicting devastat-

ing conflagrations in Northern France and Belgium. I could not help noticing in one picture that, although the houses in every street seemed to be on fire, only two sets of firemen and no adequate fire-fighting plant could be seen. In the metropolitan area, we have not more than 15 effective fire-fighting machines and about 60 men trained to cope with outbreaks. We should have at least another ten fire-fighting plants with the men necessary to man them. These should be put on the permanent staff and effectively trained. There should also be a staff of volunteers to assist, but for war purposes only. This matter is of paramount importance to the defence of the State. It is just as important as an army of fighting planes to fend off an enemy attack. Local authorities should not be called upon to pay for such services, which should be paid for on the same basis as they are paid for to-day, except that perhaps the insurance companies should be charged a greater ratio because property is being protected, chiefly in their interests. I intend to support the Bill and hope consideration will be given to my remarks. There may be other matters which local authorities should not be called upon to undertake. I do not know how effective a council will be to control these activities. Much will depend on the persons appointed and the knowledge they possess to deal with any situation that may arise. I differ from the member for Perth (Mr. Needham); I do not think this is the time to argue about who shall pay. What the public will expect in the event of a hostile attack is that the Government of this State, in conjunction with the Federal Government, will take effective steps to protect the people to the fullest extent.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [5.57]: I do not propose to say much on this measure. I appreciate the necessity for its introduction. After all, it has its origin in a country that to-day is getting the benefit of this type of legislation. But there is nothing to get panicky about at the present stage. By this legislation we shall be conferring on the Government a power far in excess of what would be conferred upon it in ordinary circumstances, and a power which I hope the Government will not require to use. As the mem-

ber for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) said, our Parliament goes into recess for a long period, and it is not an easy matter to call it together at short notice, if strong action is promptly needed. In such circumstances, I think it right that the Government should have power which in ordinary circumstances would not be given to it. I cannot imagine our agreeing to give the Government such power in ordinary times.

The Minister for Mines: I would not have the cheek to ask for it.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: I suppose the Minister would not. We must depend upon the Government's exercising this power with common sense. Notwithstanding my political differences with the Government, I am prepared to give it what is sought; but at the same time there is wisdom in the suggestion made by the member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) that Parliament should be called together at short notice to consider the regulations. If the regulations are put into force, we know that some members of the public—certainly not all—will become panicky. They will imagine all kinds of things, yet members will not have the knowledge that the Government will possess with regard to the necessity for the regulations. The calling together of Parliament would tend to clear up any misunderstandings on the part of members and of the public generally. For that reason, it is expedient that we should devise some method of calling Parliament together. I favour the suggestion made that Parliament should be summoned by petition to the Speaker, but only for the purpose of considering these regulations—not for any other business, unless the Government desires to introduce it, because it is extraordinary that power should be taken away from the Executive Council to determine whether or not Parliament should sit.

Member: We could adjourn Parliament and call it together at short notice.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. That is what happened last session: no doubt it will recur this session. Admittedly, under the measure the Government will have power to incur expenditure, because revenue is appropriated by the Bill itself. In addition, it is provided that local authorities shall find revenue for carrying out work that the regulations will empower them to do. Private individuals may also be called upon to incur expenditure for minor matters. I can imagine

that if these powers were exercised arbitrarily, people could be ruined by asking them to perform certain works authorised by the regulations. As I say, the matter is one for the exercise of common sense by the Government and local authorities. What are our most vulnerable spots likely to suffer damage from bombing or enemy action? I should say Cottesloe, Fremantle, Bunbury, and Geraldton. These are, after all, our first line of defence and it would not be right to ask the local bodies in those places to carry an unfair share of the expenditure when the safety of all the people was at stake. I hope some provision will be made whereby our people shall not be involved in heavy expenditure which should be borne by the Commonwealth. Is it proposed that any expenditure incurred under the regulations shall be recouped from an indemnity which the enemy will be called upon to pay?

Mr. Cross: The enemy is not likely to pay very much.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know what will happen. At the conclusion of the last war the enemy paid a considerable sum of money. I was in Belgium and France for some little time after the last war and ascertained that Germany paid over huge sums of money.

Mr. Warner: We did not get much of it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We did not get a great deal, because Australia suffered little damage. I think we received about £6,000,000. In the circumstances, I am prepared to trust the Government. I well know I am entrusting it with a piece of legislation which, in ordinary circumstances, I would be prepared to debate for 24 hours. I hope this legislation will not in the future be used as a precedent, except of course in circumstances such as we now find ourselves. As I have said, the main consideration in this class of legislation is the exercise of commonsense and the appointment of men who can be relied upon to render the best service not to the Government, but to the public generally, without incurring unnecessary expense. I agree with the Minister that we may have the opportunity to try out some of our public men who may be prepared to give their services voluntarily. Many of them I know are willing to do so, but we may not obtain the services of suitable people. I notice pro-

vision is made for payment to members of the council, but consideration must be given to the spreading of expenditure by local authorities. Buildings may have to be demolished, barricades erected, and air shelters provided. These latter may prove costly, because they involve a fair amount of concrete work. All this would be a charge against the local authorities. It must not be forgotten that under the Bill the Government will have authority to carry out such work if it is not done by the local authorities and to charge the cost to such authorities.

Mr. J. Hegney: Persons, corporations, or anyone else.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. It is a very great power. I hope the money will be found from other sources and that the responsibility will not be thrown on corporations, local authorities and private individuals. Perhaps I am a little optimistic, but I do not believe there will be any need for this provision. Unfortunately the legislation is necessary. There may never be any need to put it into operation, but if there is it will have to be administered with great commonsense and by a wisely selected personnel. Power is given not only to the Government but also to outside people of whom we know nothing. We do not know who will be appointed. In matters of this kind the advice of the Leader of the Opposition might well be obtained. The Government would not be committed to accepting that advice. It could, however, call together representatives of the Country Party and the National Party, and place before them the names of the people it was proposed to appoint to the Council. Members on this side of the House represent quite a number of people, just as the Government does. I make that suggestion to the Minister, for I feel sure that the Government can rely upon receiving as good service from the Opposition benches as from its own supporters.

Mr. Withers: This is non-political and voluntary.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not want politics to be introduced into the matter at all. I am giving advice to the Government as I would to my own sons. I hope the Government will be as amenable to reason as they are.

The Minister for Mines: Do they listen to you?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: They take a good deal of notice of what I say, though they do not always admit it. I do not intend to oppose the second reading of the Bill, but the Government should advise us as to the extent to which it expects local authorities to carry liability, and also the reason for including corporate bodies and private individuals amongst those to whom power is to be given.

MR. SAMPSON (Swan) [6.7]: Every citizen of the State is anxious to do all in his power to assist the Government, but this Bill leans too heavily upon local authorities. In one instance it is contradictory. The Bill states that a local authority—

if so required by the Governor by notice in writing shall in accordance with its borrowing powers under its local government Act borrow certain moneys.

In certain instances, however, the borrowing powers of local authorities are already exhausted, and it seems to be unfair to place on the local authorities the responsibility for doing something that is actually not in their power.

The Minister for Mines: We are giving them that power.

Mr. SAMPSON: I hope every member will support the Bill, but I trust also that the principle will be amended, and that the local authorities will not be depended upon to do what should be done by the Government. There will be no backwardness on the part of the people as a whole to assist the Government, but the Government cannot insist upon the local government authorities doing things which they have neither the power nor the money to do.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [6.10]: I am pleased with the reception the Bill has been given. As a matter of fact, I freely admit that when the Premier entrusted its introduction to me, the more I looked at it the less I liked it.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I anticipated that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Bill was a difficult one to introduce for the reason that it is based entirely on the supposition of something happening. It was difficult to make a case because, as already

stated—particularly by the Leader of the Opposition—the measure will come into operation to any great extent only in the event of hostile attack. The reason for the measure is set out in the Title as follows:—

An Act to make provision for the taking of precautions for the protection of persons and property in this State from injury or damage in the event of hostile attack, and generally to make provision with respect to civil defence and the security and protection of the people of this State.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Unfortunately, the Title is not the Act.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know, but it does give some idea of the reason for the Bill, and I hope, as I said when I introduced the Bill, that its provisions will never have to be used.

Mr. Watts: You will not wait until there is an attack before the Act is made operative?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If the hon. member will be patient, I will reply to some of the arguments that have been raised. During the last 12 months a considerable amount of work has been done in Western Australia and even in this House in making provision against a hostile attack. There is one committee called the Essential Services Emergency Committee. It is representative of the Perth Electricity and Gas Department, the Post and Telegraph Department, the Water Supply and Sewerage Department, the Fire Brigade Department, the Tramways, Ferries, Electricity and Railway Department, and the Police Traffic Department. That is one committee only which has been attempting to provide for co-ordination of activity by all the departments concerned in the event of any trouble. In the same way, the Medical and Health Department has been engaged in giving training to wardens. Nevertheless, we have had no legal authority to undertake this work of co-ordination.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: There is nothing to stop you.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There is a lot to stop us. Suppose a man went to the hon member's house and said, "I am seeking certain information which the Civil Defence Council considers necessary." There would be nothing to prevent the hon. member from asking—and he would probably have some justification for asking—"Who are you?" The man might reply, "I am the sub-warden of this district, and I

have been sent to obtain this information." Whereupon the hon. member would ask, "Where is your authority. You have no legal power to seek this information." Possibly—though I do not suggest it is likely—the hon. member would tell the visitor to get outside. That has been done in the Canning electorate.

Hon. C. G. Latham: So the member for Canning has been at work!

Mr. Cross: Some people in my electorate have.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I admit that there will probably be drastic regulations, but neither this nor any other Government would be likely to seek such extensive powers in any other set of circumstances. With all due deference I suggest to the Leader of the National Party (Mr. McDonald) that there is a good deal of difference between legislation introduced in Great Britain and the necessity for such legislation here. The difference lies in the fact that Great Britain is 22 miles from enemy air bases whereas Western Australia is 12,000 miles distant.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I was endeavouring to show that the Bill is purely a precautionary measure. Most of the discussion has hinged on the danger to local authorities, but I suggest that the Bill will really protect the local governing bodies in their desire to take any steps for civil defence.

Hon. C. G. Latham: It goes further than that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is so, but local bodies have no legal authority to spend any money on civil defence. Representatives of local governing authorities have told me on more than one occasion that they would like to do something, but they have no means of doing it because to spend their own funds for this purpose would be illegal. If a local body did anything towards civil defence, even to the extent of sending out a motor lorry on other than local government work, and anything went wrong, the insurance company would probably repudiate the claim because the work would not have been within the local body's province. This Bill will protect a local body in those circumstances. The

proposed council would not think for a moment of ordering local governing bodies to spend huge sums of money. Conceivably something might be required to be done by a local body.

Hon. C. G. Latham: You are dealing with Clause 11 now. What about Clause 10?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am dealing with local governing bodies generally. The whole Bill is drawn to protect them. Experts might declare that certain things ought to be done on the coast, at Claremont for instance. The member for Claremont (Mr. North) told us that that municipality would be within the range of a raider. Suppose Claremont refused to do certain things that were in the best interests not only of the Claremont people but also of the State generally, surely there should be someone in authority to say that those things must be done! Claremont might refuse to observe black-out precautions or something of that kind. Someone must have authority to insist that this or that shall or shall not be done in cases of emergency.

The member for West Perth (Mr. McDonald) said he proposed to move an amendment to provide for calling Parliament together. I do not know what the Government will say to that proposal, but I do not like the idea. I suggest that there is a great difference between the Parliament of Victoria, as constituted today, and this Parliament. In the Victorian Parliament there is no party sufficiently strong of itself to form a Government. The strongest party, I believe, would have just one member more than was needed to form a quorum in that Parliament. The position here is quite different. I think members will accept as reasonable that, in the event of an attack being made on Western Australia, there would be no doubt about Parliament's being called together so long as there was a place in which to meet. Further than this, I believe that any regulation of a drastic nature would be unnecessary. I cannot see any need for putting a drastic regulation into operation unless an emergency actually arose. I might go so far as to say that if the Premier, who is the channel of communication between the State and the Commonwealth, received word from the Prime Minister that there

was a possibility of an attack being made by plane or by raider, and some drastic regulation was found to be necessary, the first thing the Premier would do would be to summon Parliament and let members know what was happening.

Hon. C. G. Latham: At present he cannot call members together without 14 days' notice.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: If Parliament is merely adjourned and not prorogued, members can be called together at any time.

Hon. C. G. Latham: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the Premier would be prepared to give an assurance that Parliament would not be prorogued in such circumstances. Since the closing of last session, Parliament was prorogued for only a few days so that members could be called together at short notice. I do not agree with the member for West Perth in his statement that because members are to some extent scattered, there would be difficulty in getting them together. Transport is reasonably convenient and I think members could attend, at any rate in numbers sufficient to form a quorum, if need arose. Therefore I see no necessity for the amendment.

The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) has some idea of the possibility of concentrated attacks. I suggest to the hon. member that if there is a concentrated attack, it will occur only because our navy and our air fleet have gone. If there is a concentrated attack on Western Australia or on Perth, I do not think we shall be worrying much whether Parliament is called together. The Commonwealth will have charge of affairs and we shall be doing what we are told to do individually and collectively. Therefore I say we need not worry about the possibility of a concentrated attack. When that happens we will be all in and well in. The hon. member was also concerned about the authority this Bill proposes to give to the Government, and he said such powers should be granted only in time of war. I suggest that in time of war there must be one authority. It would not be of much use having a hundred authorities if we were attacked even on only a small scale. We must have some directing authority, and this Bill will provide for it.

The member for Claremont (Mr. North) thinks that, in the event of an attack, people on the coast might get a bad time, and he went on to say that if Claremont was demolished, the civil defence council might order the municipality to build up the town again. I cannot imagine that the hon. member entertains any such idea as that.

Hon. C. G. Latham: The Bill does not give power to order rebuilding.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, and I do not think Parliament would allow the civil defence council to give any such instruction. If a town was demolished through enemy action, the rebuilding would be a matter for the State and not for any particular municipality or road board.

Mr. North: There is the question of providing air-raid shelters.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I do not think the civil defence council would demand many of them. I know a few good spots around Claremont that would shelter quite a lot of people. Members should bear in mind the difference between the position of England and of Australia. I am afraid members are inclined to think that what has been done in England in the shape of preparations and precautions is necessary here, but we have to remember that England is only 22 miles from enemy plane bases and that we are 12,000 miles away.

Hon. C. G. Latham: No, we are not.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Well, we are that distance from any great danger at the moment.

Hon. C. G. Latham: This legislation is not for the moment.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: It is for the moment. However, I shall not try to convince the Leader of the Opposition of that. The hon. member has seen something of air and artillery work, just as I have. He knows it will be for only a small affair that this Bill will be required. It may be that there will be a raider or some vessel carrying a plane capable of dropping a few bombs that can do very little damage. We must be prepared for that sort of thing. I am not optimistic enough to believe that the Government, by this legislation, can confer a great deal of benefit upon the community in the event of a concentrated attack. That would be a matter for the Defence De-

partment and the army of Australia, and not for this Government or this legislation. The member for Brownhill-Ivanhoe (Mr. F. C. L. Smith) suggests that we should not pass legislation of this nature. Were it not that we are at war, no attempt to put through such a Bill would be made. The hon. member will, however, agree that legislation of this kind is essential, and could only be essential in the event of any crisis we may be called upon to face.

Hon. C. G. Latham: There was no such legislation during the last war.

Mr. Warner: There is no comparison between that war and this one.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: During the last war 22 Bills were introduced in this House, and some of them are still on the statute-book.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They were put through subsequent to the war, were they not?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No. Some of those Acts are still on the statute-book. There is no comparison between this war and the last one.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: No legislation like this was introduced during the last war.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The hon. member is always certain. It is no use my arguing with him.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: I was a member of the Government of that day.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: During the last war?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the Labour Government went out of office during the last war.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I know I was getting knocked about pretty badly by "Fritz" in 1917.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: The question at the moment is whether such legislation was introduced then.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not going to stand here arguing about that.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister had better address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The Leader of the Opposition said that no legislation like this was introduced during the last war. He will agree there is no comparison between that war and this one. Be-

tween 1914 and 1918, 380,000 men were sent overseas by Australia to fight, and they were well convoyed.

Hon. C. G. Latham: By whom were they convoyed?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: There was no likelihood of the enemy coming here at that stage, except in the case of one raider which the Australian Navy finished off.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Our ships are not being convoyed this time.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is the difference between the two wars. It is the reason why this legislation has been brought down; there was no reason for it during the last war.

Hon. C. G. Latham: And we cannot say that the enemy is 12,000 miles away.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I am not afraid of the enemy the Leader of the Opposition has in mind.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition has made his speech.

Hon. C. G. Latham: I am only trying to help the Minister.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I thank the hon. member for his assistance. I am pleased at the reception accorded to the Bill. Members will appreciate that it is purely a precautionary measure, and I am sure they agree that we ought to take these precautions. Even if we are optimistic enough to believe that no raid will be made upon us, at least we can say, should a raid occur, that we are doing all we can to assist ourselves. It is no use any member saying this is a Commonwealth matter. The States and Commonwealth have decided that each has its respective responsibilities. The Premier and every member of the Government would like the Commonwealth authorities to say, "We will do everything and pay for everything," but we have a duty to perform and that duty is to protect our civil population. That is all we are endeavouring to do by this Bill.

Mr. Needham: There can be no objection to that.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I trust the second reading will be agreed to.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

BILL—PETROLEUM ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [7.45] in moving the second reading said: We have for some time been discussing what precautionary measures we should take in the event of war being brought to these shores. A great deal of consternation has also been shown with regard to the rationing of petrol. We can, therefore, claim that this is a particularly important Bill. Everyone will agree that the discovery of oil in payable quantities in Western Australia would place us in a happy position. During the last few months there have been many inquiries concerning the Act in this State and the possibility of some amendments to it being made. It is not a simple matter to prospect for oil, for such exploration requires a considerable amount of money. Exploratory work is now carried out first by a preliminary air reconnaissance, which oil companies propose to do. That work is followed by highly trained ground parties whose object is to locate suitable formations. If those formations are satisfactory, they usually result in boring operations. A more detailed examination, however, is necessary to determine which of those formations is likely to give the best results from boring. In all my discussions with representatives of oil companies and other experts, including Dr. Wade the Commonwealth Oil Geologist, I find that two fundamentals have to be considered when the object is to encourage the introduction of capital on a scale that long years of experience, coupled with disappointments, have shown to be necessary if the search for oil is to be carried out on the lines which give any hope of success. These are:—

1. The size of the holdings, particularly in cases where the productive stage has been reached.
2. The payment of royalties to the State by the operators.

Members will agree that we have long looked forward to the day when oil will be discovered in Australia, particularly in this State. Admittedly, the attempts to find oil in Australia have not been as vigorous as they might have been, but some attempts have been made. Up to this date all efforts

to obtain petroleum in payable quantities have been somewhat disappointing. I have been informed that the disappointing results that have been obtained during the past 30 years have been due in a large measure to insufficient capital and the lack of technical experience. My advice is that technical experience is of the greatest importance, and that any search for oil without capital is of little value. Companies have been floated with the idea of gambling on the success of one bore hole, and this in a country that is as yet unproved so far as petroleum is concerned. Even in long established areas of production, many cases can be quoted to show how misguided is this idea. Scores of deep borings have been necessary in some places before commercial production has been obtained, even though geological structures had been mapped with great care. While I admit that this is not the universal experience, such happenings are most common in new and untried areas. Great oil fields like those of Southern California, East Texas, and Sumatra would have been condemned, abandoned, and considered not to exist had they been in Australia. One borehole, or at most two, would have condemned the area completely, in the eyes of Governments, company directors, and the general public alike. But more than one or two holes having been bored, payable wells were struck.

Of necessity, State legislation regarding search for oil has, in great measure, been a reflection of existing public opinion. It has encouraged the small company with small capital. The fact that even success in locating oil may yet turn out unprofitable seems not to have been envisaged. It follows, therefore, that capital expenditure on a scale hitherto impossible in Australia is necessary if success is to be achieved. It also follows that any concern willing to expend such an amount of capital must take great risks. It will be generally admitted, I think, that as regards this huge territory of Western Australia we have only a slight idea of oil formations. A company prepared to search for oil by aeroplanes and with good technical ground staff would have to expend a great amount of money, with the possibility of never striking oil at all. The American Petroleum Institute estimates that a sum between £50,000,000 and £60,000,000 per annum is spent on prospecting alone in the United States. If work on this scale is

necessary in oil-producing countries, the inadequacy of the efforts which have been made in Australia is evident. Throughout the world, including this Commonwealth, encouragement is being given which bears comparison with the inducements offering elsewhere. Sufficient areas are necessary to ensure possibilities of return of capital and reasonable interest if and when petroleum is found. As well as granting sufficient areas, it is desirable, in order to assist a company operating, to arrange a programme of development which will extend over at least 20 years, thus giving the company security of tenure for a reasonable period. I think members will agree that a company able to spend less than, say, £25,000 would hardly be justified in starting out on reconnaissance or ground-prospecting in the Kimberleys.

These principles have been generally recognised during the past ten years in all countries where development of petroleum resources is needed, but have been hampered chiefly by legislative provisions. New Zealand, Papua, and New Guinea, Great Britain as well as the Crown Colonies and South American Republics, are amongst countries which have taken steps to remove such obstructions. In every one of the cases quoted, amendments of legislation have been followed by large-scale effort. Over £1,000,000 has been spent in Great Britain and New Zealand, and nearly £1,000,000 in Papua and New Guinea, on searches for oil. The need for revision of legislation in the British Empire was so apparent that the British Colonial Office drafted model Acts and regulations which were recently circulated to the Governments of the Crown Colonies. New oil-bearing areas have been found in Great Britain, Egypt, and other countries. I suggest that Australia, which needs liquid fuels as much as or more than these other countries, has lagged behind. There has been no great effort, no introduction of new capital on this scale, and no new discovery of oil. It is the considered opinion of the Government of Western Australia that we cannot afford to lag behind, but must catch up and march with other portions of the Empire in such a matter as this. If revision of legislation will result in the introduction of capital—and I have already definite evidence that it will—then it is surely an urgent step for us to take.

The size of holdings suggested in the Bill is based not only on recent legislation elsewhere, but on the stated requirements of experienced oil companies who know what the risks are and the amount of money that must be expended. I suggest that prospecting for oil is not exactly a poor man's or a layman's job; and it is not a matter of shutting out prospectors by granting large areas such as might arise in goldmining, since prospecting for oil necessitates expert knowledge and plenty of capital. I know that this Chamber has repeatedly discussed the reservation of large areas in goldmining. In accordance with legislation on the Statute Book, these areas may be gigantic; but I reiterate that little or no comparison can be drawn between prospecting for gold, which is carried out mostly by men who frequently are called upon to get storekeepers to back them, and prospecting for oil. It would not be much use for that class of prospector to set out on a search for oil. The prospector for gold knows something of goldmining as well as of prospecting; but it requires more than ordinary knowledge, and capital as well, to prospect for oil. We should also bear in mind that the whole population derives advantage, either directly or indirectly, from an active petroleum-prospecting campaign. The huge sums of money provided are practically all expended in the country. This expenditure, and the wages paid to men in Western Australia, would be of great benefit to the State as a whole.

The royalties suggested in the Bill are not lower than those stipulated in other countries where oilfields are being looked for and developed. They are, in fact, higher than in some countries, and I think represent a fair deal to concerns which are called upon to spend a great deal of money. In some old-established oilfields, such as those in America, royalties may run up to 12½ per cent., although the trend of the modern legislation available to us is towards reduction to a level of five per cent. In addition, Australia needs oil, and we cannot expect companies to expend capital here when better terms are obtainable elsewhere, especially in countries where oilfields have already been proved to exist. We are in the position of having to compete not only for

capital, but also for the experience and the technical knowledge which are essential if Western Australia is to have any chance of achieving success in oil production. We have a record of 30 years of failure, and I have been informed by experts that there is no structural area in Australia that has been properly tested. The Government feels that unless practical steps, based on experience gained in other lands, are taken and the State is brought into line with those other countries, another 30 years will probably pass with still nothing achieved. The Commonwealth Government is extremely anxious to have established uniform legislation regarding the search for petroleum in Australia.

Hon. C. G. Latham: We were told that in 1936.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Four years have passed and much has happened since then. All the other States of Australia and New Zealand have passed legislation similar to the Bill now before the House. Our own Act is fairly modern and was drafted with the assistance of Dr. Wade. However, he, in common with the Government, is now of the opinion that the titles should be enlarged in respect of areas and that the royalties should be reduced.

Hon. C. G. Latham: Like most scientists.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That may be so, but I am prepared to take off my hat to scientists and technicians on such matters. As an indication of the value of modern oil legislation, the remarks of the Minister for Mines in New Zealand, in his annual report for 1938, are illuminating. In the course of that report he said—

As announced in my last statement, the passing of the Petroleum Act, 1937, heralded a new era in the search for oil in New Zealand. Following the passing of this Act, considerable interest was evinced by some of the major oil companies, and practically all the potential oil-bearing land in New Zealand was applied for. In all, 52 licenses, with an aggregate area of 9,236 square miles, have been granted, and applications for further areas are still coming to hand. With the granting of the licenses, the search for oil commenced on a scale unprecedented in the history of New Zealand.

That was the experience of New Zealand after passing legislation of this description.

Hon. C. G. Latham: But oil was discovered there 30 years ago.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: And the reason for the lack of development was that insufficient capital was available to work the deposits adequately. Speaking in Sydney on the 19th June, 1939, Mr. Henry Dundas, a vice-president of the Vacuum Oil Co. of America, said that his concern had budgeted for an expenditure of £500,000 in New Zealand and was prepared to spend even more. That refers to one company only. Countries possessing their own oil supplies in these days must be considered extremely fortunate, and Dr. Wade has assured me that Western Australia possesses oil possibilities, but that intense search and large expenditure are necessary to cope with the task ahead.

The Bill may appear to members as somewhat complicated, but on perusing it they will find that it embodies very few important amendments. Those that are included necessitate a great number of consequential alterations, the effect of which is to make the Bill appear more complicated than it really is. Like the present Act, the Bill is divided into three parts: (a) Permits to explore, (b) Licenses to prospect, and (c) Petroleum leases. I shall deal with the three sections in their order and will draw a comparison between the provisions of the existing Act and those embodied in the amending Bill.

Dealing first with permits to explore, the present Act provides for a fee of £50, of which £45 may be refunded at the expiration of the permit if operations are satisfactory, whereas the Bill provides for a fee of £50 for every 1,000 square miles, with a maximum of £500. The existing Act does not require any bond to be taken out but the Bill stipulates a bond of £1,000. Then, again, under the Act the State is divided into five oil provinces, but if the Bill is agreed to these will be abolished. That will mean that the whole State will be classed as an oil field. The area allowed within a province will be practically unlimited under the provisions of the Act, but no exclusive right is provided as any number of permits to explore can be issued within the one oil province. The Bill, however, provides that the area shall be not less than 1,000 square miles and the exclusive right to prospect within that area is to be granted. Any number of permits can be granted to one person provided that the requirements

of the legislation are carried out. As to the term of the permit, the Act provides for 12 months with the power to grant two renewals, but under the Bill the term is increased to two years with power to grant 12-monthly renewals. The working conditions provided for in both the Act and the amending Bill are the same. Members will appreciate the fact that the Government is anxious to see that the working conditions are carried out by any concern embarking upon this undertaking. The Bill provides for a definite exclusive prospecting title to be issued, but at present this is only in the nature of a miner's right. In making the preliminary reconnaissance, oil companies conduct the search first by aeroplane and then by means of ground parties who look for suitable formations. In those circumstances, a large area is necessary with a protected right to warrant this preliminary heavy expenditure. We must remember that the work takes a long time. Naturally we hope that oil will be found quickly but, possibly, that result will not be achieved until investigations have been carried out for a long time. In the circumstances, it is essential to give the exclusive right to carry out the investigations to the company operating in a given area. As I explained, what are regarded as suitable formations are explored by ground parties and those considered to warrant further and more detailed examination can be dealt with if application is made for a license to prospect.

That leads to the next stage, when the companies take out licenses to prospect. The fee for a license to prospect is, under the existing Act, £1 per square mile per annum, but up to 90 per cent. of that amount may be refunded if operations are satisfactory. The Bill provides for a fee of 5s. per square mile per annum during the initial term of the first two years and of 10s. per square mile per annum during the renewed term, with respective maxima of £12 10s. and £25 per annum. The provision for a bond of £1,000 as set out in the Act is also included in the Bill. With regard to the area, this must not exceed, under the provisions of the Act, a square of 15 miles, which equals 225 square miles, but under the Bill the area held must not be more than 200 square miles and not less than eight square miles, unless special authorisa-

tion to the contrary is secured. Under the Act the term of the license is for 12 months with a right to grant four annual renewals, but under the Bill the term is for four years with a right to secure renewals of 12 months. The number of licenses that can be held under the Act must not be more than five within any one oil province at any one time, and not more than two such licenses can apply to adjoining areas in any one province. Under the Bill there is no restriction upon the number of licenses that can be held. Under the Act, working conditions provide for a detailed survey of the land to be commenced within six months and other operations as prescribed. This provision is unaltered in the Bill. Although the maximum area of a license is slightly less in the amending Bill, there is no restriction upon the number of licenses which can be held. Such a provision may not appeal to some members, but irrespective of the number of licenses, the holders must comply with the provisions of the Act in regard to each license. The fees now set out in the Bill are less than those at present charged, and a longer preliminary term is granted to enable the holder to prepare an extensive, long-distance programme. If his operations are successful he will apply for petroleum leases.

The rental for petroleum leases under the existing Act is 6d. per acre per annum, reward leases being free of rental for the first five years. This legislation provides for a charge of £10 per annum per square mile. No bond is required under the present Act, but under the Bill a bond of £1,000 must be furnished. The area allowed under the Act is 160 acres; but provision is made that the first discoverer in Western Australia of payable petroleum shall have the right to apply for a reward lease of 225 square miles, while the first discoverer in each oil province can apply for a reward lease of 16 square miles and the second discoverer four square miles. Under the Bill not more than 100 square miles and not less than four square miles, unless specially authorised, is allowed, while the provision for reward leases has been deleted. Members may wonder why, but I am informed by those interested that they are not worrying about reward leases; if they strike payable oil, that will be sufficient reward for them.

Royalties under the Act on ordinary leases are on a sliding scale varying from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. according to daily production in barrels; for reward leases the royalties are 5 per cent. for the first five years and 10 per cent. thereafter. Under the Bill the royalty will be not less than 5 per cent. nor more than 10 per cent., and the rent paid will be set off against the royalty. Under the Act no person can hold or be interested in more than five leases in any oil province, but no restriction is placed in this Bill on the number of leases which may be held. If, however, a company desires to take up several leases, it must put down bores on each lease. I mention this so that hon. members will understand it is not the Government's intention to grant huge tracts of country to companies that will not actually prospect them for oil. The terms of the leases must be strictly complied with, as in the case of a 24-acre claim under the Mining Act.

With regard to working conditions, the Act stipulates that a drilling plant must be installed and operations commenced within six months. This provision is not altered by the Bill. Six months is a reasonable period, because the prospectors must bore for oil and they might be situated 250 miles from Derby in the Kimberleys. Those who know the conditions prevailing there are aware that it takes some time to convey and instal a plant for the purpose of boring for oil. But the prospectors must be ready to start boring operations within six months.

Generally areas are increased under the Bill, the restriction upon the number which can be held is removed, and royalties are lowered. The actual amount of the royalties to be paid will be fixed having regard to the isolation of the oil basin, cost of pipe-lines to the coast, etc. Members will appreciate the importance of this provision. If oil is discovered within 50 miles of Broome, obviously the cost of a pipe-line will not be so great as it would be if the oil were discovered 200 miles inland from Broome. I am informed that the cost of laying a pipe-line from the Kimberleys to the coast would be from £10,000 to £12,000. We have accordingly provided that royalties shall be charged after taking into consideration the capital expended by the company

and the cost of transporting the oil to the nearest point of shipment.

I feel sure that the passing of this legislation will result in the starting of an immense oil prospecting scheme. In fact, already one company is making necessary arrangements to spend at least £25,000 in prospecting and exploration. During my visit to the Eastern States at the beginning of the year I discussed this matter with interested men, who informed me that the introduction of this legislation would mean the raising of a large amount of capital to prospect for oil in this State. There is no necessity for me to enlarge on what it would mean to the State if oil were discovered within our boundaries. Many of the big companies who were prospecting for oil in other lands are now seeking to prospect countries far removed from the scene of the present war. The Government feels that oil is as likely to be found in Western Australia as in any other part of the Commonwealth. Each of the other States, as I have already pointed out, has passed similar legislation with good effect. A company in Queensland is already carrying on prospecting in that State. I understand a company intends to prospect for oil in this State; if we can get one big company to do this work, even should its efforts be unsuccessful, we shall at least prove for all time that oil does not exist in this State. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Willmott, debate adjourned.

BILL—ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [8.20]: I think everyone in the House will support the Bill and I can emulate the Minister for Justice, who made a very short speech, by making one as short, or even shorter. The Bill, as the Minister said, sets out to prevent nomination by persons who are disqualified from taking a seat in Parliament. The Minister recognises, as I do, that it is very difficult to prevent a man who knows he is disqualified, but who possibly cannot be proved to be disqualified,

from submitting a nomination. All the Minister seeks to do by this Bill, and all that we can do, is to make it an offence for a man to nominate when he knows he is disqualified, a penalty being provided if proof of his wrong-doing is forthcoming. That is the first part of the Bill.

The next part provides for some alteration in cases where candidates retire or die between the time they nominate and polling day or die on polling day. The Minister has made some distinction between a candidate who withdraws and a candidate who dies. He says that if a candidate retires the remaining candidate, in the event of there being only one, should be elected. That is fair enough. If, however, a candidate dies, great difficulties may be occasioned by the opposing candidate being declared elected. Consequently, distinction has been made between the procedure to be adopted in the event of a candidate withdrawing and that to be adopted in the event of a candidate dying. The manner in which the matter has been tackled is quite reasonable and the proposed procedure is much to be preferred to that which would be adopted under the existing Act. The only complaint I have to make concerns the wording of the Title which states that the Bill is to amend three sections of the parent Act. However, the measure amends one section and repeals two, and then proceeds to re-enact the repealed sections in a different form. That being the only complaint I have to make about the Bill, I propose to support it.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 76:

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: This clause provides for a penalty to be imposed on any person who nominates as a candidate in an election either for the Legislative Council or for the Legislative Assembly while being disqualified from being elected. The Minister told us that the need for this legislation was brought home to him as a result of a certain person being returned

to this House at the last election and remaining a member only until the House met, when he decided he would not proceed any further. If the Government had any information at the time about this matter, it should have demanded a return of the salary paid to that individual. If a man is statutorily debarred from taking a seat in the House, he cannot, under the Constitution Act, be elected.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: He can contest an election.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Section 31 of the Constitution Act states—

No person shall be qualified to be a member of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly if he—(1) be a member of the other House of the Legislature; or (2) be a judge of the Supreme Court; or (3) be the Sheriff of Western Australia; or (4) be a clergyman or minister of religion; or (5) be an undischarged bankrupt, or a debtor against whose estate there is a subsisting receiving order in bankruptcy; or (6) has been in any part of Her Majesty's Dominions attainted or convicted of treason or felony.

Section 33 states—

If any person not qualified to be a member of the Legislative Council or Legislative Assembly shall, nevertheless, be elected and returned as a member to serve in the said Council or Assembly, such election and return shall be void.

So if this man was not qualified, it was impossible for him to be elected, and therefore he was not entitled to draw a salary. That is one of the matters to which the Government might have given some attention. If, for instance, a man was an undischarged bankrupt and knew he was at the time he nominated, a refund of the money paid to him by the State should be demanded. The Minister also pointed out that a free railway pass was granted to the individual in question, which he was not entitled to use. These are serious matters. Hon. members are here to look after the finances of the people and if we allow one man to make use of the finances of the State to that extent, it is difficult to foresee how many more might attempt to do it. I do not know whether the Minister can recover the money now. The Minister may be defended on the score that he may not have had the facts.

The Minister for Justice: I do not know whether anyone has the facts of the case now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not know whether it would be advisable for the Minister to ask me to say what I know.

The Premier: You can say as much as you like; no one will stop you.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not think it would be advisable. But we know that there was a statutory bar to his election and there was another election afterwards.

The Premier: I do not know that.

The CHAIRMAN: The Leader of the Opposition will kindly address the Chair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Very well, I will address the Chair. But we do know, and so does the Government know—

The Premier: No!

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The Leader of the Opposition must address the Chair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Very well. There is of course a way of finding out the facts. I could have asked for the matter to be referred to a select committee at the second reading stage. There is another chance of doing so if the information is desired. I do hope the Minister will look into the matter and that if his statement is correct and a certain man was statutorily debarred from being elected to this House, a refund of the money paid to him will be demanded.

The Premier: Many things can be alleged but that does not mean they can be proved.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think there is very good proof of this.

The Premier: No.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think so.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: The Government does not know of any disqualification of the person mentioned. We have not made any inquiries and do not know the reason why that person did not take his seat in the House. We can only presume that he was disqualified but we have no other information. I as Minister have no information beyond the acknowledgment of disqualification implied by his not taking his seat in the House. We can only presume from that fact that he must have known he was not qualified.

Hon. W. D. JOHNSON: I had a disappointing experience at the last election. According to the Act any person may nominate. A person who nominated for the Guildford-Midland seat was not qualified to vote; he had not been in the State sufficiently long to qualify for enrolment, but his name was on the roll. Yet he was

eligible to nominate for the seat because the Act does not stipulate that a candidate must be an elector. The Electoral Department afterwards admitted that his name was wrongly on the roll. That, however, did not interfere with his nomination because any person may nominate. I thought I had no opposition, but this nomination came in two minutes ahead of time. Just when the returning officer was about to congratulate me on being elected unopposed, in came the £25 followed closely by the hands and head of the candidate. I tried to fault the clock, but could not do so. This nomination caused a good deal of expense to the State, and I was wondering whether the amendment in the Bill would prevent a recurrence of that sort of thing. So far as I can see, any person may still nominate. A candidate should be an elector. Surely he should have been six months in the State before being qualified to stand for Parliament!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There have been candidates whose names were not on the roll. A candidate should at least be an elector. A candidate must be 21 years of age, and the law provides that a person of that age must enrol. Yet men have been nominated whose names were not on the roll. We should ensure that a person, to be qualified to nominate, should be one whose name is on the roll. The man mentioned by the member for Guildford-Midland had his name on the roll, though he was not qualified to be on. At present there is insufficient time to deal with names on the roll. I do not think it wise that the Electoral Act should be dealt with piecemeal. A select committee should be appointed to consider it.

The Premier: You know our experience when we tried that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Probably we went a little too far on that occasion.

The Premier: Apparently we did.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There are other defects that might be remedied. I think the Premier will agree that a person who is not prepared to observe the law by having his name on the roll, although qualified, has no right to nominate. The Minister should report progress and see what can be done.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: I have not considered the aspects mentioned. I do not know that the Bill makes any provision

against nomination by a person on the roll and disqualified from sitting, or whether a person not on the roll might nominate, but the Bill does provide that if a person who nominates is not qualified to sit, he will be penalised. There is another aspect to be considered; a person might contest an election and not be successful.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: That puts the State to a good deal of expense.

The MINISTER FOR JUSTICE: Yes, and also the other candidate. In the circumstances we might report progress and consider the points raised.

The Premier: If you start on the Electoral Act, it will take 12 months.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: But this defect is so obvious.

Progress reported.

BILL—RESERVES (GOVERNMENT DOMAIN).

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 22nd August.

HON. C. G. LATHAM (York) [8.38]: I do not suppose that the Minister will for one moment expect me to support this Bill seeing that I led the very strong opposition against a similar measure last session. While this Bill might not be identical with the other, it certainly deals with the same piece of land. I regret that I was not in the House last session when the Minister moved the suspension of the standing orders to permit of the appointment of a committee to consider the question of sites for Government buildings. I contend that a mistake was made by the House in appointing the committee, because there is no provision in our Standing Orders for the appointment of a committee of that kind. The Standing Orders clearly set out the type of committee that may be appointed, and I maintain that this excludes any other kind of committee. Therefore I say the House made a mistake, and I hope the mistake will not be repeated, because it is a serious matter. In perusing the voluminous evidence submitted to this committee, I find that the evidence was taken on oath. The committee had no power whatever to take evidence on oath; I shall quote Standing Orders on the point. Our

standing orders certainly show that the committee did things that it was not legally entitled to do.

MR. SPEAKER: The hon. member must not reflect upon anything done by the committee.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: I am not doing so, and am merely pointing out mistakes that were made. Standing Order 403 says—

Witnesses cannot be examined upon oath by the House, or any Committee thereof, except in cases provided for by law.

Numerous witnesses were called, and the oath was administered to them. I contend that were it not for the provisions of the Criminal Code and the Justices Act, that would constitute an offence against the law. Some member has just interjected, "What does it matter?" We have to set an example of what is right, and that is one way in which we should do so. I have been carefully through the report. Apparently 16 witnesses were examined, and most of them were public servants. Amongst them were the Public Service Commissioner (Mr. Simpson), the Principal Architect (Mr. Clare), the Assistant Under Secretary for Works (Mr. Hall), the Town Planning Commissioner (Mr. Davidson), the Surveyor-General (Mr. Fyfe), the Chairman of the State Transport Board (Mr. Millen), the Commissioner for Railways (Mr. Ellis), and the Inspector in charge of the traffic branch of the Police Department (Inspector Campbell). A committee was not required to get evidence from those witnesses, for it was available to the Minister at call.

The Minister for Lands: That might have impressed me but might not have impressed the House.

HON. C. G. LATHAM: The Bill was introduced last year, and although it passed through this Chamber it did not pass through Parliament as a whole. I contend it was not within the province of the Houses to appoint such a committee until the standing orders had been amended to permit of such a thing. Four members from each House went into the question, and the Bill was resubmitted to us. I object to that class of legislation; it should not be encouraged. If there was a change of Government and this sort of thing was done, it would be very unfair to the Opposition. I trust that in future such methods will not be resorted to.

The Premier: We could have introduced the same Bill that was brought down last session, had we desired to do so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There would have been no objection to that, but a committee comprising members of both Houses should not have been used as a means of influencing members. Its report must have some influence upon members.

The Minister for Lands: Do you not think it was an impartial committee?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It might have been, but I do not know how the members of it voted. I am not questioning their impartiality. I have read the report of the committee, and of the evidence, and propose to quote passages here and there. I have also looked at the site in question. Will the Minister, in his reply, tell me whether there have been any difficulties with the erection of the Technical College buildings, water troubles, for instance, and whether there has been some delay in the construction, and what the additional cost will be on that account?

The Minister for Lands: That aspect is dealt with in the evidence.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes and no. I am very concerned about the whole matter. To-day, more than ever since I have been a member of this Chamber, we should harbour the resources of the State. We do not know what is ahead of us. I propose to show that that factor did not enter the minds of the Government. The proposal is to expend a large sum of money, somewhere about £350,000. What have the Government official witnesses had to say concerning the proposed expenditure? Are we justified in laying out that large sum of money? I hope to show as I go through that the population of this State has dwindled considerably. I believe that the births last year exceeded the deaths by about 115. Unless we have some means of building up the population, can we anticipate that it will grow in the future?

Mr. Holman: That is the way to keep the population here.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Last year the departures exceeded the arrivals.

Mr. Holman: That is the point.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The matter is a serious one. I will show later on what the population was in 1922 and what the increase was during the first 10 years after

that, and indicate how the numbers have gradually fallen off until they are now dwindling.

The Premier: We are well forward in that respect compared with that time.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am going to adopt an attitude I would not adopt in normal circumstances; I am going to give advice to the Government. That is not a duty cast upon the Opposition. We are here to endeavour to keep the Government on the straight and narrow path by criticising its actions. I do not wish to criticise. In these times we desire to render any assistance we can. I believe that where the Agricultural Department is located there is sufficient land for Government offices. At present there is a single-storey building on the site. The building is too small for the staff of the department, which is thus severely handicapped. A two-storey or three-storey building could, however, be erected on that site and provide a wonderful outlook such as the expert advisers are constantly putting before the Minister. Two factors are prominent in the report. We must have spacious grounds such as are found at Canberra. This House has repeatedly resented the expenditure of £56,000 a year for the maintenance of gardens at Canberra. We cannot afford that to-day, much as we want to find employment for people. We cannot afford to put money into gardens if the cost is as great as that. The second statement is that the public would not walk up the hill to Parliament House. There are members in this Chamber who have attended it day after day and year after year, not only while the House is sitting but at other times. Some of them are past the age of three score years and ten. If young people, and those who are commercially active cannot walk to Parliament House in the discharge of their work, it is a poor lookout for the future of the nation.

Mr. Cross: You are straining your imagination to invent excuses.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: At last we have an interjection. The first page of the report itself contains the following paragraph:—

It has been shown, too, that the Government has a heavy annual rental bill to meet for departments and parts of departments for which there is no accommodation in Government-owned premises.

It is admitted that we are paying rent for Government offices. It must also be admitted that the interest on a large sum of money must be found. What does it matter whether we spend public money in paying rent or in paying interest? Surely it amounts to the same thing. Therefore that section of the report carries no weight with me. Turning to Page VIII I find this—

The Committee was of the opinion that the principal considerations influencing the final choice of a site were—

2. Its suitability of position and elevation, for dignified architectural treatment of buildings worthy of the State and the capital city, and the nature of the ground, particularly as affecting foundations.

If we want elevation, can we beat some of the sites equally handy to Parliament House? It is not possible to excel them for elevation. Certainly it is time that the Observatory was moved to a site where disturbance is less, because there must be vibration from the heavy traffic passing along Malcolm-street and Hay-street. It is felt in our residences, and there must be considerable disturbance from that source. And as regards foundations, where are better foundations to be found in Perth than those in this locality? Again, I would like to see the results of boring. On that point the committee made no inquiries whatever. It did not even ask for such information. One outside man who gave evidence said that he had been in the office of the architect who built the Christian Brothers' College, and that they had gone through some strata of clay and of shell. I continue to quote—

6. Its proximity to the more or less established Government utilities impracticable of inclusion in the administrative centre, e.g., Parliament House, Supreme Court and Law Department, Government Printing Office and Government Stores, Departmental Laboratories, etc.

That committee wanted the site to be close to Parliament House, but in fact it went as far away as was possible in relation to any Government lands in the city. True, in the electorate of the member for Canning (Mr. Cross) there is a fair area of Government land. I was highly amused, while reading the evidence, by the demand that the site must be "very handy." Certain members of the committee were applauded by other members because they had travelled round the world and seen

wonderful Parliament Houses. I think I took pretty nearly the same track as the members thus referred to, and I will describe some of the legislative buildings I saw. England, of course, is a very old established country, and its Houses of Parliament were built centuries ago, and they have the Government offices surrounding them. Those buildings seem to be too old-fashioned. Let us take a new dominion, Canada, whose headquarters are at Ottawa. There the Parliament House is set up on a hill overlooking a river, if it can be called a river; certainly it cannot be compared to the Swan. That building is on the outskirts of the city. It is not within the city at all. However, I need not go so far as Canada; I can stop at Northern Ireland. There the Houses of Parliament are quite outside the City of Belfast, though they are surrounded by the Government offices. Those are very new buildings. As regards the provinces of Canada, their Houses of Parliament are not right in the city, with the single exception of Quebec. I should say that every other Parliamentary building is situated almost on the edge of the capital city. I cannot call to mind any exception. I saw Edmonton, Winnipeg, Saskatchewan, and Toronto, and all the Houses of Parliament are on the edges of the cities. Take Victoria: Parliament House and the Government offices are not in the centre of Melbourne, but right at the top of Bourke-street, along Spring-street. In South Australia one finds the Houses of Parliament on the edge of the city, where the railway station is, together with all the Government offices. As regards Queensland, will the Minister in charge of the Bill maintain that its Parliament House is in the centre of Brisbane? It is right out of the city; in fact, quite close to the Brisbane Club, doubtless an ideal setting. Therefore let us dismiss that argument as worthless. In cities where town planning has operated, the Parliament Houses and the Government offices are not in close proximity to the business centres. Accordingly, not much consideration need be given to that aspect.

Mr. Holman: You could have given evidence to the contrary of that which you have quoted. This committee advertised for witnesses.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I discharge my responsibility in this House, not before select committees. I had no responsibility in the matter at all. This committee did not even report to Parliament.

The Minister for Lands: You are suggesting that the members of the committee are irresponsible.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: No. The fact that the members of a committee do not carry responsibility does not imply that they are irresponsible. They merely wanted to get evidence for submission to Parliament so as to make it alter its opinion as expressed last session. The most interesting point of this report is that it quotes a Town Planning Commission appointed in December of 1930 by the Labour Government of which the member for Boulder (Hon. P. Collier) was the head. I quote from page VIII:—

In commenting on public buildings, this Commission stated that—

The use of the old Barracks and the Government offices in Barrack and Hay Streets apparently met all requirements of Government for some years. Since then, to meet the needs of the growth of the State, other buildings have been acquired or built spasmodically throughout the city without any co-ordinating policy, until to-day the difficulty of doing business with the Government is an uneconomic, time-wasting, and wearying task. The Commission feels that it is essential, in the interests of efficiency and economy in Government business, as well as for public convenience, that there should be a closer co-operation and co-ordination in the many departmental buildings. Such a group of buildings, too, would add to the amenity of the city and help to create in the public mind a sense of pride and pleasure in Government.

Let us do that by all means.

This Commission favoured a civic and governmental centre on the north side of the city and including part of the railway property in an area bounded by William and Beaufort and Newcastle and Wellington Streets.

The Commission proposed to shift the centre to the other side of the railway line. Their report added that if that site was not available, the proposed buildings should go to the Esplanade. The Esplanade was the Commission's second choice. In 1935 another expert committee was appointed. Undoubtedly this question has received a deal of consideration. I quote from page IX:—

In 1935, an expert Committee was appointed to consider suitable sites, confining its inquiries to Government-owned or controlled land which did not involve the spending of money on land resumption. That Committee con-

sisted of Messrs. Munt, Berkeley, and Clare, and the sites considered were Parliament House grounds, Esplanade, Treasury site, and Government Domain.

The committee did not state what its recommendation was. I think it was to erect the proposed buildings somewhere near Parliament House. Regarding objections raised from time to time to putting up such buildings on the grounds of Parliament House I wish to remind hon. members of something that happened not many years ago, when the Government of the day, a Labour Government moreover, found it necessary to erect a number of buildings alongside the old Barracks. They are very good buildings, and I have no fault to find with them. In that instance the Government did not seek parliamentary authority. No legislation was passed to provide authority for that purpose. That building has not dwarfed Parliament House. It may not be up to the architectural standard that our present officers seem to delight to indulge in; but the premises are eminently serviceable and the cost of construction was moderate, despite the fact that a strike hampered operations for some time because of some dispute. The committee reported—

The final choice of the committee rested between Parliament House grounds and part of Government Domain. After very full consideration of all desirable features, the committee is unanimously of opinion that an area from the east end of Government Domain best fills all requirements.

The committee did give some consideration to Parliament House grounds, and had it been wise it would have selected the site there.

There are a few points in the report to which the attention of members should be drawn. Certainly, Government officers showed that they knew a good deal about the matters they dealt with in their evidence, except, perhaps, the Public Service Commissioner, Mr. Simpson, who seems to have set out with the determination to have new buildings at any cost. In fact, he did not appear to be concerned about the cost, or the locality, so long as new buildings were provided. In his statement to the Joint Committee he said—

Modern office accommodation should provide for . . . good lighting, congenial surroundings . . . Fresh air is essential to good work—

I admit that is so—

Many of the offices are poorly ventilated. Heating is by fire or radiators. There is no

central heating. Heat in summer necessitates the constant use of fans. This means the consumption of quite a lot of electric current, which is very costly.

In a climate such as that of Western Australia, I do not think any brick or stone building could be erected that would obviate the necessity for the use of fans during summer months. The erection of new buildings will not eliminate that cost. We know how cold the Assembly becomes in winter. We have no system of central heating in this Chamber; we have to avail ourselves of a system similar to that in use in the public offices. We are provided with radiators. Not much money will be saved in that respect. Then the Public Service Commissioner dealt with the different departments and mentioned those for the accommodation of which the Government has to pay rent. This part of the Public Service Commissioner's evidence is interesting because I do not think the Government should be called upon to provide rent for the offices occupied by these concerns. He instances the following Governmental activities and cites the rental paid per annum—

Farmers' debts	£400
Tourist Bureau	£828

Does the Public Service Commissioner suggest housing the Tourist Department in the buildings proposed to be erected on the Government Domain site?

Mr. Sampson: That would involve Tour No. 1 to get there.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If there is a suitable site for the Tourist Bureau, it is the one in which it is located at present in Forrest-place, which is close to the Post Office and to the railway station. Surely it is not suggested that the bureau should be moved to the proposed new Government buildings? Of course, rent must be paid for the present premises, unless they are purchased.

Public Works Architectural Division £325

I understand that branch is housed in Yorkshire House.

State Insurance (approximately) £1,000

If the State Government Insurance Office is to engage in competition with other insurance companies, it should be housed in the heart of the city. The concern should not be located in the new buildings. In fact, even in its present location it is out of the

heart of the city. It should be more centrally situated in St. George's-terrace. I think the Minister will agree with me.

Unemployment Department .. £500

Surely the Government does not suggest shifting that department to the Government Domain site!

State Lotteries £515

Milk Board £260

Surely it is not the responsibility of the Government to provide rent for any of the concerns mentioned! If they are to be conducted, the activities should be run upon lines adopted by ordinary business concerns. Members can dismiss the idea of saving the rentals as mentioned by the Public Service Commissioner. If Governments will enter into business operations, they must do so successfully. The only way that can be done is to have them situated where the public can gain ready access to the offices and make contact with the officials without, so to speak, having to go out of the city to do so. I hope the House will not take much notice of this phase of the Public Service Commissioner's evidence.

In the course of his evidence, the Public Service Commissioner, in answer to a question put to him by Hon. W. J. Mann, said—

Concentration of offices in one block would facilitate the transaction of business and save a great amount of time One section of the building programme would not permit this, but with a complete set of buildings in a central position you would be able to get an amalgamation of record offices and correspondence staffs. These items alone would in the long run mean quicker despatch of business, a smaller staff and greater satisfaction because of better supervision. Every year Parliament passes so many more Acts, and that generally has the effect of building up a staff in some place or other.

Therein lies a warning to members! If they do not desire to make government so costly that the people cannot bear the burden, they should not pass Acts of Parliament.

Hon. W. D. Johnson: It has got beyond the bearing stage now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I agree.

The Minister for Lands: Is that correct?

Hon. W. D. Johnson: They are not doing it now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: At any rate, there is the warning all right. If that furnishes one reason why new buildings are required, let us economise in Parliament.

Let us curtail legislation, and thus save mounting costs. Then the Public Service Commissioner proceeded to point out that the telephone service costs a lot of money. We know that is so, but let members consider what takes place in Sydney. By ringing B06 there, it is possible to get the Central Railway Station, Parliament House, the Lands Department, the Law Courts, and so on, despite the fact that the various public offices are scattered all over that city. The erection of a new building is not necessary to secure the introduction of such a system. Possibly the provision of such telephonic arrangements might entail considerable expenditure at the outset because most of the offices have separate lines, but it could be done. There is no need to erect new buildings merely to save money in that respect. The Government of which I was a member found, as I presume the present Government has, that much money was spent on trunk line calls, for which cash had to be paid. The great bulk of those calls could be avoided if officers would write instead of ringing up country offices. That is the costly part of the business. The Public Service Commissioner points out that many more messengers are required because the Government buildings are separated from each other. I question whether that is so: at all events, we generally recruit our staffs from the messengers. Mr. Simpson also refers to the situation of the Government drafting offices. He says—

We have drafting offices in the Lands, Public Works, Metropolitan Water Supply—although these last two are amalgamated to some extent—Forestry and Mines.

Mr. Simpson knows as well as I do that the Forests, Mines and Lands Departments have one drafting room, or did until recently. The drafting work for the Metropolitan Water Supply and the Public Works Department is done in one room. I should be surprised to learn that there was a drafting room in the main office. I know the two departments have been working together for a long time. Dealing with paragraph 5, Convenience to the public, Mr. Simpson says—

Many commercial houses employ one or more of their staff to transact Government business. A bank would of course employ one person to attend to its legal work. Many large business concerns having occasion to do

business with the Government appoint one officer to attend to that work. Such officers would still have to do the work, consequently the reason advanced by Mr. Simpson cannot be put forward as an excuse. There are some gems in this report. Mr. Simpson goes on to deal with laboratory accommodation. He says—

I know that in the Agricultural Department the public frequently complain about the stench, and the same remark applies to the Chief Secretary's Department.

I am sorry the Chief Secretary is not present; he ought to be acquainted with these facts. Of course, the smell of a strong chemical will permeate a building. If the Public Service Commissioner visited Parliament House in the early hours of the morning, he would probably leave feeling not exactly well. In answer to a question by Mr. Gray, the witness complained about a laundry. He said—

Question 8—

Before Dr. Simpson died—

Excuse my laughing, but I think this amusing—

—I have not heard anything about the matter since—he told me that their delicate instruments were being shaken to pieces and that it was not possible therefore to secure reliable results.

Before that, the witness had said—

Something will have to be done at an early stage regarding the main Government laboratory in Wellington-street, because it is built on a section of the land that will be required for the Perth Hospital. In addition to that, alongside the laboratory a laundry has been erected in which powerful machinery has been installed.

Later he continued—

However, I have given the committee a somewhat superficial outline of how I view the position.

The next question, No. 9, and the answer thereto read as follows:—

By the Chairman: There are two matters respecting which I would like further information from you. They relate to staff efficiency and future needs. With regard to staff efficiency, with accommodation along the lines that you suggest as necessary, what would be the effect on the public service as regards numbers and efficiency consequent on the better housing conditions?—I am afraid that question is rather difficult to answer.

When the Minister put a poser to the witness, of course he could not answer it. What credence can be given to that class of evidence? The witness goes on to deal with the

Agricultural Department. In reply to Mr. Baxter (Question 14) he said—

You will recollect that at least 50 per cent. of the staff works outside and of the other 50 per cent. probably 25 per cent. comprise professional officers whose services are required under any conditions. Certainly better results would be achieved, and the public would be able to obtain better advice.

I cannot understand how the public could obtain better advice. It could only obtain the advice that those officers could give, whether they were in the new buildings or in the old buildings. I shall now quote Question 18 and the answer thereto:—

If we were to indulge in a fit of economy, would it be possible to erect a building to accommodate these two departments as part of the general scheme, regarding it as the initial stage of the plan?—That would be possible, but, I think, somewhat inadvisable because, when you are contemplating a general scheme, another storey is neither here nor there.

Apparently, when witnesses of this class appear before a committee they do not seem to have any regard for finance. The first question we and the Government must consider is that of finance. Witnesses like Mr. Simpson, I am afraid, do not seem to be able to grasp what finance means.

Mr. Styants: What does he say in the report about finance?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will deal with that directly. I thank the hon. member for reminding me of it. In reply to Mr. Holmes, the witness said that officers could be better supervised in the proposed new building. That may or may not be so. The witness seemed to think that if the new buildings were erected many minor economies could be effected amounting in the aggregate to thousands of pounds. I shall now quote Question 36, asked by Mr. Holmes, and the witness's reply—

In modern offices an exchange system has been introduced, so that a person in one department can speak to a person in another department?—Yes.

The next question and answer read—

It is costly to instal, but economical in the long run?—The system you refer to is worked from a central exchange in the building; so much is paid to the postmaster for the rental of each exchange line. One can talk all day on those lines without any extra cost.

When I read those pages, I could not help but feel amused. Mr. Holmes pointed out that the Perpetual Trustees Coy. had in-

stalled such an exchange system, which had proved economical in its way; but if the officers of the company desired to telephone the public they had to make use of a separate instrument. The system was not economical in that respect. Now, the committee knew all this, and so not much value could be attached to the evidence. The witness was asked if he would place the Lotteries Commission in the new public offices. He replied—

I do not know. That has not been considered. I do not see why we should not, if only to save the £300 rental.

I question whether £300 rental would be saved. The Lotteries Commission offices must be in some convenient part of the city if the public is to be attracted, and I understand that is the idea at the moment. If a building were erected for the Commission, interest would have to be found on the capital expenditure. Consequently there would be no great saving in that respect. In reply to Mr. Styants—Question 57—the witness said—

At present we have the Wyndham Meat Works office located in our Government buildings. That is convenient for certain reasons. They pay us rental for the use of the premises as a trading concern, which otherwise would be paid to some outside individual.

If the Government desires to collect a large sum of money, all it has to do is to put up a row of business premises in some situation attractive enough for leasing purposes. Then we have the evidence of Mr. Clare, who furnished a table showing the usable floor space of the various Government buildings. He certainly made a good job. He pointed out that the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Board had an existing floor space of 2,678ft., which he proposed to increase to 3,240ft. Evidently the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Board is to be a permanent institution.

The Premier: The Price Fixing Commission is located there now.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. These are temporary bodies established to tide us over the economic stress in which we find ourselves. Therefore I do not think we should give that very much consideration. The existing area of the Medical and Health Department is 7,657 feet, and that is reduced to 7,224 feet, which indicates to the Government that there is room at present

that could be used. The Premier should look into the matter and see whether some of that spare space could not be utilised. On page 8 appears the following—

How many floors would be required for a building on three acres?—It would be necessary to go to the maximum building height of 125 feet, equal to about ten storeys. That would result in a number of internal areas. You can imagine that in a building of that type and size, offices abutting on deep areas would have insufficient light and air. The conditions generally would be poor. What I have in mind is a number of separate buildings with plenty of space between them, to give a maximum of light and ventilation.

I do not want hon. members to have the idea that the building of a ten-storey structure on the present Treasury site would be necessary because it is anticipated there will be a ten-storey building on the new site. The House needs to understand that. From page 9 I quote the following—

There is a continual seeping between the brewery and the Esplanade Hotel?—Yes. We would need to deal with the seepage. Seepage occurs right along the Terrace. We are now putting up a new Technical School building and have the same problem of seepage to deal with. Seepage occurs at Shell House and has been successfully dealt with.

I want some information about that and I think the Minister should give it to us.

The Minister for Lands: Read Question 72 as well.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will go back to Question 72 if the Minister wishes me to read it.

The Minister for Lands: I think you have obviously omitted it.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I will read Question 72 and the answer for the benefit of the Minister, but it does not convey anything. Had I thought it did so, I would have quoted it. It reads—

With regard to Government House Domain, have soundings been taken as regards seepage, etc.?—We have bored over the whole area and we know the various strata down to sand and where the water level is. The seepage can be dealt with and I do not anticipate any difficulty either with foundations or seepage.

One would have thought the committee would follow that up and ask the depth and where the water level was.

Mr. Styants: Questions 84, 85 and 86 tell us the levels of Shell House and deal with the seepage problem.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But not on the new site. I was informed some time ago that the seepage at the domestic science building of the new Technical College is causing a good deal of trouble.

Mr. Styants: The witness did not think so.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I think I will have a look at it and see what is actually being done. Question 74 and the answer are—

By Hon. W. J. Mann: Have you any idea of the ratio of increase in the Public Service each ten years?—Yes, I can give you from 1922 to 1939, a period of 17 years, showing an increase of 10 per cent.

Then he goes on to deal with the reason and concludes—

Things became more or less normal in 1922 and between 1922 and 1939 the growth has been about 10 per cent.

I have taken out figures to show what actually happened. These figures deal with the increase in population in five-year periods from 1922 to 1939. From 1922 to 1926 the increase was 39,716; from 1926 to 1931 it was 48,502, and from 1935 to 1939 it was only 18,171. I quote those figures to indicate that the increase in population diminished considerably in the last five-year period. Unless there is an impetus from some source or other, it is not anticipated that the population will increase to anything like the extent it did until a few years ago. I have already pointed out that the witness was rather opposed to a ten-storey building being erected on the Treasury site, but he considered that an eight or ten-storey building would be necessary on the new site. Question 82 and the answer read—

That would mean eight or ten storeys?—Yes. I intended a central structure of ten storeys that would dominate the whole group. The other buildings would be lower, seven or eight storeys, and subsidiary to the large one.

In answer to Question 107 Mr. Clare pointed out that the area of the block that includes the Treasury Building and the Town Hall is only one acre three roods and 25 perches. That is a very small block in comparison with the size of the site the Minister is asking for. He requires eight acres. I should say the probability is that if we erected a ten-storey building on the Treasury site, we could house all the Public Service there. I do not say the site would

be convenient; I think it would be too cramped. The point I am making is that a large area of land is not required for the erection of adequate accommodation. In Question 109 Mr. Clare speaks of the great advantages of the new site. He does not say that if that site were selected, a bridge across the river would be required. If traffic termini are to be established there, the best course would be to have a river crossing. I do not know what would be the cost of a causeway at that point.

Mr. J. Hegney: Some people would agree with you about that.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: There will be considerable additional cost incurred in connection with these new buildings and we must not conceal that fact. Question 113 and the answers were as follows:—

By Mr. Patrick: You do not think the Commonwealth Bank and the General Post Office are a good group?—No. I think the Federal authorities made a mistake in not providing a suitable setting. Those buildings were erected in accordance with a scheme that was prepared 25 or 30 years ago, but in the meantime ideas as to the need for and value of setting have been developing

I want members to bear that in mind. I do not know how long it is expected the erection of these buildings will take, but by the next ten or 15 years designs will have changed again and the buildings will be quite obsolete. Mr. Holmes asked Question 124 and was answered:—

You emphasise the importance of gardens and surroundings; but we cannot live on views?—No, but if it will cost very little more to create beauty, why not do so? It will not cost much more.

If we take the Canberra gardens as a guide, it will cost considerably more. Unfortunately the soil formation of this State does not lend itself to cheap gardening.

Mr. Withers: The beauty there is natural.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Has the hon. member seen it? If not, he should inspect it. It is a squashy old hollow, excepting a small strip of land on the Terrace side. Question 130 contains the following:—

The Observatory site comprises an area of 10 acres, 1 rood, 35 perches; combined with the Hale School site, the area is 18 acres, 1 rood, 15 perches.

What is wrong with that site? It has the elevation that the committee desired and also is suitable as regards foundations.

Why not take all that block and put the Government buildings there? It is good enough for Parliament House but not for Government offices. The lame excuse given is that people would have to walk up the hill. Such people ought to go to Wellington, New Zealand, for a little while to learn what hills are. In reply to Question 142 the Principal Architect pointed out that disadvantages of the Bank of New South Wales building, where there are so many windows facing west. The bank has found it necessary to use venetian blinds. I might lodge a complaint about the window in the room assigned to the Leader of the Opposition. I hope the Premier does not become Leader of the Opposition until a decent room is erected. Question 164 reads—

In our clear sunlight, with the blue sky and blue river, the trees in the streets and the absence of smoke, we have a wonderful chance of creating an atmosphere?—Yes, a Mediterranean atmosphere.

I was highly amused at that. One of the buildings that sends out more smoke than any other is a building belonging to the Government—the power-house, and with that I might bracket the Mint and the hospital. Mr. Hall gave some very good advice. He was Land Resumption Officer at the Public Works Department, and if any man knows the value of property, I should say he does. He has been an extraordinarily good officer, having saved the Crown a lot of money by being able to arrive at correct values, and his evidence is worth considering. Mr. Hall quoted a report by a committee appointed by Cabinet in 1928 as follows:—

So far as can be reasonably foreseen a site with an area of not more than four acres should be ample for very many years for the housing in utilitarian offices of administrative departments as usually understood. The city sites that received special consideration were—(1) James-street School and Police Department, Beaufort and Roe streets; (2) Museum and Francis streets north of Public Library (what is known as the Drill Hall site); (3) Observatory grounds, Harvest-terrace frontage; (4) Parliament-place (then called Wilson-street) and Hay-street and Harvest-terrace; (5) Murray and Hay streets, near Harvest-terrace (known as the Strathalbyn site); (6) Old High School block and additions, George-street. (That is the site at present occupied by the Christian Science Church and other buildings). (7) Milligan-street and St. George's-terrace corner (That includes the

land where the Arbordale flats are now). (8) Bishop's Grove, St. George's-terrace and Spring-street; (9) Mill-street, St. George's-terrace and Mount's Bay-road; (10) Mount and Malcolm streets to St. George's-terrace; (11) Irwin-street (both sides), Hay-street and St. George's-terrace.

Mr. Hall said those were the only sites that were considered, because of certain restrictive influences imposed by the Government on the committee at the time. The report of that committee continued—

It had to be recognised that there were certain Government activities and particular buildings that would not be disturbed for very many years to come, and other services of a business or trading nature located in the city which, for obvious reasons, should be separate and distinct, though not too far removed from the main administrative buildings . . .

Choice of sites was further limited inasmuch as Parliament House grounds, Government House lands, and the remaining portion of Stirling Square at the corner of Barrack-street and St. George's-terrace were to remain undisturbed for the people's use and enjoyment.

Those were the recommendations by a committee to the Government. If we go on appointing committees ad infinitum we might expect a different report from each. In reply to Question 189, Mr. Hall read further from the committee's report, as follows:—

Reviewing carefully all the circumstances, existing and probable, as they appear to the committee, we place the sites in order of our unanimous preference as follows:—

First, the Mount-street-St. George's-terrace corner.

Second, the Irwin-street expansion (old University site as the nucleus).

Third, Bishop's Grove.

Fourth, Mill-street (St. George's-terrace corner).

We are of the opinion that there is little to choose between the two first-placed sites.

The Government objects to resuming land for sites for Government buildings, although a site might be available preferable to one favoured by the Government. Members will recall that some years ago a Labour Government introduced a Bill to alter the railway line to Fremantle and carry out certain harbour reclamation works. A scheme was put up to cost £5,000,000. You, Mr. Speaker, will remember that.

MR. SPEAKER: Is the hon. member going to connect those remarks with the Bill?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. At that time the Government did not give much consideration to the cost of land resumption. Al-

though authority was obtained from Parliament to carry out the work, it has not been proceeded with; common sense has since prevailed. A Labour Government also resumed a large area of land at West Perth for metropolitan markets. That was a very wise move. I do not object to the resumption of land for a site for public buildings so long as an inflated price is not paid for it. To resume land for a site would probably result in a large saving of money in the long run, because the cost of foundations and construction would be considerably less than on the site recommended by the committee.

Mr. Styants: How many of the sites mentioned in Question 189 are available to-day?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I do not suppose any of them is available.

Mr. Styants: None is.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The sites might be available, but I do not think it would pay the Government to resume them because the cost of the buildings would be too high. When the 1928 committee reported, I believe it would have been a business proposition to resume land for a site. Since then, however, more expensive buildings have been erected on those sites. In answer to Question 197, Mr. Hall stated—

The committee arrived at the conclusion, in view of the nature of the site, that six to eight acres would be required effectively to house the Government departments. That was the area originally contemplated. The site selected by the committee of 1928 was more utilitarian. The site in the Government Domain was for a Government centre in an appropriate setting, according reasonably to town planning amenities.

That accounts for the difference between the area of the old site, four acres, and that now contemplated, six to eight acres.

In Question 210 the witness was asked by the Chairman—

What about the area west of the one mentioned by Mr. Mann, taking in Lake-street, James-street, and going towards Russell-square? What are the land values there?—Comparatively very low.

If the site was suitable, evidently the cost of resumption was fairly low there. The Government might have been justified in making the resumption. New members of Parliament bring along new ideas, and I am afraid sometimes these ideas will lead to the destruction of some of the beauties of the

city In Question 222 Mr. Baxter asked the witness—

I am referring to the deliberations of the first committee. The second committee dealt with the Government Domain site?—The consideration of Parliament House site was excluded from the deliberations of the 1928 committee. The choice of sites was further limited inasmuch as Parliament House grounds—that included the Barracks—Government House lands, and the remaining portion of Stirling Square, at the corner of Barrack-street and St. George's-terrace, were to remain undisturbed for the people's use and enjoyment.

That seemed to be a very wise and sound statement. In question 224 Mr. McDonald asked—

Do you consider that the Government House site, together with the Christian Brothers' College site is the best for the public buildings?—It is the only site for a Government centre as contemplated, that is, if you are not going to have only utilitarian buildings as envisaged by the 1928 committee. Otherwise I would say there are sites that are better.

The witness was asked which other sites he thought were better and he replied —

Stirling Square is calling out for selection for that purpose. You have the whole of the centre there.

In reply to Mr. Styants, in Question 226, the witness said—

In that connection I might quote again from the 1928 report, "It is close to Parliament House and of advantage to Ministers and members, and also to departmental officials when the House is sitting." I should also like to read this paragraph from the same report—"It was interesting to note the experience of the Under Secretary (Mr. C. A. Munt was Under Secretary at that time) spread over many years regarding the locating of the Public Works Department at the western summit of St. George's-terrace hill, and later the removal of the Water Supply Department to George street. Notwithstanding a measure of outcry at the time, results have shown that the disadvantage prophesied at the time has been more apparent than real; there has never been any serious complaint of public inconvenience. There has, however, been serious departmental disability but that has arisen from the distance separating the Public Works Department from the other departments of the State.

The witness says there is no disability attached to erecting the buildings up here. The Chairman said he had a statement drawn up showing the number of people attending an office such as the Titles Office. That surprised me. I thought a great deal more business was done at the Titles Office than it has been given credit for. For the period from the 1st July, 1938, to the 30th

June, 1939, the number of transfers put through the Titles Office was 111,457. Many of the banks deal with more accounts than that. Mortgages numbered 7,876. The total number of documents dealt with was only 31,236.

Mr. Cross: Does that include searches?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I would not say that. The Titles Office issues tickets. Plans and diagrams numbered 413, making the total 31,649 documents. Assessments for fees issued numbered 20,115, and search tickets numbered 8,550. The search tickets included the work I have previously mentioned. The average number of documents dealt with per day, according to the statement of the Minister, was 1,368. That is not a great many. I admit the necessity for a new Titles Office, not from the point of view of the public, but because the vaults are too small to hold the documents. I do not think the place is a healthy one for the officers. To house them underground is very unwise. I have always advocated the provision of a new Titles Office. If the Lands Department were moved to a new building it would provide all the space required for the Titles Office under better conditions than the officers enjoy at present. There should be no need to move the Titles Office from that locality. If new buildings were erected up here, I still would not move the Titles Office. It is close to the Supreme Court buildings and occupies a site that is suitable in every way. The gem of the whole thing is shown in the financial aspect. In Question 228 the Chairman said—

I also anticipated that the committee would want some evidence regarding the availability of money. I asked the Under Secretary to draw up a statement, which I now present to the committee. If there is any necessity to call the Under Treasurer, he will be available.

Inter alia the Under Treasurer's statement was—

At the present time the State Insurance reserve fund has in cash at the Treasury an amount of just under £400,000. This fund has been built up deliberately with the object of providing money for the first section of the Government offices. Under the Public Buildings Act we are entitled to use up to £300,000 and the State Insurance Office is entitled to interest on the amount borrowed at such rate as the Treasurer may determine, having regard to the rate paid by the State for loan moneys. If the money were borrowed now the rate would be slightly under 4 per cent. The interest payable to the State Insurance Office

would form part of the revenue of that office, and any profits it made could ultimately be appropriated by the Hon. the Treasurer and paid into Consolidated Revenue. Provided the office was not being operated at a loss, it is quite probable that the money borrowed for the public offices would be obtained free of cost to Consolidated Revenue.

I want the member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) to listen to this—

The Insurance Office would receive interest from Revenue and Revenue would receive it back as profit from the Insurance Office.

If that is not a damning statement I do not know what to say of it. The State Government Insurance Office is evidently responsible for the closing down of many of the secondary industries in the State. If that office was not run to make huge profits, it would bring down considerably the cost of insurance.

The Minister for Labour: What secondary industries does the State Government Insurance Office provide for?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I did not say it provided for any, but surely it acts as a policeman over the rates. A little while ago the premium rates on farm workers were increased. That was begun by some of the outside offices, but the State Insurance Office immediately advanced its rates.

The Minister for Labour: Not immediately.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Not long afterwards.

The Minister for Labour: That was as the result of experience.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am using the Under Treasurer's statement, which is to the effect that the fund has been built up deliberately with the object of providing money for the erection of the first section of the Government offices. That was what the money was accumulated for.

The Minister for Labour: What has that got to do with secondary industries?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: We have always heard that the State Government Insurance Office would act as an effective policeman in keeping down rates. But instead of keeping down premiums that office has increased them. It has increased them so as to obtain funds for putting up the proposed elaborate offices. What does that mean? It means that the people who insure with the State Government Insurance Office, including the Government itself, have contributed

again and again towards the cost of the buildings to be erected. I will tell the Minister something. The State Government Insurance Office receives from the Government a premium of £1 per cent. for covering Government office staffs, whilst such staffs could be insured with private offices for 2s. 6d. per cent.

The Minister for Labour: Now let us get back to the point.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition had better address the Chair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am looking straight at you, Mr. Speaker, and am speaking straight at you. That statement is right, and has been borne out by evidence long ago. Therefore we find that the State Government Insurance Office was brought into existence for the purpose of finding money to erect the proposed buildings.

The Minister for Labour: Now give the name of one manufacturer who insures with the State Government Insurance Office.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I contend that if the rates of that office were reasonable, the huge profits which the Under Treasurer tells us about would not have been accumulated, and private insurance offices would have had to come down. However, the State Government Insurance Office, like every other Government business undertaking, has joined the ring, and thus is making huge profits. I have read through this document. I have not a great deal more to say, but I wish to quote a little further on. The Under Treasurer's statement also contains this—

It may be contended that the State cannot afford to spend its funds on the provision of public offices and that if the money is available for the erection of these offices it should be available for unemployment relief works or some other governmental use.

You see, he was afraid of the cross benches.

It would not be possible to use the State Insurance money for ordinary unemployment relief works or for any other governmental purpose unless such purpose could be related to the purposes for which the State Insurance Office had been established.

It was established, according to the Minister's own statement, for the purpose of putting up these buildings.

The Minister for Lands: You are a wonderful man in the art of misrepresentation—wonderful!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: May I go back and repeat that this fund has been built up deliberately with the object of providing money for the Perth section of Government offices. For that reason the proposed buildings are to be put up. The best gem of all, naturally, comes from the Town Planning Commissioner, whose evidence I do not propose to quote at length. Undoubtedly the committee got very good value for its money from the Town Planning Commissioner. He took the members of the committee all round the world—to Vienna, Paris, Karlsruhe, and right across to India.

The Minister for Lands: You have taken us to Canada and other places.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: But not so extensively as this evidence of the Town Planning Commissioner. I quote from page 19 of the evidence—

Speaking from the standpoint of pure theory of town planning, I can quote the example of New Delhi, which is the latest scientifically planned city, where the Parliament House buildings are erected at the end of a long vista that leads to Government House at the other end, about a mile away. On either side of Parliament House are two big buildings housing the administrative groups of departmental offices.

Exactly as I picture this proposed building, looking down St. George's-terrace to the beautiful vista over on this side of the Causeway, and the Government buildings just down below, magnificent buildings. I do not understand why the member for Kalgoorlie (Mr. Styants), who seems to have put very intelligent questions—I say that advisedly—and who brought out quite a lot of information that I have not quoted—

Mr. Styants: Oh!

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: If the Minister quoted it, that might be a little bit to his advantage. It is a wonder that the member for Kalgoorlie did not picture this.

Mr. Styants: I pictured Parliament House at the end of that vista, not those buildings.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The other buildings would be considerably lower. If one looks eastward from the ground floor of this building, one can hardly see the other building down below. With a nice garden laid out, it would be like the New Delhi, though it needs a big pond to reflect the magnificent architecture. I continue to

quote the evidence of the Town Planning Commissioner—

That is what was planned at Canberra, the lay-out of which was the outcome of a world-wide competition. There we find that Parliament House was so constructed that from it was an avenue leading to administrative buildings dealing with various functions. That is an idea we cannot give effect to in Perth, because we have not the money with which to resume properties. On the other hand, we have a main artery leading straight down from Parliament House along St. George's-terrace. We have before us the knowledge of what has been achieved in Adelaide in a small way.

There is sufficient to satisfy any committee. It tells us the ideal place in which to build these offices. We should accept the Town Planning Commissioner's advice in this instance. I do not always agree with his views. However, there is that speech from the Town Planning Commissioner—for it is a speech—which I have read with a great deal of interest; and I am sure it edified the members of the committee.

Mr. Styants: What did he say about the Government Domain site?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: In reply to question 274 the Town Planning Commissioner stated—

I can find no rival to it on actual facts, provided we acquire the area held by the Christian Brothers. It is the only site we can secure and capitalise that will give us the requisite area and the permanent light.

The Town Planning Commissioner says he can find no rival, on actual facts, provided the Government can acquire the area held by the Christian Brothers. Let us not forget that. I thought it worth quoting. I for my part agree that if the Government Domain is chosen, we should acquire the Christian Brothers' site provided it is procurable at a reasonable price. That would give an opening on the street, and would certainly make a much better job than building on the low country further west.

Mr. F. C. L. Smith: A laundry might be started there if the Government does not buy the land.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: With regard to stench, as has been explained, a laboratory might easily be established there. The Town Planning Commissioner's answer continues—

It is the only site that provides for growth in the next 50 or 75 years. The only other

comparable site is that on which the Treasury buildings stand. That has many things against it. The area is only about $2\frac{1}{4}$ acres, without the Town Hall, which would have to come down.

The Minister for Lands: You are not treating his evidence consistently. You said it was unreliable. Now you say it is authoritative.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Surely to goodness the Minister can understand!

The Minister for Lands: I understand.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I agree with what the Minister's own officer said. As I mentioned before, however, the most valuable evidence given to the joint committee was that submitted by Mr. T. S. J. Hall, the Assistant Under Secretary for Works and Officer in Charge of Land Resumption. So much for the evidence tendered by the Town Planning Commissioner. The next witness was Mr. R. Summerhayes, who is an architect. The chairman of the committee said to him—

Yesterday evidence was given that placed great stress on the importance of public buildings being erected to face the waterfront. Do you hold that view?

To that question Mr. Summerhayes answered—

Buildings facing the waterfront are very attractive, but from the appearance point of view more than anything else. In other cities every possible advantage has been taken of waterfronts. One of the most outstanding examples of that is the Stockholm Town Hall, a delightful structure. In the United States are to be found many developments along the water frontages, and wherever possible the authorities endeavour to utilise such frontages. Perth possesses a beautiful waterfront. This should be developed, and buildings could be erected there to enhance the appearance of the city. I do not know whether you have noticed the, to my mind, remarkable improvement in the appearance of Perth since the erection of tall buildings. Coming round the Mount in the morning, one finds that to be one of the most striking features—the effect of the buildings rising out of the city; that is, just looking across the water to them. The same thing would apply to the Government buildings here. A nine-storey block would have the same effect as the C.M.L. building.

It was suggested then that there should be buildings on the Esplanade, and Mr. Summerhayes pointed out all the great advantages. While I admit that the architecture is old in style, members may know that generally in the cities of Europe there is a big open square in the centre, with the govern-

mental and civic buildings surrounding it. However, Mr. Summerhayes was asked about the Parliament House site, but he said that the Government Domain site would be a very good one for the public buildings. Mr. McDonald put the question to him—

From an idealistic point of view, you would like to see the whole of Government Domain regarded as an area for future development, but if that cannot be achieved, you still adhere to your view that the site shown on the plan before you is the best of all those that are available.

To that the witness replied—

Yes, the best of those mentioned, except that the question of the Treasury buildings, together with the Stirling Square site, is still against your point that no further progress could be made westward. The Treasury buildings site alone is not advisable on account of the limited accommodation available. As to bringing in Stirling Square, I think public opinion would be a factor to be considered. As an alternative to that, there is the Parliament House site, the objection to which is mainly based upon Parliament House and its surroundings.

Then Mr. Patrick put the question—

You think quite good buildings could be erected on that site?

The witness's answer was—

Yes, as far as the site itself is concerned.

Mr. Summerhayes went on to say that buildings could be erected to suit the locality very well. The next witness was Mr. W. V. Fyfe, the Surveyor-General. In the course of his statement, he said—

Before concluding my remarks on this point, I would like to express the view that even if the present Treasury site were developed to its full capacity, in the long run it could not accommodate all the Government departments. No doubt it would meet all requirements for some time to come; but in this matter we must take a very long-range view, and if that site were decided upon, then within a very short period in the life of the State we would again be faced with the problem of where to provide for the expansion of our public buildings.

Irrespective of what we may do, we cannot keep abreast of the times. These buildings will not be erected in a short time, and naturally the architectural standards will change. Probably by the time the complete scheme is finished, the buildings will be like "Topsy"; they will just have "growed," and we shall be said to be old-fashioned in our style of architecture. The Surveyor-General was asked about dis-

tancee, and Mr. Holmes put the following question to him—

With regard to distances, I understand there is only four chains difference in the distance between the Parliament House site and William-street and between the Government Domain site and William-street.

Mr. Fyfe replied—

That would be about right, but I would rather walk from a central point between William-street and Barrack-street to-day down to the Christian Brothers' College than walk up to Parliament House.

Here we have a young man who is a surveyor, and yet he can talk like that! It is about time he indulged in some physical training. Mr. G. H. Parry, the Vice-President of the Royal Institute of Architects of Western Australia, was next. The quotation of some of his remarks is quite worth while. He stated that he was giving his evidence in a private capacity and not as a representative of the Institute of Architects. He was questioned by the chairman, who put this to him—

Several sites are under consideration; the site which was the subject of a Bill before Parliament is really the one upon which the Committee desires to obtain evidence.

That is what the Chairman of the Joint Committee stated. He was practically advising the witness.

The Minister for Lands: That is not fair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have read the report.

The Minister for Works: No, that is not fair.

[*The Deputy Speaker took the Chair.*]

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: That was the Minister's own statement. That was not correct; the Joint Committee required evidence on the several sites, but the Minister, as Chairman of the Joint Committee, left the impression on Mr. Parry's mind that the one he mentioned was the only site. Mr. Parry replied—

We understood a departmental committee had made a careful survey of some sites.

Then again, the Chairman, with reference to the Observatory site, the area of which Mr. Parry was unaware but thought contained about three or four acres, explained that it covered from eight to ten acres. Mr. Parry said—

I think that is a magnificent site, but I doubt whether it would be a good site from a business point of view.

Of course, it would not be good from that point of view. No one would think of putting the State Government Insurance Office or the Lotteries Commission or the Milk Board on such a site. Mr. Parry said—

It is not too accessible to ordinary people having business with Government departments.

With regard to Parliament House site, he asked if that included the old Barracks, and on being informed that it included the Barracks and adjoining buildings he said—

That would be a very good site, with many points to recommend it, one of which is that people are in the habit of going there at present and they would not experience any confusion in adapting themselves to the new location of centralised public buildings.

He evidently favoured the Parliament House site, for he said he considered suitable buildings could be erected there. Mr. Mann asked him if he thought the placing on the Parliament House site of buildings of sufficient dimensions to house the whole of the civil service would lead to the dwarfing of Parliament House, to which Mr. Parry replied—

I think the new buildings could be designed so as to improve the general pile rather than otherwise. I do not see why that should not be.

Then he was asked as to the possible danger if other buildings were erected around Parliament House, to which he replied—

I think not. I believe other buildings could be erected around Parliament House without interfering with its appearance. The corners of the block towards Hay-street and Malcolm-street would permit of a large amount of accommodation being provided without erecting buildings six storeys high.

I agree with that statement. Mr. Holmes—Question 405—asked—

You said that if the Treasury site was used, the sky would be the limit. If a large building were erected there, do not you think traffic problems would be created?

The witness replied—

Undoubtedly, but it would be an excellent site for a large building, because the Esplanade is handy for the parking of cars.

The evidence continues—

You would use the Esplanade for the parking of cars?—I think that would be a good purpose for which to use it. It would not spoil the esplanade.

Mr. Rodoreda: Who said that?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Mr. Parry, the witness. He is an architect. I shall now quote the following evidence—

Do not you think that very attractive buildings could be erected on the Parliament House site, facing the city, that would be an ornament in themselves?—I should think it is a problem that could be solved satisfactorily.

I am referring to the attractiveness of the buildings?—No. Quite the contrary, especially if you had Parliament House as the dominating structure and the accessory buildings arranged around it on a lower level. I think these buildings would make a very good group.

By Hon. E. H. Gray: Would not any scheme of buildings on Parliament House grounds tend to dwarf Parliament House?—I think not.

By Mr. Styants: The plans submitted by the professional officers show that to provide sufficient accommodation for immediate use and for a period of 50 years hence, it would be necessary to erect all around Parliament House blocks of buildings up to nine storeys high. You have seen the original design for Parliament House, which visualises the removal of the old Barracks and building a facade to St. George's-terrace. Do you think the fact of having nine-storey buildings around Parliament House, which is only two-storey, would dwarf the appearance of Parliament House?—I do not know what the plan indicates, but I think this is an instance that when a scheme of huge public buildings is being considered, you should not be satisfied with the opinion of one department, but should take advantage of the competition of brains outside the department.

I think that a very good recommendation. The evidence continues—

By Hon. J. J. Holmes: The Principal Architect told us that this scheme could be altered to give a view of Parliament House from the Terrace?—That is obviously what is wrong with this plan.

The evidence is interesting reading. Mr. Boas, at the foot of page 37, says—

As to the possible sites, there are the recommendations of the Commission upon which I have touched.

Mr. Boas was referring to a commission of which he was the chairman. He continues—

I shall not put these suggestions in the order of respective merits. No. 2 is the Public Works site at the head of St. George's-terrace forming the apex of the block upon which Parliament House stands. I am inclined to think that would be about the next best site for Government offices. I envisage there a block of buildings that architecturally would be the crowning point to the head of St. George's-terrace and the city. The site would meet some of the conditions that I have already laid down. It is owned by the State; it is large enough, and it would form an effective

part of the development of Parliament House grounds. It is not necessary to see the front of Parliament House to make it a palatial Parliament House.

He proceeds to explain the advantages of the site. The evidence continues—

By the Chairman: Mr. Clare also prepared a plan showing a north and south orientation, which could be followed if we did not require the Christian Brothers' College area?—I would not like to see a block erected like that, because it would look like a mere institution. If we are to build, let us have individual buildings with amenities about them. There is one physical objection, but it is not very serious. I refer to the difficulty regarding the levels on the site, represented by the change between the Esplanade level and the St. George's-terrace rise. How that will be treated to provide adequate parking facilities and traffic requirements, I do not know.

That is Mr. Boas's evidence. Apparently one architect disagrees with another.

The Minister for Lands interjected.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I cannot read all the evidence.

The Minister for Lands: Read the whole report.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have read the report. I do not desire to detain members much longer. I could quote much more; but undoubtedly the architects who gave evidence favoured other sites. The Government had, however, definitely made up its mind. I know enough about Government officials to be aware that they try to fit in with the wishes of the Government of the day.

The Minister for Lands: It is not a report by Government officers. It is the report of the joint committee.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The Commissioner of Railways gave evidence, portion of which I shall quote—

By the Chairman: There are one or two points respecting which the Committee would like information from you. One relates to the number of passengers arriving at the central railway station, monthly or weekly, to give us some idea of the volume of traffic there. The other point concerns your opinion as to the permanency of the railways in the present position, and consequently the retention of the land for use for railway purposes from, say, East Perth to West Perth?—As to the first point, the annual arrivals and departures to and from the Perth central railway station total approximately 6,000,000. The average daily figure would be between 18,000 and 20,000 from all quarters.

Mr. Styants: You said there were about 18,000 to 20,000 passengers arriving at Perth station daily. Have you any idea what percentage would be suburban and what percentage country passengers?—I looked up the figures, and our total suburban passengers last year were about 10½ millions. That is, roughly, about 55 per cent.

I do not know how the Commissioner arrived at those figures.

Mr. Styants: There was a question about them.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The evidence continues—

What did you say the annual figure was?—Six millions, that is inwards and outwards.

Mr. Cross: Are you reading the whole report?

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I point out that what is contained in that report may not be relative to the Bill. Does the hon. member propose to link up those figures with the Bill?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Yes. The proposal is to erect these Government buildings where they will be accessible to the public and therefore consideration must be given to the question of transport. The evidence submitted showed that the present Treasury building would not be satisfactory, because of the inconvenience of depositing a large number of people on the footpath each night at 5 o'clock. It was considered that that would cause congestion. Transport has a great deal to do with the Bill. It is a simple matter to connect transport with a big suite of offices where probably 1,500 persons will be employed. But, as I said, I could not reconcile the figures given by the Commissioner of Railways and consequently I did not take much interest in his evidence. The number of passengers carried by bus apparently greatly exceeded the number carried by railway, and I can hardly believe that that is right. The police inspector in charge of traffic was called to give evidence. He quoted figures to show an increase in revenue and consequently he believed considerable congestion would take place if these buildings were erected on an inconvenient site. The President of the Legislative Council gave evidence also, apparently for a dual purpose. One was to get Parliament House completed, and the other to make sure that use would not be made of Parliament House grounds for public build-

ings. Some deference apparently was paid to the President of the Council because he had recently made an extensive tour of the world; but his evidence does not add much to the report.

Mr. Cross: Have you read the whole report?

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am very near the end.

Mr. Cross: A good job, too.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I have probably brought to the notice of members much that is contained in the report of this committee. As I pointed out, the committee should never have been appointed because there was no authority to appoint it.

Mr. Needham: You did not object to its appointment.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I was not present. I thought some explanation would be required on that point. The committee was appointed on a Wednesday evening, after the Standing Orders had been suspended, and I was in my room looking through a Bill which had been submitted to the House. I understood it was being proceeded with later in the evening. I was out for only a very little while but it is amazing how quickly the motion was carried. I am surprised somebody in the House did not notice that it was out of order. The member for Murchison (Mr. Marshall) must have been absent; otherwise I feel quite sure that his knowledge of the Standing Orders would have prevented the motion being accepted. I hope the House will never again agree to a similar motion. Furthermore, I hope that members of such a committee or a select committee will never, in future, swear witnesses without authority to do so. They are deprived of that power by the Standing Orders. As a matter of fact, it is illegal for any ordinary person to administer the oath. That is provided for not only in the Evidence Act but also in the Criminal Code. On a previous occasion I informed the House of my objection to this site. I also quoted the objections of other people. From the point of view of the contour of the country, I do not think a worse site could have been selected. Any member of the committee who inspected the site, walked along the piece of ground level with the St. George's-terrace side and looked south could not have failed to notice the

big fall in the land. I doubt whether any man would buy the site for an ordinary building. Only an individual with a good deal of money could afford to buy it with a view to erecting offices on it. We should look around and try to find some other place for public buildings. The Agricultural Department and the Lands Department could be housed in one set of offices. A building could be erected where the present Agricultural Department stands. The officers could be left in the old building, while the front portion of the new structure was being erected, and, when that portion was completed they could be transferred to it and the premises previously occupied could be pulled down. I do not know why the present building could not be extended back to where the Broadcasting Commission's offices are situated. If we can put up officers to rent to outside people—and the broadcasting authorities may be regarded as outside people—we can establish Government buildings there. As a matter of fact, that is a Class "A" reserve and the Government had no authority to put those buildings there, but this is an instance of the way in which some Government officials and some Governments seem to be able to do as they like.

Mr. Needham: It is a pity you did not give evidence before the committee.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: I am giving evidence before a much more important body. Why should I appear before a committee of eight members of Parliament when I can speak to 48 and the Deputy Speaker? I do not wish to waste time giving my views to only four members of this House when I can speak to 49. I do not propose to cover the whole ground again. The Minister knows the reasons for my opposition to the site. That opposition is very solid, despite the fact that the Minister tried to belittle it on the last occasion. His criticism was not very sound. He is determined on having the public buildings erected on this particular site but I hope he will never get the money. If he continues in his determination to have them erected there, I hope he will not call upon the people who patronise the State Government Insurance Office to provide the money.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order! I remind the Leader of the Opposition that there is nothing in the Bill about the State Government Insurance Office.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: The money must be obtained and the report quotes the Under Treasurer as stating that that is where it will come from.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am not concerned about what is in the report but what is in the Bill and I will have no debate on what is irrelevant.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: You might assist me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by telling me how we can finance this project.

The DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is not my prerogative to inform the Leader of the Opposition how the project is to be financed. I am here merely to see that he speaks relevantly to the subject matter before the Chair.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Very well. I know you do not desire to correct me unnecessarily, but I wished to ask how these buildings are to be paid for. However, if you will not allow me to proceed any further on those lines, I cannot do anything more. I repeat, however, that the site is most unsuitable and to utilise it for Government buildings will be to deprive the city of a very valuable piece of ground that will be required when the population reaches the 750,000 mark, which it is expected to do in 60 years' time. We have it on the authority of the Town Planning Commissioner that that is what the population will be at the end of that period, and we may want every bit of land then for a new Government House. One excuse for using this site is that Government House will soon fall into a condition of bad repair and it will be cheaper to put up a new building than to renovate the existing one. I hope it will be a long time before we shall have to waste money in that direction. Meanwhile we should reserve for the future all the land we have around Government House. I do not know that it is an ideal site for Government House but to leave the building there is cheaper than to waste the people's money in pulling it down and erecting a new one. I intend to fight the Bill and will object to it at every stage. No committee from this House or any other House will make me change my mind. I gave the matter careful consideration before previously opposing the plan. This is the third

occasion on which the matter has been before us. Twice before it was introduced and each time it was rejected. Then a committee was appointed to try to persuade us to take a different view. The eloquence of the Minister must have been responsible for inducing the other members of the committee to change their minds because I know they were opposed to the site. They had only to look at it to be convinced, as I was, that it was the most unsuitable site that could possibly be chosen. If the college alongside had been acquired, and a street constructed to the Esplanade, where a decent building could be erected, the plan might have had some merit, but I do not know how the site will be used in view of that fall of 25 to 30 feet.

The Minister for Lands: It is nearly as great a fall as exists from Parliament House to the Terrace.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is a drop of probably 30 to 40 feet but it is not as great a dip as from here to the Terrace.

Mr. Styants: The buildings will not extend over that fall.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: It is proposed to build the offices down that street.

Mr. Styants: They will not go on the dip.

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then for what reason is the ground to be resumed?

Mr. Styants: For gardens.

[*The Speaker took the Chair.*]

Hon. C. G. LATHAM: Then I hope the garden will be a success. The creation of a garden on the flat ground—that beautiful garden which has been visualised—will probably be less expensive than if it were made on the hill. From the point of view of gardening the site is probably a far better one than any other that has been suggested. A good garden is not possible on elevated ground such as that on which Parliament House and the Observatory are situated. The possibility of establishing a good garden in the Government Domain is the only fact that commends the site. A good garden might be established or pastures sown to create a bucolic surrounding. I intend to oppose the second reading of the measure. I wish I could persuade the Minister not to proceed with it. One final word: The Government is not justified in spending the people's money on a new

building. I think I have proved convincingly from the evidence itself that the increase in population does not justify such a project and that temporary buildings could be erected to satisfy our needs.

On motion by Hon. W. D. Johnson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.

Legislative Council,

Wednesday, 28th August, 1940.

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

QUESTION—ELECTORAL.

As to Death of Candidate.

Hon. J. CORNELL asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is there any record of any candidate for Parliamentary election having died between the date fixed for closing of nominations and the date fixed for the polling, or on polling day? 2, If so, will the Minister furnish the House with all particulars relating thereto?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied: 1, No; not so far as this State is concerned. 2, Answered by No. 1.

QUESTION—NORTHAM MILITARY CAMP.

As to Wet Canteen.

Hon. G. B. WOOD asked the Chief Secretary: 1, Is the Government aware that certain difficult conditions exist in Northam