Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: It is suggested there should be a proper plan of levels of all streets, and that therefore the clause could stand as printed.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 346—Municipality liable for compensation for altering fixed levels:

Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I move an amendment—

That the words "six years" in line 17, page 257, be struck out and the words "twelve months" inserted in lieu.

Apart from saying that the time is unduly long, I think no other explanation is required.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: The clause provides for a period of six years and the amendment seeks to change that to 12 months. It is considered that the provision in the Bill is preferable and that the clause should stand as printed.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Why?

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: It is argued that where a road has been constructed for a short period it could be regarded as temporary but after it has been down for six years there could be no doubt that it is permanent, so the longer period is preferred.

Hon. L. A. LOGAN: There are many streets that are permanent as from the day they are finished; and whereas 12 months might be too short a period, I think six years is too long.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM: Members will recall the intention to put a street across the middle of Herdsman's Lake, but it was impossible because the pressure of the road on the 40ft. of mud there would make it insecure. I think this provision was taken from the Victorian measure and in that State there are many clay roads that are likely to sink; a difficulty that does not arise with sand. I do not think the provision will be used often.

Hon. J. D. TEAHAN: I have no objection to the amendment.

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

Clause 347—agreed to.

Clause 348—On notice from statutory authority council to fix levels:

Hon. R. C. MATTISKE: I hope the Committee will not agree to this clause. I believe it would be detrimental to the general interest and I ask the Committee to vote against it.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 349—agreed to.

Progress reported.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS (Hon. H. C. Strickland—North): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.30 p.m., tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 10.31 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 4th September, 1957.

CONTENTS.

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

QUESTIONS.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.

Eradication and Control of Red-legged Mite, etc.

Hon. A. F. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Is the department concerned at the considerable infestation of red-legged mite that exists in many areas of Western Australia and the consequent damage to pasture and other growth that is taking place?

(2) If so, has research indicated any reliable means of eradication and/or control of this pest?

(3) If so, what are the means considered to be most satisfactory?

(4) Does the department consider that this pest is of such a nature that isolated activity by individual farmers is unlikely to result in effective use of eradication or control measures?

(5) If so, has any consideration been given to a State-wide campaign to be organised by the Department of Agriculture with a view to eliminating this pest?

(6) If so, has any estimate been made of the cost. Would it be necessary to use aeroplanes; or what other means of distribution?

(7) If the department has not given consideration to these matters will it have them investigated in the near future and provide a report indicating the incidence of the pest in Western Australia, so far as is known, best remedial measures and any suggested methods that might lead to an overall attack of the pest in the districts most affected?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

(1) The Department of Agriculture has always been concerned with infestations of red-legged earth mite and made control of this pest a major item of investigation prior to the allocation by C.S.I.R.O. of an officer stationed in Western Australia to work on this problem.

(2) Satisfactory and economic means of control of the pest have been developed. Because of the large host range of the mite and its wide distribution, it would not be practicable to attempt eradication.

(3) The present recommendations for the control of red-legged earth mite on pasture is 1oz. active ingredient DDT plus 1oz. active ingredient malathion. This should be applied as a spray either from ground equipment or aircraft with sufficient water to give a good cover.

(4) No. Farmers are able to achieve satisfactory control of red-legged earth mite using the above recommendations.

(5) As already mentioned, eradication of the mite is not practicable and for this reason a State-wide campaign has not been considered.

(6) Answered by No. (5).

(7) The incidence of the pest in Western Australia is well known. The Department of Agriculture has already publicised widely efficient control measures and is continuing this publicity. It is not considered that there is any effective alternative to individual action using recommended measures for control.

Details of control are given in the following pamphlets:—

(a) Department of Agriculture Leaflet No. 2009.

(b) Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 2331.

(c) Department of Agriculture Bulletin No. 2418.

ALBANY HARBOUR.

Completion of No. 2 Berth.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Will he give an approximate date for the return of the dredge to Albany for the purpose of cleaning up the harbour bed adjacent to No. 2 berth?

(2) Has No. 2 berth been completed with rail access?

(3) If the answer to No. (2) is "Yes", does he not think that an official opening would be appropriate to mark the completion of such a project?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Approximately March, 1958.

(2) Work is virtually complete with a restricted draft operating until further dredging is completed.

(3) Consideration will be given to this suggestion.

WILLIAM ALBANY-RAYNER.

Possible Prosecution After Twelve Years' Medical Practice.

Mr. ACKLAND asked the Minister for Health:

Referring to the suggested prosecution to be launched against William Albany-Rayner, will he explain why this man has been practising without question for twelve years, since the passing of the proviso to Section 19 of the Medical Act, and is now the subject of search and proposed prosecution?

The MINISTER replied:

The Medical Board is acting on evidence recently obtained. If similar evidence had been in the hands of the board previously, action would have been taken against William Albany-Rayner at an earlier date.

FORESTS.

Felling of Trees, Great Eastern Highway.

Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Forests:

(1) Further to Question No. (3) asked by me on the 8th August last, who is responsible for the almost clear felling of timber on both sides of the Great Eastern Highway, between the "Stone House" and "The Lakes?"

(2) Is this private property, or Crown land?

(3) What is the area involved, and for what reason is this land being cleared?

(4) Apart from the mill logs being recovered, for what purpose will the fallen timber used?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The Forests Department.

(2) State forest and Crown land.

(3) A strip 10 chains on either side of the road is being cut to remove mature and useless trees with a view to its replacement by a full stocking of vigorous regrowth. Good quality growing stock is being retained.

(4) Firewood for the charcoal-iron industry at Wundowie.

KING'S PARK.

Perth City Council Jurisdiction.

Mr. JOHNSON asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Does the reserve known as "King's Park" form part of the territory of the Perth City Council?

(2) Has the Perth City Council power to spend money on works in the area?

(3) Has the Perth City Council power to spend money on advertising, publicity or propaganda concerned with the area?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:

(1) No.

(2) The Perth City Council has no power to expend money in the King's Park area or any portion thereof until such time as a portion of the reserve is placed under the care, control or management of the council.

(3) No objection could be raised to the Perth City Council spending money on advertising, publicity or propaganda concerned with the area, provided such expenditure is charged to the council's three percent. account.

BOTANICAL GARDENS.

Site and Control.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Has progress been made in the selection of a site for a botanical gardens?

(2) If so, is the location and area determined; and under whose control will it be developed?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Lands) replied:

(1) The National Parks Board of Western Australia has for some time been endeavouring to obtain a suitable site for a botanical gardens, but has not yet been successful.

(2) Several sites are at present being investigated.

ORCHARDS.

Registration on a Periodical Basis.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Agriculture:

(1) Has the Government reconsidered the question of extended periods for registration of orchards, as mentioned in answers to my questions in July?

(2) If so, with what result?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Agriculture) replied:

(1) Yes. An attempt is being made to resolve the accounting difficulties associated with registration periods of more than one year.

(2) The matter has not yet been finalised.

STATE HOUSING COMMISSION.

(a) Land Acquired at Mt. Claremont.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) At what price did the State Housing Commission acquire the land now known as 38 Lisle-st., Mt. Claremont?

(2) What additional costs were incurred before it was sold?

(3) At what price was it sold by the State Housing Commission to the present owner?

(4) What were the respective figures as per the above questions applicable to the land on either side of No. 38 Lisle-st., Mt. Claremont?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) £34 (acquired in July, 1948).

(2) £27 9s. 7d.

(3) £500 (taxation value at date of purchase, the 23rd July, 1955).

(4) (a) Lot 12—£31. Lot 14—£34.

(b) Lot 12—£6 16s. Lot 14—£16 10s. 2d.

(c) Lot 12—taxation value at date or purchase, the 16th May, 1952—£170.

Lot 14—taxation value at date of purchase, the 15th January, 1954—£170.

(b) Purpose of Inspections, Manning Area.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Housing:

Will he state the purpose of the recent inspections carried out by officers of the State Housing Commission of a number of long-term purchase homes in the Manning area?

The MINISTER replied:

I am informed only one house was inspected and this inspection was made in accordance with normal practice following receipt of correspondence from the purchaser.

ICE CHESTS.

Dismantling when Discarded.

Mr. CROMMELIN asked the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government:

Will he take early action to determine what steps can be taken to make it an offence for ice chests and similar articles to be deposited on rubbish tips without first being dismantled, in an endeavour to avoid a tragedy similar to that which occurred recently in Victoria?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH replied:

Yes.

SPAGHETTI PRODUCTION.

(a) Effect of Road Transport Restrictions.

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Has he seen a report in the issue of the "Sunday Times," dated the 1st September, 1957, regarding the difficulties being experienced by a local spaghetti manufacturer?

(2) If so, and as the comparable figures quoted have apparently been confirmed in official quarters, will he state what action he proposes to take in this instance where restrictions on road transport are retarding the development of a worth-while local industry, and making it possible for Eastern States competitors to under-sell a local product, contrary to the Government's policy of fostering local industry?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No specific application has been received from Rifici for transport of spaghetti sauce from Perth to Albany by road, but in any event the cost of road haulage of the goods mentioned in the report would probably be at least three times the rail freight, therefore the hon. member's allegations that the development of a local industry is being retarded by road transport restrictions are completely without foundation.

(b) Competition with Eastern States.

Mr. HEARMAN (without notice) asked the Minister for Transport:

Further to my question concerning the difficulties being experienced by a local spaghetti manufacturer, has the Government any suggestions for enabling this manufacturer of spaghetti to compete with Eastern States competitors on a more favourable basis than he apparently does at the present time?

The MINISTER replied:

I would suggest that this would be an opportunity for a display of some initiative by private enterprise in Western Australia.

RAIL CLOSURES.

Haulage by Local Contractors.

Mr. HALL asked the Minister for Transport:

Will he give consideration to local haulage contractors when considering tenders for contracts in areas where railways have been closed?

The MINISTER replied:

In the consideration of tenders, cartage rates and efficiency of service are regarded as the major factors. Subject to these, it is the policy to give priority of consideration to local haulage contractors.

FEDERAL DIESEL FUEL TAX.

Reducing Operators' Fees.

Hon. D. BRAND (without notice) asked the Treasurer:

(1) In view of the tax about to be imposed by the Commonwealth Government on automotive diesel fuel and the Commonwealth Government's proposal to make £3,000,000 available this year as special aid against a diesel tax of £2,000,000, is it the Government's intention to amend the scale of licence fees which were recently increased on the ground that diesel vehicle operators did not make any contribution to petrol tax?

(2) Will consideration also be given to a reduction of the Transport Board fees for operators directly affected by the Commonwealth tax on diesel fuel?

The TREASURER replied:

I wish to thank the hon. member for making of copy of this question available to me earlier and the answers are as follows:—

(1) The matter will receive consideration.

(2) Yes, this matter also will receive consideration.

CRAWLEY BATHS.

Report on Condition and Restoration.

Mr. ROSS HUTCHINSON (without notice) asked the Premier:

Is he able to give me any information about the promise he made regarding a report on the condition of Crawley Baths?

The PREMIER replied:

No, not at this stage.

BILL—PARLIAMENTARY PERMANENT OFFICERS.

Introduced by the Premier and read a first time.

PAPERS—GOVERNMENT COAL CONTRACTS.

Details regarding Negotiations.

MR. COURT (Nedlands) [4.41]: I move—

> That in the opinion of this House, and in view of the information apparently already made available to the Collie Miners' Union, all papers in connection with the negotiations over Government coal contracts be tabled.

The object of this motion is to try to bring into the open the background of the protracted negotiations with respect to the supply of Government coal requirements which appear to be surrounded with an air of uncertainty and, in fact, with a degree of mystery at the present time—unless, during the last 24 hours, the Government has arrived at a decision and is about to announce that decision. It is not intended that this motion should be a full-scale debate on the coal industry and the Government's policy because, quite frankly, the air of uncertainty, delay, procrastination and mystery that surrounds this subject makes it, temporarily at least, impossible for the Opposition to deal effectively with such a debate.

It is impossible to indulge in a parliamentary debate on a subject of this type unless we have access to the latest and most reliable information. The only reliable source should be the Government of the day and at this point of time that information is not available to the Opposition. I say, with all sincerity, that the air of mystery surrounding this particular subject, and which has surrounded it now for several months, is fast creating an atmosphere of suspicion. We know it is not an easy problem to deal with, but these difficult problems are better handled if a decision is made and the public is informed, for then the merits or otherwise of the particular decision can be discussed and, in fact, proved by the passage of time.

Not only has this delay over many months caused an air of uncertainty and a degree of suspicion in the public mind, but it must also have caused a great measure of uncertainty in the minds of those directly engaged in the industry, both employer and employee, and in the Collie district, which is so vitally affected by the Government's decision in connection with coal. At this point of time Parliament has been denied the information it has sought.

Last week the Leader of the Opposition asked a question on this particular subject. He asked the Premier whether he would table all departmental papers covering negotiations for revised coal supply contracts. He asked if the negotiations had been completed and, if so, on what basis. The Premier replied that the answer to the first question was "Not at present." In answer to the second question he said, "Negotiations are nearing completion," and in answer to the third he informed the Leader of the Opposition that "it is not thought advisable to make this information available at this stage of the negotiations."

We find from a copy of an A.B.C. broadcast during its news session on the 2nd September, the following item:—

> Delegates from the Collie Miners' Union again discussed with the Premier, Mr. Hawke, in Perth today terms for the supply of coal to the Western Australian railways and the electricity commission. The A.B.C. political reporter says it is believed that the delegates reported to the Premier about the feeling at a meeting of miners at Collie on Saturday when the men were informed of the Government's proposals.
>
> He says miners are reluctant to accept any retrenchments in the industry while any coal is being taken from open cuts. However, the Government cannot get coal at a satisfactory price without taking some open cut coal, and has offered to find other work for any men displaced from the mine.
>
> A special meeting of Cabinet will be held at Parliament House on Wednesday evening to make a final decision about the contracts.

The Leader of the Opposition asked further questions yesterday arising out of the news item broadcast by the A.B.C., and on his second attempt he received a reasonably lengthy answer from the Premier, the relevant part of which is—

> Consequently they—

that is, the members of the miners' union—

> —are entitled to be brought into consultations up to a point but not beyond that point. They have been brought into the consultations in regard to the matters which affect their own standing in the coalmining industry and their future welfare. Beyond that they have not entered into the discussions, and they certainly have not had placed before them the proposed conditions of contract, nor have they had placed

before them a number of other very important angles to this total situation.

As far as that answer goes, it is an answer that one would normally expect to get from a Government at this stage of the negotiations. One has to accept that there are certain matters that have to be kept fairly dark until the negotiations are actually complete. However, either some of the rumours abroad regarding information known to the Collie Miners' Union are utterly and completely false, or the union has much more information than the Premier's answer would indicate. They are quite openly discussing such matters as prices in discussions with the respective companies.

Mr. May: They still have not got a clue.

Mr. COURT: It will be interesting to see whether or not they have a clue, because I have noted the prices they indicated, and we will see how they approximate the final and official prices that are eventually declared. As we have not yet been allowed to see the papers in connection with the negotiations, or been given vital information in connection with them, I think it is important and desirable in the interests of the Government, and the people of this State that the papers should be tabled in this House, so that the people can see the basis on which the negotiations have been, and are, proceeding. Here are some of the questions that I have posed myself as being pertinent to the matter under discussion: Firstly, how much does the union know of these discussions? How much does each of the three companies vitally affected know of these negotiations?

Mr. Marshall: Have you not asked them?

Mr. COURT: I have not. Thirdly, I ask myself what policy is behind the Government's proposals, and what will be the short and long term effect, on the industry, of the proposals. Again, I ask myself, what are the savings to the S.E.C. and the railways from these proposals if adopted and implemented? What will be the ratio of open-cut and deep-mined coal? Is the Government planning a transition from deep-mined coal to open-cut coal? If one company is to be left out of the contracts, is this the thin end of the wedge to force it out of business and make over its leases to a Government instrumentality?

Several members interjected.

Mr. COURT: It is a pertinent question. I am asking a series of questions.

The Minister for Transport: Is the moon made of cheese?

The Minister for Mines: Who got you into this difficulty?

Mr. COURT: It makes me think I have scored a bull's eye, the way everyone jumped when those questions were asked.

The Minister for Mines: You are getting wider of the mark as you go along.

Mr. COURT: To what extent are prices related to quality? What bargain has the union endeavoured to make with the Government and the Government with the union? What escape clauses, if any, are in the contract if the quality and costs in the proposed contracts prove difficult for the successful companies to maintain?

Mr. Moir: What size mesh have you on that net?

Mr. COURT: I think the mesh is a bit smaller than I thought it was. I think the hon. member will agree they are all very pertinent questions for one to ask when one does not know the answers. If I were sitting with the answers in front of me, I could probably say much which would be more effective. However, these are all pertinent questions which a responsible Opposition is entitled to ask and to expect answers to them. A further question is: Has any threat been made to any of the companies to conform to the Government's conditions and, to use a popular phrase, "or else"? Is the lowest tender to be accepted, having regard to quality as well as the quoted price?

The Minister for Transport: Are you giving notice of the questions?

Mr. COURT: If the Premier would like notice of these questions, I would gladly let him have the list.

The Premier: There are too few to worry about!

Mr. COURT: I well remember in a previous debate on the Esperance scheme, the Premier did not answer many questions. He said he got giddy after writing down the first five or six, and left the rest to our imagination. I hope he does not do that with these, because they are vital questions that any responsible member of the public is entitled to ask and to receive answers to them. This matter has not just been going on for a few weeks. It is possible to read for hours and hours the speeches of the Premier and some of his present Ministers and some of his present back-benchers, castigating the previous Government on its dealings with the coal companies.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Was that when you took over the Black Diamond leases?

Mr. COURT: It goes back there and up to the 1952 cost-plus agreement, which the Government, when sitting in opposition, said was iniquitous.

The Minister for Mines: Infamous.

Mr. COURT: If the Minister for Mines does not like the word, "iniquitous" and prefers the word "infamous", I do not mind. Strong language was used in the Press statements and Hansard notes, and the language was very extravagant.

Hon. D. Brand: The Minister for Mines has been in office for five years now and it has taken five years to do something about it.

Mr. COURT: I find it interesting to allow for the passage of time. After the Government had three years in office, it had to go to the people again and in the Premier's policy speech delivered on the 9th March, 1956, he made reference to coal. I will read the lot so that I will not be accused of leaving out criticism of the McLarty-Watts Government.

The Minister for Mines: That will be good.

Mr. COURT: He said—

> The demand for coal has fallen off following the greater general use of oil for industrial purposes.
>
> However, the present coalmining problem has developed mainly because of the maladministration of the McLarty-Watts Government. That Government encouraged the establishment of a third coalmining company at Collie and granted very substantial financial assistance to each of the three coal companies, totalling in all over £1,500,000. More than £1,000,000 is still owing by the companies to the Government.
>
> This places at least a partial responsibility on the Government to keep each coalmining company operating on a profitable basis.
>
> The Government would require to buy the whole of its coal requirements from only one company to obtain coal at the lowest price. The extent to which the Government spreads coal orders over, say, two or three companies naturally increases the price to be paid for the coal.
>
> At the present time the Government is buying coal on a fortnight-by-fortnight basis, giving each company an order.
>
> In the near future the Government should make a decision to buy coal on a long-term basis.
>
> The decision will not by any means be easy to make.

That was the Premier's policy speech—

The Minister for Mines: It is still true.

Mr. COURT: —on the 9th March, 1956. We must bear in mind that at that time the cost-plus agreement, if I remember correctly, had expired and the Government was buying coal on a fortnight-to-fortnight basis. One wonders whether Ministers hoped somebody else would have to work out the solution of future supply.

The Minister for Mines: The public will work that one out.

Mr. COURT: This is September, 1957, and that decision has yet to be made. I think the Opposition has every reason to be impatient about this matter. I will not weary the House with all the Press cuttings I struggled to obtain in order to find out the progress of events in some of which it was said there would be a decision in days and in others, it would be in weeks. There are also a series of questions in Hansard which are well known to members and I do not want to fill Hansard with a record of Hansard. Time after time, questions were asked by different members regarding this so-called iniquitous or infamous cost-plus agreement, and we found it was still struggling on. I am afraid it was in either the too-hard basket or the unfair basket, and a decision has yet to be made.

The Minister for Mines: It was always active.

Mr. COURT: I am pleased to know from the Minister for Mines that it was in the active file.

Hon. D. Brand: Going between the Premier's Department and the Minister for Mines. To that extent, it was active.

Mr. COURT: I want to recall an observation by a former Leader of the Opposition, just prior to the election, because it cannot be said by the Government that he, as Leader of the Opposition at that time, left the people of the State or the Government in any doubt where the Opposition stood. It is pertinent that I should make this observation as his remarks were so forthright that it should have been a basis for the Government to go forward with some confidence in this matter, knowing it could not be attacked by the Opposition if it adopted a responsible attitude. In a Press statement released on the 30th January, 1956, Sir Ross McLarty said—

> The Leader of the Opposition yesterday attacked the Government for its "farcical and unrealistic handling of the Collie coal situation."

The Premier: Did he say that?

Mr. COURT: The statement continues—

> If it were not so serious it would be almost like something out of Gilbert and Sullivan.

The Premier: Uriah Heap!

Mr. COURT: He said—

> Time and time again the Premier (Mr. Hawke) had attacked the McLarty-Watts Government for entering into a three-year cost-plus agreement with Amalgamated Collieries Ltd. in 1952 under which the company supplied 60 per cent. of the Government's requirements.
>
> Mr. Hawke claimed this was "to the disadvantage of the State" and made repeated attacks on the "pernicious" cost-plus system.

The word "pernicious" which is quoted, is taken from one of the Premier's utterances. Sir Ross said—

> He did not take into consideration that when my Government entered into the agreement, coal was in very short supply, special measures to encourage development of the mines were necessary because of the advent of Kwinana and there was then no knowledge of the Muja open-cut seam.
>
> In fact, the known available open-cut seams would have only lasted 16 years at the rate then being depleted. Sir Ross added that on September 1st last the Premier was quoted as saying that he was "hoping and praying for the day—

I like that part—

> —when the cost-plus agreement would end" and he indicated that when this happened, future Government supplies would be ordered by fixed price contract.
>
> "But what has happened?" Sir Ross went on. "The final result is a complete anti-climax. Tenders were called, conferences were held and repeated Press statements were made in recent weeks that a decision on the coal contracts was pending.
>
> "Then Mr. Hawke withdrew from his three-man negotiating committee and Messrs. Tonkin and Styants submitted to the terms laid down by the Collie unions.
>
> "As a result, the Government is continuing with the much-condemned cost-plus agreement, the 'price being determined on the formula in the last agreement'."

The Premier: The member for Murray is looking worried at your quoting this extravagant pre-election propaganda to us.

Mr. COURT: There is more to quote, but it is hardly relevant to the matter under discussion.

The Premier: Let us have it all.

Mr. COURT: I was trying to save time. Sir Ross then goes on to say—

> Also Messrs. Tonkin and Styants have gone one further and have actually increased the percentage of Government orders to be given to Amalgamated Collieries Ltd.
>
> Sir Ross added that by its agreement with the unions the Government had prevented the closure of the Black Diamond and Westralian mines which were the most costly on the field.
>
> The Muja open-cut, with reasonable production could supply first-class coal at approximately 60 per cent. of the average price now paid by the Railway Department and the State Electricity Commission.
>
> However, by its agreement, the Government had prevented these utilities from obtaining more than 5.7 per cent. of their requirements from this "wonderful open-cut which has about 100,000,000 tons of easily-gained coal available."
>
> Sir Ross added: "If industry is to progress in W.A. and if coal is to compete with oil and other sources of heat and power, then the cheaply-available coal must be utilised and the costly mines closed. The Government has done a great disservice to industry in this State by its weak handling of the coal situation."

That is a very forthright statement and it should have given the Government some courage to go on, knowing that in connection with this matter it had the complete support of the then Leader of the Opposition and his followers.

The Premier: Have you the election policy of the Country Party on coal?

Mr. COURT: I am speaking for the Liberal and Country League section of the Opposition. The Country Party, no doubt, will make its own comments in due course. I have neither requested its permission nor have I its permission to make any comments on its behalf. I think the Leader of the Country Party is well able to defend himself.

The Premier: I cannot see him blundering into this one.

Mr. COURT: The Leader of the Opposition went still further in his efforts to make clear to the public what his policy, or his party's policy, was.

Members will recall that during the last election a series of rather embarrassing questions was asked of the various leaders. The Press was more or less asking for direct answers to specific points, but found it extremely difficult to get the Premier to reply at any greater length than that of a minimum-priced telegram. I remember well that if the Press got more than thirty words out of him, it was doing very well.

The Premier: I do not believe in supplying the Press with free copy.

Mr. COURT: The Leader of the Opposition, Sir Ross McLarty, was much more generous. On the 4th April, 1956, these three questions were put—

> Would you be willing to reduce employment at Collie to get cheaper coal?

Sir Ross McLarty replied—

> Our plan of conversion to greater use of good quality open-cut coal is a gradual one. The reduction in the number of men working the deep mines should be largely taken care of by the normal rate of retirements and resignations and the increased overall production that might be expected for a growing State.

The second question was—

> Would you take other steps to get cheaper coal? If so, what would you do?

To this Sir Ross replied—

> At present approximately 70 per cent. of the Government's requirements come from deep mines and 30 per cent. from open cuts. Our programme to obtain cheaper coal provides for—
>
> 1. An interim period of six months—that is to September of this year—during which the companies can close the inefficient mines and make adjustments in readiness for our proposals.
> 2. In September contracts would be let for 12 months on the basis of 65 per cent. from deep mines and 35 per cent. from the cheapest available open-cut coal of good quality.
> 3. In September, 1957, contracts would be let on the basis of 60 per cent. from deep mines and 40 per cent. of the cheapest open-cut coal available.
>
> We would then further review the position with a view to making still greater use of open-cut coal. This question will need to be continually reviewed because of the keen competition from oil and the possible future uses of atomic power.

The third question was—

> What would be your idea, approximately, of a fair price reduction?

Sir Ross replied to this question as follows:—

> We expect substantial reductions but at this stage it is impossible for us as an Opposition to assess accurately an exact figure. However, if the inefficient deep mines are closed by September and the cheapest open-cut coal is bought, the average price of coal might fall by at least 10s. a ton.
>
> This would mean a saving to the Government of about £400,000 a year on the present consumption by the State Electricity Commission and W.A. Railways.

There was no holding back in that statement, which was a forthright one on a difficult problem. The Government and the people were left in no doubt as to where the Opposition stood on this question of trying to secure the life of the Collie coalmining industry. I would have thought that to a Government which was in some difficulty over the problem, the announcement by the Opposition in such terms would have been a God-send. However, we have gone on for months and always we get promises that negotiations are nearly complete, but no positive answer is given until, on the 2nd August a ray of hope appeared when "The West Australian" announced, "Government Ends Its Talks on Coal." It went on to say—

> The Government has concluded the negotiations on its new coal policy. The negotiations with the producing companies and the Collie unions lasted many months.

I would like members to note that the negotiations with the producing companies and the Collie unions lasted many months—

> Collie Legislative Assembly member Harry May (Lab.) and a big group of union representatives conferred yesterday with Premier Hawke and the Cabinet sub-committee on coal.
>
> The sub-committee consists of Works Minister Tonkin, Railways Minister Strickland and Mines Minister Kelly. The Premier said afterwards that the Government's new policy would probably be announced next week.

That was on the 2nd August, and today is the 4th September—

> The Cabinet would discuss the question on Monday and the Government would make its final decision. The companies would be told before any decision was announced. The Premier said on July 15 that the Cabinet had approved negotiations on coal which could save the Government up to £500,000 a year.

There is still no positive statement from the Government as to the decision it has made. The situation has developed to the stage of almost a farce. On rough calculations from information publicly available, it would appear that it could be profitable to the Government to pay a large part of the labour force to remain idle—pay these people the full wage to remain idle—from the savings through producing coal by the most economical means.

Mr. May: What would be the most economical means?

Mr. COURT: Having regard for quality and the coal most easily won, which, I presume, would be in the main from Muja.

Mr. May: You have a lot to learn yet, my boy!

Mr. COURT: I am just making a statement which appears to be factual to me and it is that we have reached the situation where the Government could almost make a profit out of paying men their full wages during their effective working life without those men doing any work, and get the coal from the most economical seams.

Mr. May: You want to have a talk with the loco. firemen about the quality of the open-cut coal. You would be enlightened then.

Mr. COURT: The hon. member can deal with the point later. We are anxious to know about the quality of the coal because there seems to be a never-ending argument as to which is the most economical fuel.

Mr. May: All the coal is good; it is the stuff they mix with it.

Mr. COURT: I submit that an indefinite delay in the use of good open-cut coal cannot be accepted as a policy. There are some who say, "Leave it alone. Let us use it last of all. Do not bother to develop it during the next 30 to 50 years. Let us keep it on ice as a national reserve." There is a considerable amount of open-cut coal, and some schools of thought believe that we should just allow this to remain dormant and have it available in years to come.

Mr. May: That is what they are going to do with King's Park.

Mr. COURT: The hon. member seems to want to draw me off the trail at Collie and bring me up to the metropolitan area.

The SPEAKER: That is certainly a red herring across the motion.

Mr. COURT: I submit it is not a policy at all to say that we will let this large amount of good quality coal remain idle for the next 30 or 40 years and then make up our minds as to what we will do with it. I say this, because we are facing the situation that in 30 or 40 years' time it is not inconceivable that coal, as a major source of power, will have been replaced. What would we do then if one of our major reserves had, through no fault of our own, been completely frittered away as a source of power because we were too cautious or too timid about the matter? This is one of the great problems that has to be decided.

While I will not press the question further, I point out, as I said earlier, that it is important to try to get some information for the Opposition and for the public on the present situation regarding coal supplies for the Government. As an Opposition, we feel that we have been very patient in the matter. Negotiations have been going on for months and months and it is now getting into years since the much criticised cost-plus agreement expired. We feel it is high time that not only the details of the new coal supply to the Government were made public, but also the conditions and circumstances leading up to the negotiations for such a contract.

THE PREMIER (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [5.15]: I think it is easy to understand why those members in the Liberal Party section of the Opposition who were Ministers in the McLarty-Watts Government would not touch a motion of this kind. Clearly, if the matter is as important as the member for Nedlands would have us believe—and it is important—it is a subject which the Leader of the Opposition should, I think, have handled. But, of course, he has had practical experience in Government and practical experience with the coalmining industry and the coalmining companies and I could not imagine him falling for the moving of a motion of this nature, particularly at this stage.

Mr. Court: Are you suggesting that he shirked it?

The PREMIER: No, but that he had too much good sense to move it. Let us examine the wording of the motion. It says, "That in the opinion of this House, and in view of the information 'apparently' made available", and so on. The motion itself is based upon something which is not fact. The member for Nedlands knew that and so he included in the motion this very expansible word "apparently".

Quite clearly, in vital and difficult negotiations of this kind the unions whose members produce the coal are entitled to receive some thought and consideration from the Government and they have, during the negotiations, received a fair measure of consideration. I think most members of this House know that in these days, particularly, it is necessary to have as much goodwill and co-operation as possible from the people who produce the commodity; otherwise there is always a danger that the commodity will not be produced in regular and adequate quantities, and no one in Western Australia would want a situation of that kind to develop.

I think we all know from practical experience that the men who work in the coalmining industry at Collie have created —for coalminers, at any rate—a very good record over the years. Therefore, even if only for that reason, they were certainly entitled to be called into discussions with the Government when it was trying to iron out a policy for the future purchase of coal for the Railway Department and the State Electricity Commission. I suppose it would have been quite easy—perhaps easier than it has been up to this stage—for the Government to have ignored the unions associated with the coalmining industry at Collie and not to have had any discussions with them at all.

But I am sure that when a new policy on coal had come to be applied in practice, very great difficulties would have been encountered; difficulties which, in fact, could have taken away a great deal of the financial benefit which it is hoped will accrue to the two departments I have mentioned and, through them, to the State generally. I am not saying that there may not be some difficulties anyhow, when the proposed new policy is first applied.

We all know that the policy of the miners' unions at Collie has been one very strongly in favour of the production of deep-mine coal as against the production of open-cut coal, and they do not follow this policy from any selfish motive and certainly not mainly from any such motive. Their very firm view is that the deep mines at Collie, if they were allowed to fall into disuse and all or most of the coal required by the State were obtained from one or more open cuts, would become unworkable and the time would undoubtedly come when the State would find itself in very great difficulties in regard to the supplies of coal which would be required at some future time.

It is quite easy to grab a lot of coal which is easy to work at a particular time but it would be fatal to develop a coalmining policy at Collie which would place very great reliance upon open-cut coalmining and allow the deep mines to fall into disuse. I imagine no coalmining company would spend much money on deep coalmines if nobody was buying any coal from those deep mines. I presume that all members of the House know enough about coalmining to realise that once deep coalmines are deserted, they are ruined in next to no time.

Mr. May: They are flooded.

The PREMIER: And they could not be redeemed or rehabilitated, I imagine, except at very great cost and over a considerable period of time. So this short-sighted policy which the member for Nedlands seems to advocate, of grabbing at the open-cut coal because it is easier to get at and cheaper to produce, might have some short-term advantages for Western Australia, but it would have some tragic long-term disadvantages.

Mr. Court: I did not advocate that as the only course.

The PREMIER: No. The hon. member was dancing around in great style in connection with this motion from the first word of his speech to the last. He was not advocating anything very specific at all, but the emphasis in his speech was greatly in favour of the purchase and use by the Government of open-cut coal as against the purchase and use of deep-mine coal.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: But not to the exclusion of deep-mine coal.

The PREMIER: I suggest that if the policy which the member for Nedlands advocated were to produce the financial benefits of which he spoke, to any worth-while extent, there would have to be a production and purchase of open-cut coal to a very great degree and a production and purchase of only a percentage of deep-mine coal and the final result, from the long-range point of view, would be to imperil substantially the future of the coalmining industry at Collie.

Mr. Court: The whole case put forward by the Leader of the Opposition before the last election was based on a systematic transition from the present ratio to a higher ratio of open-cut coal.

The PREMIER: Yes, with no ceiling for the purchase and use of open-cut coal, so presumably the transition would go from 30 to 40 or 50 or 60 or perhaps as high as 80 per cent. of the open-cut coal and only 20 per cent. or less of deep-mine coal. I say that, taking a long-range view and a sensible view, such a policy could be tragic in the effects it would have upon the stability of coalmining in this State in the future. It is quite easy to work out the answers to these problems on paper.

We can all be smart Alecs when it comes to providing answers on paper to any problem; there is nothing easier. Neither is there anything easier than to think out and write down a whole series of questions. Some great mind once expressed the thought—I say this with no disrespect to the member for Nedlands—that the fool would be capable of asking more questions in five minutes than the wise man would be capable of answering in 500 years—if he lived that long—and so these questions which the hon. member has spent days and nights thinking out and writing down—what about this? when will that happen? when will something else happen? and so on—are of no value.

Mr. Court: Are you going to answer any of them?

The PREMIER: I am not specifically going to answer any of them.

Mr. Court: Do you not think we are entitled to know?

The PREMIER: I am going to say plainly that this motion could not have been more ill-timed, and I would say that the political judgment of the member for Nedlands is extremely bad in that he should move in this House a motion of this character at this particular stage.

Mr. Court: That is only your opinion.

The PREMIER: I am not trying to express the opinion of anybody else. It is not my habit or practice to do that.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: You never hesitated to attack our Government on coal and put all the questions you wanted to, so why should you resent this motion being moved?

The PREMIER: If the member for Murray would come back to earth, he would realise that I do not resent the fact that the motion has been moved. I welcome it.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: You said it was ill-timed.

The PREMIER: It is, but surely the member for Cottesloe can draw a line of demarcation, and a very substantial one, between resentment of a motion and a description of it as ill-timed!

Mr. Court: Ill-timed for whom?

The PREMIER: I am sure the member for Cottesloe, if he thinks about it, will see that there is a great difference between the two. If all these questions which the member for Nedlands has asked were to be answered specifically at this stage, they could undo all of the valuable work that has been done in recent months in the direction of bringing to finality the negotiations which have been taking place between the Government and representatives of the company on the one hand, and the Government and representatives of the unions on the other hand.

We could all, I think, give the member for Nedlands credit for having enough practical business experience to know that when negotiations are at a critical stage in regard to finality as between two groups of people, the worst thing that could be done at that stage would be to have a whole host of questions put up and answered. I know of nothing more likely to wreck negotiations than that sort of performance. I am sure the member for Nedlands would know from his own practical experience in the business world that that sort of thing would be fatal.

Mr. Court: Well, are negotiations just about complete?

The PREMIER: Yes.

Mr. Court: How near to completion?

Hon. D. Brand: The Premier could not answer that question, I am sure.

The PREMIER: The member for Nedlands, in his speech, has criticised the Government—I raise no objection to that—for the fact that from time to time negotiations were proceeding and that they were nearing completion. If I say to him now that the whole matter will be finalised and conclusively decided next Monday and something happens in the meantime to make it next Wednesday, then next Tuesday when we meet, he will get up in his place and ask another thousand-and-one questions and indulge in more criticism.

I would say this: I would be extremely disappointed indeed if the whole matter were not finalised by the Government at the Cabinet meeting to be held on Monday afternoon next. I should hope that when we meet here again next Tuesday, I will be able to say to members of the House that the Government had made its final decision and all that then remained to be done would be for the company's representative to sign on the dotted line and for the Government's representative to sign on the dotted line, as soon as the contracts had been prepared in proper legal form.

Mr. Court: Would you be prepared then to table the papers?

The PREMIER I would have no objection, and I do not think any other Minister would have any objection, to tabling the papers as soon as possible after that date. I go this far to say that negotiations as between the Government and the company's representative have reached an almost final stage in regard to each and every condition to go into the contract form. It is not a matter of the Government deciding that it will buy so much coal from such-and-such a company and pay so much for it and then a long argument developing as between the Government and the company representative as to the several conditions which are to be associated with the purchasing of the coal by the Government from the company.

So I would express a very strong hope—indeed I would appeal to members of the House in that respect—that the motion will not be agreed to. It could have very serious and unfortunate results because, as I have indicated, this matter is practically finalised. I have already said that as soon as the matter is finalised and the necessary contract forms are drawn up in legal phraseology and the signatures put to the contract, we shall have no objection to the tabling of the papers.

I am strongly tempted to rake up the past in connection with this coal business; this business of Governments buying coal and of the conditions under which some Governments have bought coal; of the things which some Governments have done in connection with coal in the past; but, in the same way as the passing of this motion might have some critical and unfortunate effect at this time, so might the heavy raking activities in which I might indulge if I were to yield to that temptation at this stage. Therefore, we should approach this matter rationally.

Of course, I can quite understand the desire of the member for Nedlands and perhaps the desire of some other members to give this coal business the "works," but to give the coal business the "works" at this stage is, I think, the wrong time to give it the "works." If, after the contracts are finalised and the papers are tabled, the member for Nedlands would like an all-out brawl on the coal issue, members of the Government and members on the Government side of this House, particularly the member for Collie, would be very happy to oblige him or any other members on the other side of the House.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [5.36]: In support of the motion and in replying to the Premier first of all, I would remind him that on many occasions his Deputy Leader took up very important subjects; subjects which were equally as important

as this one and on which we might have expected the then Leader of the Opposition to take a lead on such an occasion. However, the motion before the House at the moment is for the tabling of the papers dealing with coal contracts and I feel that the justification for the moving of the motion stems from the years of delay—I think it is fair to say that—that have elapsed in endeavouring to arrive at a decision on this question.

As has already been said, no one ignores the fact that it would be a most difficult decision to make. However, we on this side of the House, especially those who were in the Ministry—some of whom held ministerial rank for twice as long as I did—can recall the hours and hours of trenchant criticism that was levelled at the Government in office at that time, over the agreements that it made then with the companies and the arrangements that it entered into in order to obtain coal, which was so vitally needed.

All the records reveal that year in, year out—during the postwar period—we had very little coal in reserve and every week Cabinet called for advice on what reserves of coal were available. I believe that the Government led by Sir Ross McLarty and Mr. Watts is to be congratulated on the fact that it provided the coal necessary to permit Western Australia to emerge from those postwar years at least without being limited in its efforts to progress as the result of a shortage of coal.

No doubt there could be criticism of the arrangements which were made at that time. But might I point out to the House that probably we can level justifiable criticism at the agreements which the Premier says will be made public within the next few days. The Deputy Leader of the Opposition, in asking that these papers be tabled, in order that the negotiations on this vital question might become public, is actually reflecting the thoughts of the people at large.

Every week statements have been made by the Premier or by Mr. Latter, the representative of the union in Collie, that certain arrangements would be made and that finality would be reached. In fact, as members of the Opposition have pointed out and as the Government has confirmed, a huge saving could be effected if arrangements were entered into to use, under agreement, more open-cut coal. It was for that reason that at the last general election we came out with a policy which proposed a gradual transition, on the existing scale, from the use of deep-mined coal to open-cut coal.

Although the Premier has stated that there was no ceiling to such an arrangement, surely over the number of years that would be involved in the transition period, anything could have taken place. Therefore, it is quite stupid and futile to place any ceiling on such an arrangement. However, to say that, at the very time when oil was being discovered in quality and in some quantity in the North-West—

The Minister for Mines: Not at that time; three years later.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am talking about the last election and not the 1953 election. Everybody considered, at that time, that oil could be discovered in payable quantities. Therefore, one could imagine the effect which the discovery of good quality oil in commercial quantities would have had on the general motor power of the State and the overall cost of production.

The Minister for Mines: All that transpired three years later.

Hon. D. BRAND: I am speaking of the election speech delivered by the Leader of our party at the last general election. It is fair to say that the discovery of oil could have been in the minds of the members of the Government, but what about the possible development of nuclear energy? Although it is suggested that it will be many years before such type of power can become competitive with the power that is derived from coal—and well it might have been—

Mr. May: Do you think that if oil was found in this State, you would get it cheaper than it is today?

Hon. D. BRAND: I would not have a clue about that, but I know that if we discovered oil in payable quantities in this State, it would have a marked effect on the commercial life and the cost of production in this State, if not immediately, then in the years to come.

Mr. May: It would be the same as the establishment of the oil refinery at Kwinana, with South Australia getting its oil £2 a ton cheaper than we do here.

Hon. D. BRAND: That is entirely irrelevant. The discovery of oil would have a marked effect on the cost of production and I feel certain that coal would be priced out of the market as a fuel. In fact, it has been stated by the Government itself that a saving of some £500,000 could be made if it were permitted to use cheap open-cut coal. Indeed, I believe statements have been made to indicate that the State Electricity Commission could save a substantial amount of money if it were able to use oil as a fuel. Therefore, confusion has developed in the minds of not only members of Parliament but also of members of the public as a result of the tentative promise made by the Government to give notice of some satisfactory agreement to indicate the change that would be made in respect of the number of companies concerned.

Surely we on this side of the House are justified in asking that the relevant papers be laid on the Table of the House! The Premier was critical of the timing of such

a motion. He himself had no great regard for the political difficulties that we, as a Government, were confronted with when he wished to embarrass us for some political or any other reason when he came forward with such motions to call for papers on any particular subject. The Premier has now indicated that the papers will be made public after the announcement of the contract and that such announcement will be made within the next few days.

I feel, therefore, that the motion has been partially successful inasmuch as the Premier is prepared to lay bare the facts which will be found in the papers, the contents of which have confused the minds of the people for quite a long time. It is also fair to say that industry has requested that a decision should be made as soon as possible. It has called for a favourable decision on this agreement because it knows how critical the present Government was of the cost-plus system, having had five years to get rid of it.

To listen to them from this side of the House, one would think that was the simplest thing out. They attacked the then Premier, the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Mines at the time over this agreement. Evidently the Premier today has indicated that he has discovered that he, too, may have been a smart Alec in suggesting that we could so easily have got rid of the cost-plus system. In practice, he has found that the coal agreement, which is necessary under the existing arrangement, was not so easy to arrive at, taking into consideration the position of the companies, the unions, and indeed the whole commercial community.

The Minister for Mines: It is easy to arrive at if you base it on a give-all type of agreement.

Hon. D. BRAND: It is easy to arrive at anything, but I am suggesting that we have been criticised for putting forward suggestions for a solution of the problem of providing coal, a fuel which was so vital to the State at that time. We therefore have the right, as a responsible Opposition, to press the Government on this matter, and indeed we have been ultra patient. I only hope that within a week the Premier will lay on the Table of this House the papers that will reveal what has gone on, not only between this Government and the companies, but also between the Government and the unions, so that we can see to what extent each has pledged itself for the continuous supply of cheaper coal. Cheaper coal is available, and unless we are prepared to arrive at an agreement to enable such coal to be obtained, then the cost will not be comparable with the coal produced in other States and countries.

The Minister for Mines: Cheap coal was available to your Government when it made the agreement, but you did not get it any cheaper.

Hon. D. BRAND: The large coalfields which were found later, and on which the open-cut mines have been placed, were discovered as a result of an extensive drilling programme which was initiated by the McLarty-Watts Government.

The Minister for Mines: It was not very far advanced.

Hon. D. BRAND: It was well advanced. The Government, together with the Minister for Mines at that time, took the initiative and investigated the fields, and it was revealed that there was a huge area of coal close to the surface which could be mined cheaply. The people of Western Australia are justified in asking the Government to make such coal available, and at the same time not to overlook the very practical propositon of closing down the deeper mines gradually under some agreement so as not to displace the men engaged in coal production. That is the responsibility of the Government. The changeover must come about because of the general progress which is going on. Because the Opposition realised it was a difficult subject, it has said nothing at all in regard to the matter. We now ask for the information to be made available to us and to the public. The member for Nedlands is to be congratulated on this move which urges the Government at a greater speed to arrive at a decision which it has delayed for almost five years, ever since 1953.

The Minister for Transport: Piffle!

Hon. D. BRAND: It is not piffle at all. The Minister for Transport knows that it should not take the Government five years to arrive at a decision, and a decision has not yet been made.

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

MOTION—REGISTRATION OF CHIROPRACTORS AND OSTEOPATHS.

To Inquire by Royal Commission.

Debate resumed from the 31st July on the following motion by Mr. Ackland:—

> That, in the opinion of this House, a Royal Commission should be appointed to inquire into and report upon the desirability or otherwise of legislation for the registration of chiropractors and osteopaths within the State, particularly with regard to—
>
> (1) the apparent need for qualified chiropractors and osteopaths;
>
> (2) the desirability of the services of such persons coming under the National Health Scheme.

THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH (Hon. E. Nulsen—Eyre) [5.51]: The member for Moore has moved for the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire

into the services rendered to the public by chiropractors and osteopaths. I have no objection to an inquiry into this matter, but I believe it would be better to appoint a select committee rather than a Royal Commission. There is nothing at the present time to stop chiropractors and osteopaths from practising as they have done in the past.

One of the reasons why I prefer a select committee to a Royal Commission is that the former will take into consideration the innate instinct possessed by some of these practitioners who have not been brought under control by any legislation. There is nothing to hinder them now. Practitioners like Martinovich who possess no real qualifications through examination but who possess something innate, have done good work for the community. If we are to bring them under an Act, we will lose some of these people who possess that naturalness because they will be required to pass examinations before they will be permitted to continue to carry on their good work in the community.

Hon. A. F. Watts: It is customary to register those who have bona fide practice before the passing of an Act.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: If that is done, the number who will eventually be registered will be reduced. Take dentistry, for instance. I can remember a few years ago that these practitioners needed only to pass the Junior examination, as a preliminary qualification, and yet they were doing good work. We do not want to see a return to those days. Since the passing of the Act in 1945, the dentist has had to be highly qualified by examinations. He has had to study at a university for six years; and he is required to possess qualifications similar to those of a doctor, although they have been taught some extraneous matters which are not really necessary.

Ultimately, the same will apply to chiropractors and osteopaths. The people practising at present have done a good job and the alleviation of pain suffered by their patients has been very commendable. Of course, we have not heard of everything they have done. They have had very favourable publicity. I can mention a few more practitioners besides Mr. Martinovich. The B.M.A. is not antagonistic towards these people. It is quite unbiased on the matter. It has no real objection to allowing them to be registered in some association, but they would be required to possess some qualifications.

Many people consider that chiropractors and osteopaths should possess qualifications parallel to those of a medical practitioner, and that they should not be subservient in their status to the latter. If that is brought about, we will have another very highly qualified branch of medicine. It seems a great pity that we have to take away from the public such people like Martinovich who possesses the knack for this work, if they were to fail to qualify. There are many problems to be contended with.

I have some comments prepared by a person who knows far more about this subject than I do. They are as follows:—

Occupational and Professional Registrations.

Objects:

(1) To inform the public of those who are qualified to follow certain essential callings.

(2) To lay down requisite standards of such qualifications.

(3) Therefore to protect the public from unscrupulous exploitation by those not so qualified.

(4) To register and discipline conduct of registered persons.

Considerations of conditions to achieve these objects:

(1) The calling should require special training and experience before qualification is obtained.

(2) This can be done only at special teaching institutions which are duly accredited by impartial observers who are competent to exercise judgment.

(3) Such institutions should be open and available to free and open inspection by the authority granting registration.

(4) Registration implies ethical standards of professional conduct and excludes advertising.

Obviously, therefore, care should be taken in assessing the claims of certain persons for registration to ensure that:

(1) Their claims concerning themselves should not be accepted without verification.

(2) Uncritical and perhaps uninformed claims made by others in their support should not be accepted without evidence that they are correct.

These conditions are observed in this State with reference to the callings of medicine, dentistry, physiotherapy, law, engineering, architecture, teaching, etc.

The claim of chiropractors for statutory registration should be approached with the following considerations in mind:

(1) No institution for the training of chiropractors exists in this country. Therefore, it would be impracticable for a registering body to inspect and assess such institutions in other countries.

(2) Those few chiropractors in this State possessing some qualifications obtained in a foreign country ally themselves in their claim for registration with other persons who possess no academic training of any kind whatever. Registration granted now would completely exclude any of the latter from registration in the future. These latter have recently had the advantages of unlimited, free and quite uncritical press publicity and advertising, which circumstance has undoubtedly precipitated the present pressure. The trained chiropractors are cashing in on these facts.

(3) The granting of registration now would result in the creation of a small closed ring which would effectively exclude future intrusion of the unqualified, despite the fact that the recent publicity concerning the latter has initiated the present move.

(4) Any form of treatment of human ailments or illness necessitates a thorough training in, and understanding of, the normal function of the body and the causes of departure from the normal determined under verifiable and controlled conditions, and open to impartial and disinterested inspections.

(5) Modern methods of treatment have evolved away from the practice of the "cult" and the hypothesis of the "belief" in the existence of an abnormal condition which is not demonstrable. Chiropractic is based on the existence of such a "cult."

(6) Manipulative surgery is a recognised branch of orthopaedic surgery and is practised by medical men who have graduated through the normal medical training and then undertaken special postgraduate training in this specialty. But they have an adequate medical background of knowledge of bodily function and disease.

(7) Before any method of treatment is accepted as producing results claimed for it, it should conform to the following conditions:—

(a) a sufficiently large number of patients with an abnormal condition, the presence of which has been proven to be present by verifiable methods by independent observers, is divided into two or more groups;

(b) a certain line of treament is given to one group;

(c) different treatment is given to another group;

(d) no treatment at all is given to another—the "control group;"

(e) preferably, the patients of groups (b) and (c) are unaware of the particular nature of their treatment, or how it varies from that given in other groups. This is to avoid any "subjective" element in the patients themselves;

(f) the results of the different methods of treatment are assessed by independent observers and then compared with the control group.

These methods are followed today in modern medicine and surgery and this accounts for their outstanding successes and also for the abandonment of ineffective methods of treatment. It also accounts for the modesty and humility of the practitioners of really modern scientific medicine. They will be followed in the training now being commenced by the Faculty of Medicine in the University of Western Australia.

Within the past few years the public has been inundated with Press publicity concerning "magic" cures achieved by untrained and unqualified persons. No mention is made of their failures (as for example in the case of the League footballers Ron Tucker and John Todd).

The trained chiropractor (of whom there are three in this State) is free at present to practise his cult. The Medical Board only interferes with the untrained person or the unregistered practitioner if there is evidence of fraud or exploitation of the public, or if harm is done. Its attitude is one of vigilant toleration. The honest practitioner of these methods and cults is thus not impeded in his activities.

Western Australians have, as a community, just taken the bold and courageous step of establishing a medical school in their own university. It

would be most unfortunate and ill-advised for us to express publicly, for the whole world to see, our lack of faith in our own institution.

A Royal Commission would have before it the task of investigating the claims of these unqualified persons, and for its findings to have any value at all, this investigation would have to be carried out on the lines described. This would be impracticable and would occupy a considerable period of time even if attempted.

It is recommended that the present state of affairs be left undisturbed.

I do not quite agree with leaving it undisturbed; but I think a select committee would be able to give the matter reasonable consideration, and would be able to ascertain what these chiropractors and osteopaths have done. I know of cases in which they have done very good work. But it has to be remembered that as far as the papers are concerned, we have learned only of those who have been successful in their practice; we have not heard of the failures. If we were to compare the failures with the successes, I do not know how it would work out. I realise, of course, that no matter what profession a man may follow, he makes mistakes and has failures.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Hear, hear!

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: There is no question of that. Even my learned friend, who is a legal practitioner—

Hon. A. F. Watts: Was.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: —I suggest he would agree that he would not have done much if he had not made a lot of mistakes. That applies to everybody. If a person tells me he has never made a mistake, I conclude that he has not done much at all. I would like to submit to the House definitions of "chiropractic" and "osteopathy."

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Are you adamant about the appointment of a select committee in preference to a Royal Commission?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Yes. I think we should have a select committee to investigate the position. We are at present short of judges, and those we have find it difficult to carry out the work in hand. I believe that a select committee could really do a better job than a Royal Commission, generally speaking, from a humane point of view and a general understanding so far as the public are concerned. The definitions to which I referred are as follows:—

The science of chiropractic is based upon the premise that abnormal function is caused by interference with the normal nerve transmission, and expression, due primarily to pressure, strain, irritation or tension of the spinal nerves as they emit from the spinal column, as a result of bony segments, especially of the spine, deviating from their normal position.

The practice of chiropractic consists of the analysis of any interference with normal nerve transmission and expression and the correction thereof by specific adjustments with the hands, of the abnormal deviations of the bony articulations, especially of the spine, for the removal of the cause of abnormal function.

The science of osteopathy is based upon the belief that there is a close association between the structure and functions of the body; therefore abnormal states are corrected by manipulation of bony structures, ligaments, and muscles.

The practice of osteopathy is a method of correcting body conditions, either structural or functional, by means of scientific manual manipulations aimed at bringing about skeletal adjustment, free circulation of blood and co-ordination of nerve force.

The term analysis is construed to include the taking and use of x-rays for the purpose of producting shadow photographs for diagnostic purposes only, and shall not include x-ray therapy.

I think that is as far as I need go with regard to the definitions.

Mr. I. W. Manning: Whose definitions are they?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They are the definitions of the chiropractic people themselves. I feel that an investigation would do some good, but that it would be better to have a select committee which would go into the matter not from the professional point of view but just in order to find out exactly what these people have done in the past. There is no question that they have on occasion done very good work. Such a select committee could report to the House as to the advisability of registering chiropractors and osteopaths.

But I want to emphasise that we need to be careful. We do not want to take initiative from them. I think there is too much stress laid on qualifications today, although I believe in education. I think, too, that at times there is a certain amount of jealousy between the various universities, and there is too much theory and not enough done on the practical side.

I would like to see a select committee appointed consisting of practical persons. In this House we have all had wide experience, and we recognise what the

chiropractors and osteopaths have done. I think that a select committee would give us something to work on; and if it were necessary for us to go into the matter more thoroughly, consideration could be given at a later date to an investigation by a Royal Commission.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: Can you tell me whether there are any reputable schools in Australia where students could be qualified?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: So far as I know, there are no reputable schools for chiropractic in Australia. I believe these people have been registered—though I do not know—in one or two of the Eastern States. Now that we have a medical school in Western Australia, there is no reason why there should not be a division there whereby these people could become qualified.

But once that is done, these people are more or less brought into the medical profession; and those like Mr. Martinovich and others are prevented from exercising their innate instinct and ability to do things that will help people. Mr. Martinovich is a very good example of what I am trying to convey. He could not cope with the number of patients who went to him in Kalgoorlie. But I think that was due more to the advertisements than to his practical experience.

If prospective candidates for Parliament had to have qualifications, I do not know what our legislation would be like. It might be of a very high standard. On the other hand, men who have started from scratch, like the late Phil Collier, have done very good work. He told me that he had only reached the fourth class when he left school. Nevertheless, anybody who had sat in this House with him could not fail to admit that he was one of the best men we have had. He began with no qualifications, but he had initiative. If he had been required to reach some educational standard, he might never have got here; and there are many others in the same position.

I would like to provide some method of testing these people to ascertain whether they are of good character, and to ensure that what they do, is done with the sincere desire to help humanity. But I also feel that if we go too far in our demands upon them and upon others in similar walks of life, we will have nobody left, with the exception of members of Parliament, who will be able to use any initiative.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move an amendment—

> That after the word "that" in line 1, the words "in the opinion of this House, a Royal Commission should" be struck out and the words "a select committee" inserted in lieu.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling—on amendment) [7.34]: It falls to my lot to endeavour to represent the views of the mover of this motion because, unfortunately, engagements in his electorate prevent him from being present this evening and he was aware of the Minister's intentions in this regard. He has explained his views on the subject to me and I will endeavour to convey them to the House, with perhaps some of my own added.

The House, I hope, will not agree to the deletion of these words because I do not think that a select committee is, in all the circumstances of this particular matter, a desirable medium for an inquiry such as is contemplated by the motion. To a large extent this is a highly technical or professional matter and I should say that it would be very difficult for members of this House to handle it successfully. In fact, I think the information given us by the Minister just prior to the tea suspension, and in particular that which he read from the papers he had with him, indicated how easy it would be to make it extremely difficult for members of Parliament to handle a problem such as this because, to put it bluntly, I think we would be just about blinded with science as we were by even that which the Minister read from the papers which he had in his hands.

I listened attentively to him and I felt that that was the situation so far as I was concerned and I was satisfied in my own mind that a large number of members in the House would be in much the same position if they were members of a select committee inquiring into this subject. On the other hand, it would be in the hands of the Government to find the right sort of person to undertake the inquiry as a royal commissioner. The choice would be entirely that of the Government. There is no hurry to make the appointment; but it would be possible for the Government to look around and find a suitable person, one who would be likely not only to appreciate the scientific data that would be placed before him but also to assess the weight of evidence.

For my part, I have no doubt that there would be some considerable conflict in this matter—whether the inquiry be by way of a select committee or a Royal Commission—between those who were actually members of the medical profession and medical practitioners registered under the Medical Act, and those persons who were engaged in one branch or another of the two subjects mentioned in this motion. I think also there would be considerable resistance by one section or the other to proposals on the one hand to register persons who were not fully qualified and, on the other, not to register them. I suggest that the problem is not one which can reasonably be dealt with by

a select committee of the Legislature, involved as most members are in many other matters, especially in the course of a busy session such as this. So I suggest to the House that the matter be left on the basis of a Royal Commission and that the Government takes its own time and in its own way appoints a desirable person to undertake the inquiry.

I must confess that I was a little impressed by some of the other observations made by the Minister; and as they will have some bearing on this question of whether or not one sort of inquiry or the other should be held, I wish to make some passing reference to them. He dealt with the circumstances of a person such as Mr. Martinovich. As I said by interjection, it would be quite wrong, in my view, not to provide in any legislation which might ensue as a result of an inquiry for the registration of that gentleman on the basis that he has been legitimately in practice and at least carrying on a practice for a number of years in Western Australia. I think he has made a considerable contribution to the welfare of a number of people, but I believe that, as he has no professional standing, he has not been able to make any fixed charge for his services. That is something which I think ought to be removed by his registration under a suitable statute.

The Minister for Health: Then that would debar any further Martinovichs.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: They would then have to obtain qualifications. But great care needs to be exercised to determine what those qualifications shall be. In that regard there will be some conflict between the various sections concerned, because, on the one hand, they will want to make it unduly restrictive and, on the other, they will want to make it unduly liberal. It seems to me, therefore, that we want a very skilled and knowledgeable person who is capable of assessing these problems, with plenty of time to do it and plenty of opportunity to study all the circumstances elsewhere. I do not doubt that there are springing up in odd places persons who are offering their services to the public, in the same way as Mr. Martinovich has done; but I doubt very much if any one of those persons would have the same capacity for rendering a service as that gentleman has. If we carry out the Minister's point to its final conclusion, it actually means that anyone who sets himself up as a chiropractor, whether he can give good service or not, is entitled to registration. I draw the line there.

The Minister for Health: I did not say that.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I think we must be satisfied that the person has been in practice; that he has rendered good service, such as the case of the gentleman I mentioned—and maybe that goes for one or two others as well—or, alternatively, that he has made some study of the subject and has acquired some qualifications. But again I repeat, we do not want the qualifications to be too severe in a matter of this kind, as the Minister himself observed, and on that point I entirely agree.

So I think that this is not the sort of inquiry that should be made by a select committee; and I hope that the Minister will not press his amendment. I want members to allow the Government to appoint a royal commissioner in due course, because all that the mover of the motion desires, and all that I desire, is to place this occupation or profession on a firm basis in this State.

That being so, I shall conclude by saying that I subscribe to the view, not only from what I have heard elsewhere but also from what has happened very close to home so far as I am concerned, that these persons engaged in the practice of chiropractic and osteopathy have done, and can do, valuable service to members of the community in a way which perhaps medical practitioners cannot do. I have known of more than one case where medical practitioners have recommended their patients, in certain circumstances, to go to one or other of these gentlemen whom they considered satisfactory for the purpose. In every case—and I know half a dozen of them—there have been beneficial results.

MR. ROSS HUTCHINSON (*Cottesloe*—on amendment) [7.45]: My views run to a great extent parallel to those of the Leader of the Country Party and, indeed, they do not run contrariwise to the views expressed by the Minister, except in so far as the type of inquiry to be carried out is concerned. I thought the Minister made a very good utterance—a most sympathetic utterance—on the problems that surround the registration of chiropractors and osteopaths, and the desirability for legislation in that regard.

The only portion of his speech with which I disagree is the vital one concerning the method of the inquiry, and that, of course, has just been outlined by the Leader of the Country Party. Surely, the Minister will agree that this particular subject is one that should be inquired into preferably by a person with some scientific knowledge, one who is competent in this sphere and able to enter into any discussions arising out of the desirability for legislation in this field! If a select committee were appointed to inquire into the desirability of the registration of these people, I feel that that committee would very soon be groping in the dark. The members of it could well be blinded by science, and could quite easily make recommendations that did not fit the situation to the extent that was warranted.

I am not trying to cast any reflection on any work that might be done in the future by the select committee, but I only

make the point that because of the very nature of the inquiry, the members might not be able to come to a proper decision. If one accepts that fact, and accepts also the fact that some inquiry is warranted, then surely it would be better to have that inquiry conducted by a really competent man! I cannot think of one at the moment, but perhaps a man like Dr. Davidson, from our own State, might fill the bill. He would be a man competent in the medical field, and one who has knowledge of Government activities, with a wide experience of the world outside the medical field; he would probably be a most desirable commissioner.

It is possible that the departmental officers would be able to select a man from outside the State; one who has practical experience in this field from the Eastern States, or even from overseas. To deny an inquiry along really competent lines is, I feel, rather begging the subject, and as the Minister treated this matter in a sympathetic manner, I hope he will go the whole way along the lines suggested by the member for Moore. I know that the member for Moore expressed to me the feeling that he did not consider himself very competent to conduct an inquiry along the lines he suggested, even though he feels very strongly about the situation. Most of us in this Chamber appreciate that there is a place in our community for chiropractors and osteopaths, and at the same time we feel there is much commonsense in the B.M.A.'s attitude respecting the need for this field to be staffed by competent men.

As a community, we do not like quacks in any field and I think the desire of the B.M.A. is, as far as possible, to try to avoid the public being put in any danger as the result of work of quacks in a medical or semi-medical field. Chiropractors or osteopaths, working in conjunction with the Medical Department, could do a great deal of good for the community. There are those whom the Minister mentioned as having some innate quality and ability in this field and who are able to do really good work for the community, but who because of their schooling may not be able to pass qualifying examinations of an academic character. It would be a pity for us to have to forgo the advantages that these unqualified men could give.

This, of course, is something which has had to be faced on previous occasions over the last 50 years, particularly when the profession of dentistry first became a registered profession. In more recent years we had the case of chiropodists being given standing in the qualified professions; physiotherapists are yet another group of people whom we have made a registered profession. There have been a number of occasions in recent years when Bills have been brought before the House to register and to give proper qualifications to these people who deal in public health.

Accordingly, I would hope that the Minister will come around to thinking that this is a subject that might well merit investigation by a Royal Commission rather than by a select committee. For those reasons, I oppose the amendment and hope the Minister will even withdraw it.

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

As to Select Committee.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: I move—

> That the following members be appointed to serve on the select committee:—Mr. Ackland, Mr. Crommelin, Mr. Jamieson, Mr. Marshall, and—

Hon. A. F. Watts: The mover.

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: Not necessarily the mover. The fifth member I suggest is Mr. Norton.

Hon. D. Brand: Who is going to be chairman?

The MINISTER FOR HEALTH: They can select their own chairman.

Point of Order.

Hon. A. F. Watts: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I would like your guidance. I have not had time to look into the matter but I have always thought that the mover of the motion becomes a member of the select committee ex officio. I would like your ruling on that point.

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: He will make an excellent chairman too.

The Speaker: Standing Order 337 at page 93 says—

> Members to serve on a select committee shall be nominated by the mover;

That is the general practice but I am advised that there has been an occasion when the Minister, as in this instance, moved for a select committee but was not actually a member of that select committee. As the Standing Order does not specifically state that the mover must be a member of the select committee, I rule that the Minister is in order. When the select committee meets it has the right under the Standing Orders to select its own chairman. Even if the mover were a member of the select committee, he need not necessarily be the chairman.

Hon. D. Brand: Whilst not moving to disagree with your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I want to make it quite clear that the member from our party will reserve the right to withdraw if he is to be chairman. This motion was amended by the Minister by virtue of the numbers on the Government side, and whilst we favour an investigation

by a Royal Commission, the Minister has successfully moved for the appointment of a select committee. I feel the Government should accept its responsibility in this regard. As far as I am concerned, the member from our party will not accept any further responsibility.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I would like you, Sir, to give us your ruling on Standing Order No. 334, which says—

> All select committees shall, unless the House shall otherwise direct, consist of five members, whereof one shall be the mover.

It has been the universal practice under that order for the mover to be a member of the select committee.

Mr. Speaker: My attention has been drawn to Standing Order No. 334 and it has been the practice, I know, whilst I have been here, for the mover of a motion for a select committee almost invariably to be a member of it. Standing Order No. 334 is much more specific, and it appears that in those circumstances, the mover must be included among the members of the committee. I rule accordingly.

Mr. Johnson: It appears to me that the mover is nominated in the original motion, which stands in the name of the member for Moore.

Hon. D. Brand: He did not move anything of the sort.

Mr. Johnson: The motion before the House is to amend the motion moved by the member for Moore and the amendment moved by somebody else does not make him the mover for a select committee. He has amended the motion and I think Standing Order No. 334 has been complied with.

The Minister for Native Welfare: I would like to move to test the feeling of the House. If the House accepts it as amended, that would put it in order because, if the House accepts it, it is in order.

The Speaker: The motion before the Chair is that the committee should consist of five members nominated by the Minister. The question raised by the Leader of the Country Party is that the mover should be one of them. Standing Order No. 334 is quite clear. I have been advised by the Clerk of the Assembly that on one occasion—I think it was in 1946—a case arose where the Minister who moved for the appointment of a select committee was not actually a member of the panel of the select committee. However, I do not see how we can get around Standing Order No. 334. It sets out clearly, that of the five members to constitute a select committee, "one shall be the mover." That is the position under the Standing Order, unless the House otherwise directs.

The Minister for Native Welfare: That is why I moved the motion.

The Speaker: In the original proposition, the Minister moved five names, but did not include his own. Then the Leader of the Country Party raised the point of order, and I have to rule accordingly. If the House desires to decide otherwise, it is within its province.

The Minister for Transport: What is your ruling?

The Speaker: The Minister, as mover of the select committee, is one of the five. We take the number of five as that is usual and the mover of the motion would be one, no matter how many were on the select committee; that is a matter within the competence of the House to determine.

The Minister for Transport: Would this resolve the position? If the Minister for Health sought to obtain leave to withdraw his motion for the appointment of certain members to the select committee, that would give us an opportunity of passing a resolution that the Minister, as mover, be excluded and, if and when that was agreed to, the Minister for Health could then proceed to nominate five persons. Would that course meet the position?

The Speaker: No. I think the words "unless the House shall otherwise direct" refer to the numbers, which are within the competence of the House to deal with. There could be six. It can be amended in that direction but, according to the Standing Order, the mover for the select committee shall be one of them.

Hon. D. Brand: In supporting your ruling, Mr. Speaker, I should imagine the House—

The Speaker: It has not been disagreed with.

Hon. D. Brand: Unless the mover of the motion is included on the committee, such a procedure could get out of hand. There could be an irresponsible motion in this House and, by including the mover in the committee, it casts upon him a certain responsibility. Therefore, as the Minister has moved for a select committee, he should be one of its members.

The Minister for Health: Would it be competent for me to now withdraw my motion in regard to the selection of the five members I have already named for the purpose of proceeding otherwise?

Mr. Ross Hutchinson: For a Royal Commission?

The Minister for Health: No, we could wipe it out altogether.

Debate Resumed.

Mr. JOHNSON: If I could make a suggestion, I would refer to Standing Order No. 337 which states that members to serve on a select committee shall be nominated by the mover; but if any member of the House so demands, they shall be selected by ballot. If the Minister were to demand a ballot, it is not impossible that the ballot

would decide that the Minister be not a member of the select committee and we would abide by Standing Orders.

The SPEAKER: The Minister has not demanded a ballot up to date. In my opinion, the Standing Order is specific that the mover of the motion of the select committee must be one of its members.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am seeking guidance in respect of this matter. It appears that quite unwittingly the Minister has placed himself in a position that neither he nor anybody else thought he would be placed in.

Mr. Crommelin: Perhaps Martinovich can get us out of it.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Would it be possible to postpone any further action in connection with this matter to a later sitting of the House?

The SPEAKER: That is possible.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: May I move that it be adjourned?

The SPEAKER: Yes.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Then I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and passed.

BILL—COAL MINERS' WELFARE ACT AMENDMENT.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

BILL—BETTING CONTROL ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

MR. NORTON (Gascoyne) [8.8] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is designed to amend Section 11 of the Betting Control Act. Section 11 gives power to the board to issue licences to bookmakers on-course and off-course. When the Act was passed, I do not think that the full intention of Subsection (5), particularly paragraph (a), was meant in its entirety. Subsection (5) deals with those persons whom the board may allow to hold a bookmaker's licence, and paragraph (a) states—

> to a person who holds, or to a person who is employed in any capacity by one who holds a licence for the sale of liquor under the Licensing Act, 1911.

This Bill intends to alter that slightly.

Hon. D. Brand: Slightly?

Mr. NORTON: It is to give the right to a person in the country who is a holder of a gallon licence to get a bookmaker's licence for a country meeting so that he can field in those areas where he holds his licence or in the district around it.

Mr. Bovell: Would a gallon licensee be privileged, if it is a privilege?

Mr. NORTON: I will explain that as I go along. The gallon licensee is a person in the country who is usually the country storekeeper. Prior to the coming into operation of the Betting Control Act, he held a licence periodically for country race meetings and immediately this Act came into force, it prohibited him from continuing the practice.

Mr. Bovell: I have never heard of one instance.

Mr. NORTON: I have heard of at least one.

The SPEAKER: Order! Allow the hon. member to make his own speech. I cannot hear when members keep interjecting.

Mr. NORTON: This Bill will not allow a holder of a gallon licence to make a business of betting as it is strictly confined to 14 days in any one year. That is to say, a special licence has to be issued for each occasion on which he wishes to field. At country race meetings the local bookmakers come from business people and those interested around the towns and, in several cases, it has been the holder of a gallon licence who has been one of those to field at the local race meeting. The idea of the Bill is to give him the right to field at such meetings and perhaps meetings adjacent to the town in which he lives.

Hon. D. Brand: Doesn't this involve a gallon licensee or hotel licensee getting a licence? It is the thin edge of the wedge I would think.

Mr. NORTON: No, it is not the thin edge of the wedge. It is simply to allow a restricted issue of a licence not to a person who is selling liquor for consumption on his premises. A gallon licence does not allow for consumption of liquor on premises; it can only be sold in bottles to the total of one gallon.

Mr. Bovell: I know about gallon licences in the country. It makes no difference.

Mr. NORTON: There is no liquor sold other than under a gallon licence in many towns which I have been in. Should a licence be issued, as suggested in this Bill, it will allow such a man to operate and help to keep more money in the town than at present. In many instances money is going out to bookmakers who come in from distant parts. I earnestly submit this proposal for the consideration of members. I can assure the House that it is in no way the thin edge of the wedge so that the hotel licensee, or any such person, may get a licence. This is simply to allow the person who has operated in the past as a bookmaker to so operate for a specific period of not more than 14 days in any one year. He could not make a living out of bookmaking but could only obtain a casual licence for a particular time. The measure does not even say that he should get a licence for 14 days in any one year but that the board may issue one at its

discretion. It does not say that it shall issue a licence. I commend the amendment and move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

Hon. D. Brand: A most undesirable measure.

THE MINISTER FOR POLICE (Hon. J. J. Brady—Guildford-Midland) [8.16]: I think members would do no harm if they accepted the amendment. I shall proceed to relate where these temporary licences are necessary. Under the Licensing Act it is usual today, if a body wants to run a bar and sell liquor for one day at a sports meeting or a race meeting, for that body to be issued with a temporary or special licence. As a matter of fact, I am a teetotaller but I have had special and temporary licences to sell liquor on sports days on several occasions. In the ordinary course of events, I have no desire to hold a publican's licence to sell beer. But I have held a licence to sell liquor for the benefit of the Labour Day sports meeting or the R.S.L. sports meeting or other committees for which I was running sports days.

It is well known that in the North-West the race day is one of the leading sports or recreation days of the year. I was at Derby last year when the Derby Cup was run, and only two bookmakers operated on the course—a local storekeeper from about 50 miles out and a bookmaker from Geraldton. If the local storekeeper had not been able to bet on that day, there would have been only one bookmaker on the course, and the meeting would have been a farce. The same thing applies at Carnarvon, and one can visualise it applying at Onslow, Derby or Port Hedland. Unless the local storekeeper, who is invariably a gallon licence holder, is granted a temporary licence for the day and acts as a bookmaker, the sport loses its entertainment. A man might not even want to be a bookmaker.

Hon. D. Brand: Does it apply only to the North-West?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: At the moment, this is to apply to racecourses 30 miles outside of the metropolitan area. It could apply to Mullewa. If, the people there wanted to hold a race meeting next week, because there is only one bookmaker at Mullewa if no one comes from Geraldton, the chances are that only one bookmaker will field.

Mr. Roberts: How would it affect the Kalgoorlie round?

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: It would only affect the position there if a man who holds a gallon licence at Kalgoorlie wanted to get a special licence for the day. But in view of the fact that there would be half a dozen s.p. men operating in Kalgoorlie, they would not worry about it. From what the member for Gascoyne has said, I assume that the amendment is designed only to create and retain interest in racing in the North-West and other places outside the metropolitan area. Under the Licensing Act, special and temporary licences are granted from time to time, and it appears that no harm will be done if the House accepts the amendment. As Minister for Police I am prepared to accept it.

On motion by Mr. Wild, debate adjourned.

BILL—HIRE-PURCHASE AGREEMENTS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st August.

MR. CROMMELIN (Claremont) [8.20]: I draw attention to the fact that when we were debating a similar measure last year, some of the trading banks and hire-purchase companies came under severe criticism. Although there is no suggestion of that description at present, it might not hurt to read a small extract dealing with the lending powers of the private trading banks so far as agricultural industries are concerned, and in regard to their investments in hire-purchase companies.

With respect to the general overall lending position of the trading banks in Australia, we find that the banks do an even better job in this State than they do in Australia generally. The figures I have, relating to lending by banks on overdraft, are, of course, taken from the Commonwealth Statistician under Section 43 of the Banking Act, 1945-53 (Commonwealth legislation) and published in the Commonwealth of Australia Gazette No. 23, dated the 24th April, 1957. This shows that the seven major private trading banks held average total deposits from customers in Australia in the four weeks of March, 1957, amounting to £1,416,339,000. Mr. Speaker, I cannot retain my thoughts with the noise that is going on in the front bench.

The SPEAKER: Order! It is distracting to speakers when there is such a noise. I appreciate the point. I ask members to key their voices very low.

Mr. CROMMELIN: Average loans, advances and bills discounted made by the same banks in the same period throughout Australia were £725,480,000. This represents a percentage of advances to deposits of 51.6.

Members will appreciate that there is a limit to the volume which the banks may lend, administered as a matter of national monetary policy through the central bank. A proportion of the bank's deposits is

frozen with the central bank and for the banks I have mentioned, in the period referred to, these "special accounts" totalled £282,678,000. It is, of course, necessary for the banks to maintain substantial holdings of cash and readily convertible securities to meet the day-to-day needs of their business. It may be safely said that the Australian banks have fully lent to the volume that they are permitted by the central bank and also to the extent to which, as prudent bankers, they care to commit themselves.

Nevertheless it is interesting to turn to the figures for these same banks in relation to their Western Australian business. During March, 1957—and here again I quote the figures from the Commonwealth "Government Gazette"—these banks held deposits totalling £79,344,000. In the same period their loans, advances and bills discounted averaged £47,785,000—this latter figure is a percentage to total deposits of 60 per cent. This means that in Western Australia the position is 9 per cent. better than it is for the whole of Australia. From this it is clear that Western Australian borrowers are favourably treated in the volume of their borrowings against deposits attracted in their State, when compared to the overall Australian average that the banks have achieved. On this basis, I submit that there has been no hindering of the volume of overdraft borrowing by Western Australian bank customers.

Turning to the question of investments by banks in hire-purchase companies, I point out that a good deal has been said of the interest of banks in hire-purchase activities and reference has been made to the effect their investments in hire-purchase companies have had upon the capacity and willingness of the banks concerned to lend on ordinary overdraft terms. Of the major trading banks in Australia, five have interests as shareholders in hire-purchase finance companies, and these investments involve a total amount of £7,839,000. The outlay involved has been provided from the capital resources of these banks and follows a pattern that has long been evident overseas. The amount of £7,839,000 is relatively small in relation to the deposits held by these banks and such deposits are, of course, the base for bank lending.

The weekly average deposit figures for the month of June, 1957, of the five major trading banks, which are hire-purchase company shareholders, total £958,612,000. The total average advances of these five banks for the same period were £534,479,000, or 55.75 per cent. of their deposits. If the banks' investments in hire-purchase companies are added to their advances, the total so obtained represents 56.57 per cent. of deposits—an increase of 82 of 1 per cent. only. Thus it will be seen that the entry of the banks as shareholders into the hire-purchase field has a very minor effect on their capacity overall to lend, even if it were put forward that the capital funds they have invested were, in fact, available to overdraft borrowers.

In other words, a short summary of that is that if the banks had taken no interest in hire-purchase companies, they would today be able to make advances of only £99,000,000 whereas prior to investing in the hire-purchase companies they could have advanced £100,000,000. It amounts to a 1 per cent. reduction in the capacity to lend, which has a very small overall effect. One of the leading hire-purchase companies here—Custom Credit Corporation—has, as one of its shareholders, the National Bank. This bank invested £1,200,000 in the company—40 per cent. of the credit company's capital.

To offset that, the Custom Credit Corporation has always had a cash balance with the National Bank of an amount greater than £1,200,000. In other words, although the bank has advanced this sum it holds to the credit of the finance company a greater amount. At the end of June, 1956, the credit balance of the company with the bank was £2,837,000 and at the end of June, 1957, its credit was £2,252,000. From these figures members can realise that although the bank has a big investment in the hire-purchase company, it is certainly receiving an even greater amount from that company to lend itself.

To make their assets even more solid the policy of the hire-purchase companies has always been to have a credit balance of £2,000,000 to back up their debentures. As members will realise, hire-purchase companies do not handle any business normally handled by banks. We read a lot in the Press about the large number of debentures issued year after year by some of these companies, but many of them are issued only for a period of one year, and the following year when they call for more money on debenture, it is usually only a repayment from the previous year.

It is reasonable to assume that in these days when there is such a small rate of interest on fixed deposits, many people are anxious to lend what money they have available to reputable companies and thus earn a little more than savings bank interest. I think most people will agree that the business of hire-purchase has been, and will continue to be, the main outlet for bulk production from factories and that if it were not available, many people would not be able to obtain the common necessities of life.

I think the Bill is complicated and requires an immense amount of study. I believe the member for Leederville might have achieved his object by endeavouring

to amend the present Hire-Purchase Act, which appears to be working reasonably well. Had he done that, it would have saved him a great deal of work and thought and would possibly have achieved the same result. The Bill is modelled on the New South Wales legislation but as it has not been enforced yet, we will have to wait a considerable time to learn its effect on the community as a whole.

Some of the clauses to which I take exception deal with repossession and one that I have in mind relates to a purchaser who defaults to a certain extent and then desires to get his goods back. Provided he makes the necessary payments and tenders to the owner of the goods the sum of £10, the clause would entitle him to get his goods back. I would suggest that if £200 worth of furniture had been repossessed from Kalgoorlie, it would not be fair to expect the owner of the goods to send them back to Kalgoorlie on receipt of a maximum payment of £10, and I think the member for Leederville will agree that in such circumstances there should be some adjustment.

There is also provision that where a purchaser has bought a number of articles, he shall have the right to repay either one, two or three of his hire-purchases as it suits him. He could therefore pay off two and allow the other to remain unpaid. Another clause provides that the purchaser of goods living at a certain address and desiring to move can apply to the court nearest him for the right to remove the goods and with the approval of the court he can move them to the new address, but there is no provision that he must notify the owner of the goods, who might easily not know where they had gone to. That would be most unfair.

There is also provision, regarding repossession, that no owner can enter into premises to repossess his goods and, therefore, I do not know how he is to repossess them. A further provision deals with the right of a purchaser of goods to complete his contract. He might have signed an agreement to pay over a period of 18 months but if he pays the goods off in, say, 16 months or 17 months, he is entitled to a refund, but unfortunately the Bill does not provide that if he takes longer than the 18 months and does not pay for the goods until a period of perhaps 19 or 20 months has expired, he shall have to pay the owner something extra accordingly. I think an amendment is necessary there.

Another clause would make it compulsory for a spouse to sponsor the purchase of goods. From inquiries I have made, I believe that in not one in 100 cases is there any complaint from the spouse regarding the purchase of goods. I am informed that the average man dashes into the establishment, perhaps on a Saturday morning, looks at the goods and says to his wife, "You fix it up," and away he goes. If he has to sign and agree to every purchase, I think that will restrict the sale of goods to a certain extent. Surely he must accept responsibility for his wife who may purchase by credit! If he cannot keep her within the bounds of his purse, I think it is his own fault.

Next I come to the insuring of goods and the scale on which it is to be done. I am not capable of working out how they are to arrive at those rates, but we all know that there are the standard rates of a group of companies as well as the non-tariff companies and the State Government Insurance Office. I will be interested to learn who is to fix the rates and what is to be the method used. The rates of interest provided for in the Bill appear to be fair, in view of the cost of obtaining money today and I have no quarrel with the measure in that regard.

But a different position arises in regard to deposits. We know that the furniture trade does a tremendous amount of business and that for years many manufacturers have sold furniture on no deposit at all. It is reasonable to assume that when they do that, they go carefully into the question of to whom it is sold and if they get a customer who will maintain his payments they have no trouble with him.

When such a customer has paid for one suite of furniture, he may continue to deal with that manufacturer and gradually add to his possessions until his home is fully furnished. Today many young people on being married have not enough money to pay a 10 per cent. deposit on all the furniture they require and although I feel that everyone should have a reasonable equity in goods he proposes to purchases, I believe there should be some reservation in regard to furniture.

Mr. Lawrence: What do you mean by, "a reasonable equity"?

Mr. CROMMELIN: On that question the hon. member and I may differ but I think 5 per cent. would be a reasonable deposit on furniture and that 10 per cent. would be excessive. Extraordinary things can happen in regard to deposits and according to the Bill deposits will be fixed by regulation. A minimum deposit of 10 per cent. will be statutory, but all other deposits will be fixed by regulation. I believe that the general practice today among the bigger hire-purchase companies in the city is to ask for 25 per cent. deposit on a motorcar if the purchaser wants three years in which to pay for it.

The New South Wales Act provides that if a person who is desirous of buying a motorcar wishes the payments to be spread over a period of three years a deposit of 20 per cent. must be paid. If the period over which the payments are to be spread is from three to four years, the deposit must be 40 per cent., and if the payments are

spread over a period of over four years the purchaser must pay a 50 per cent. deposit.

However, if one wishes to buy a second-hand car, the situation is entirely different. If a man wishes to buy a second-hand car over a period of three years he has to pay a deposit of 33⅓ per cent. as against 20 per cent. on the purchase of a new motor car, and if he wishes the payments to be spread over a period of over three years he has to pay a deposit of 50 per cent. as against a deposit of 40 per cent. on a new car. In other words, one has to pay only 20 per cent. deposit on the purchase of a new Holden as against the deposit of 33⅓ per cent. on a second-hand one.

To me, that appears to be ridiculous, because, as everyone knows, one can see advertised in the Press daily the sale of what is known as demonstration cars. These cars may have travelled only 500, 1,000, or perhaps 10,000 miles. The point is that no matter how far the car has travelled, the moment it leaves the showrooms it becomes second-hand and because it is second-hand, a purchaser has to pay an extra £13 10s. in every £100 on a car valued at say £1,000 and that represents the best part of £100 extra he has to pay.

If it is required to have regulations to fix deposits on hire-purchase, I hope that that aspect will be considered because it is entirely unreasonable for a man who is buying a second-hand car to have to pay an extra £100 compared to the man who buys a brand new car, when there is practically no difference between the two vehicles. There is another clause in the Bill to which I take strong exception, although I admit that it is extremely difficult to interpret it clearly. I refer to the clause which provides that a person cannot borrow money to effect a hire-purchase.

Under the law as it exists in New South Wales at present a person who wishes to buy an article valued at £12 and who has only £2 in his possession, can enter a store and borrow £10 from a department to add to the £2 he already has, in order that he may effect his purchase. I do not believe in that practice. However, under this clause, if I have a son who has been married for two years and he says to me, "I want to borrow £10 from you. I have £10 and if I can get another £10 I will have £20 to pay as a deposit on a refrigerator." I would be liable if I lent my own son £10 to be used as a deposit on an article bought on hire-purchase.

Mr. Lawrence: You would not put that in the agreement.

Mr. CROMMELIN: One does not have to put it in an agreement. The Act says that no one can lend money which is to be used as a deposit to obtain goods on hire-purchase.

I know that the system of lending money is badly used in Sydney. This practice is followed merely to make a sale. However, when considering this legislation we should look at all aspects of it. In that respect I take strong exception to a position that might be created whereby a parent could not lend his own son money with which he could buy some household article he is anxious to purchase.

Mr. Lawrence: The parent could give the money to the child.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I am not denying that. I said he could not lend it to a child.

Mr. Oldfield: Are you referring to Clause 42?

Mr. CROMMELIN: No, I am referring to Clause 43. It is very clear. I will read it because perhaps the hon. member cannot read very well. It is as follows:—

> Any person who accepts as a deposit upon the purchase of goods under a hire-purchase agreement any money or other consideration that he has reasonable cause to believe or suspect was lent to the purchaser by any person other than a banker shall be guilty of an offence against this Part of this Act.

That is very clear. One cannot lend another money to be used as a deposit on the purchase of goods under a hire-purchase agreement.

Mr. Oldfield: It is not going to prevent you from giving the money to the child.

Mr. CROMMELIN: That is only a way of getting around the wording of the clause.

Mr. Oldfield: The clause says that a banker can lend the money.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I am saying that the clause provides that one cannot lend another money unless he is a banker.

Mr. Oldfield: You cannot carry on a business of lending money.

Mr. CROMMELIN: This clause does not mention the word "business."

Mr. Oldfield: Read Clause 44.

Mr. CROMMELIN: I am reading Clause 43 which is very clear. As I said at the beginning of my speech, I am all in favour of hire-purchase. I think it is one of the greatest aids our community has ever had, but I think we will have to frame some sort of amendments to make the Bill a little easier to understand instead of its being so complicated, as it is now. Otherwise, I would rather have the Bill defeated and should the member for Leederville introduce a measure which is more simple, it would probably receive greater support. With those suggestions, I support the second reading.

MR. OLDFIELD (Mt. Lawley) [8.53]: I have tried hard to find some reason to support this measure. I realise that the hon. member who has introduced the Bill is trying to protect people from what may

be considered to be their own folly or from being exploited by an avaricious type of trader.

Mr. Bovell: Would it not be better if the Government were to introduce a Bill such as this?

The SPEAKER: Let the hon. member continue with his speech.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Every time I get up to speak, the member for Vasse interjects for some ungodly reason.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please! I would ask the member for Vasse not to interject. I would point out that interjections, at all times, are highly disorderly.

Mr. OLDFIELD: This Bill is based on the New South Wales legislation which has not yet been proclaimed. It proposes to introduce into Western Australia some sweeping changes with respect to hire-purchase. We should all bear in mind, however, the fact that the New South Wales Government has not, to date, seen fit to proclaim the recent admendments made to the Act, yet such amendments are incorporated in this legislation. I understand that there is grave doubt being expressed in New South Wales as to whether the amendments that were made to the Act in that State will ever be proclaimed because of the impact they will have on industry and commerce and the fact that the result will be a loss of employment.

Also, if this Bill were agreed to in its present form it could only result in increased prices. During the course of my speech I hope to prove that my contention in that regard is correct. I will now deal with the clauses of the Bill in sequence. A major point is that it seeks to repeal the existing legislation in which the two parties to a hire-purchase agreement are known as the owner and the hirer.

The Bill seeks to refer to them as the vendor and the purchaser. I admit that it is not a strong point nor is it a sweeping change but the terms which have been in use for many years clearly indicate the relationship that exists between the seller and the purchaser in regard to the article that is being purchased. At present we know that under a hire-purchase agreement the person hiring the article does not become the owner of it until the final payment is made. If we refer to the owner-hirer, it is quite clear who owns the article. When we refer to the vendor and the purchaser we could introduce all types of sales between a vendor and a purchaser.

There is another point. I understand that the Bill could affect those who charge an interest rate at a figure less than that prescribed in this measure. Some of those persons or bodies charge an interest rate of 6¼ per cent. or even a flat interest rate of 5 per cent. If this Bill is passed, they will have to increase their interest rates in order to cover the cost of administration in operating under the provisions of this legislation because there is no doubt that greater costs will result.

One clause in the Bill has a proviso which has little or no effect. I refer to the clause which relates to a lien on goods purchased under a hire-purchase agreement. That clause reads as follows:—

> Where a person does work upon any goods the subject of a hire-purchase agreement in such circumstances that if the goods were the property of the purchaser the worker would be entitled to a lien thereon for the amount or value of the work, he shall be entitled to a lien accordingly notwithstanding that the goods are not the property of the purchaser.

Then the following proviso is inserted:—

> Provided that the lien shall not be valid and enforceable against the vendor if the hire-purchase agreement contains a provision prohibiting the creation of a lien by the purchaser and the person who does the work has, before commencing the same, actual notice of that provision.

As I see it, that provision has little or no effect because the real owner—in this instance the vendor, as he will be known in the Bill—is not aware that something is at fault with the instrument or the article, the subject of the hire-purchase agreement. Should a hirer or the purchaser call in a refrigeration mechanic to effect repairs to a refrigerator or should he call in any other tradesman to repair an electrical appliance, he is not going to inform such tradesman that he is not permitted to have a lien on the goods. The owner, of course, is not aware of the fault and is therefore unable to notify the tradesman. We should make it incumbent upon the hirer to serve a notice upon the owner of the goods.

A further clause deals with the purchaser's rights to determine a hire-purchase agreement. This clause provides that an account of the transaction shall be supplied to the purchaser. Under existing legislation, the hirer has always had the right to determine the agreement but that is the end of his rights. At that stage all his rights in the article cease and he is in the hands of the person from whom he purchased it initially. This clause sets out what shall be done if the purchaser determines an agreement. It prescribes that the vendor shall give an account of the transaction, and after deducting reasonable selling costs, to refund the balance.

I would like to know what is meant by "reasonable costs" and who is to determine such reasonable selling costs. Would those costs cover the expense of the initial sale as well as the subsequent sale, because the article concerned is taken back by the

trader on the determination of the agreement, to be resold? Who will be responsible for the cost of the second sale? Furthermore, what is to be the position when a commission is paid by the trader to the person making the initial sale? Is that to be deducted also? Is the trader to be given consideration for any commission he may have paid?

The provision in this clause gives the purchaser an advantage over the cash buyer. If a cash buyer takes delivery of an article and wishes to dispose of it the next day, his only course would be to arrange for a resale. On the other hand, the hirer or purchaser, as he is known in the Bill, can place the onus of that sale on to the vendor. That would have the effect of deterring a potential purchaser of the article from paying cash, because if subsequently he desired to terminate the agreement the onus would be placed on the trader to dispose of the article and to render a full account after deducting reasonable expenses. The provision here really amounts to the hirer taking the goods on approval.

When considering hire-purchase, we must realise that all traders dislike repossessing goods. That invariably leads to a loss or to a lower profit because of the necessity for a subsequent sale of the repossessed articles. In many cases repossessions are initiated by finance companies which enjoy the patronage of some traders. I understand that most traders, on receiving orders from finance companies to repossess goods, take over the hire-purchase agreements themselves in an effort to retain the goodwill of their clients. Generally, they extend easier repayment terms rather than repossess the articles. The traders are there to make sales of new goods in preference to selling second-hand articles.

One aspect relating to this provision is the trade-in article. I would like to know what will be the position of a purchaser who has traded in an article as a deposit, and he determines the agreement. The clause I am referring to provides that the trader must render an account and pay the balance in full by cash, less expenses. If a person were to trade in a 5-year old refrigerator as a deposit on a new model—the value of the old refrigerator might only be worth £40—and if in a few weeks time, when even the second-hand trade-in might not have been sold, he decides to determine the agreement, he will not have to take back his trade-in. That will stop all traders from being generous in their valuations of trade-in articles.

Quite often traders are over-generous when articles are traded in for new articles. Unscrupulous people might trade in a second-hand article as a deposit and be allowed £50, when, in fact, it is worth only £40, and then decide to determine the agreement on the following day. He has to be paid back £50 in cash, not given the return of the trade-in. After paying that amount in cash when the agreement has been determined, the trader is left with the trade-in plus the article which has been returned; so he will have two second-hand articles on hand, whereas prior to that he had only one new article for sale. Furthermore, he has had to pay cartage there and back for the article, and that does not seem to be covered by the Bill.

Another provision in the Bill deals with regular and equal payments in certain cases. I am unable to ascertain what it means. I asked other people for their opinion and they also were at loss to understand it. The provision relating to hire-purchase agreements with married persons requires the purchaser to obtain the consent of the spouse. That cuts right across the principles to which we have always subscribed. No person has the right to say what I shall do with my own money.

If I enter into an agreement and commit myself to paying a trader £1 or £2 per week out of my salary for the privilege of having some article I wanted, that is my business. Similarly, if a married woman decides to enter into a hire-purchase agreement she should be permitted to do so without having to obtain the consent of her spouse. There has been some argument, and it has been held at law that the money given by a husband to a wife belongs to him, and he can ask for an accounting of such payments. Some married women have private incomes. In such cases why should a wife have to obtain the permission of her husband before entering into a hire-purchase agreement? All married women with children receive child endowment, generally 15s. or 25s. a week, depending on the size of the family.

Some people might contend that by committing such endowment to hire-purchase payments is to misapply it. But that money might be applied in buying something for the benefit of the children. A refrigerator might be classed as beneficial to children. Endowment money might be used in the hire-purchase of clothing or bedding for the children. Certain firms engage in time-payment sales of these goods in parcel lots. Possibly some people might class that as misapplying child endowment.

This provision will also have a very serious effect upon the sales of the smaller articles which are purchased as presents. Many people purchase household articles like electric mixers or deep freezers on hire-purchase and give them as presents to their wives. Likewise, married women sometimes purchase on terms electric razors and similar articles as presents for their husbands. The value of the present will be taken away if the recipient has to sign the hire-purchase agreement. I know of one person who paid a deposit on a present for his wife at Christmas time,

and then he presented her with the booklet to keep up the instalments. Almost half of the hire-purchase agreements entered into at Christmas time for household goods and electrical appliances are intended as surprise gifts.

We all know that costs of sales are passed on to the customers, and one factor which would tend to add to the cost is the necessity to obtain a second signature. If a married woman purchases an article on hire-purchase in town and her husband is at work at Midland Junction workshops or on the Fremantle wharves, she first signs the agreement. She may have selected a refrigerator, a washing machine or some other appliance. Naturally, the trader is keen to make the sale and inquires the whereabouts of her husband, as he will need to follow up the sale by getting the husband's signature. In doing that, extra cost will be involved. Half the time when the salesman goes to see the husband, he will have to return because the husband may require time to think about the matter. Sometimes a salesman will have to return two or three times before he is able to find the husband at home. This all adds up to the cost.

The 10 per cent. minimum deposit in the Bill is favoured by most traders, but some are opposed to it because it will interfere with their type of business. At present there is a sliding scale of deposits, depending on the article and its saleability second-hand. Generally, in the city, the deposit for radios is 15 per cent. and for portable radios, 25 per cent., for the simple reason that they can be picked up so easily and carted anywhere; cameras, 25 per cent; and musical instruments, 25 per cent. I understand that pianos are sold at as low as 5 per cent.

Mr. Lawrence: What is the percentage for gasbags?

Mr. Potter: That is, deposits.

Mr. OLDFIELD: No doubt the member for Subiaco could go to one of the firms and, by virtue of his office and his salary, might be able to buy things at a lower deposit. We need to be careful when we start talking about enforcing a minimum deposit. There is quite a large volume of trade in this State—it would run into at least £2,000,000 per year—which is done on a no-deposit basis, either through hire-purchase and credit-sales or time payment, or whatever one may like to call it.

Some firms have a system whereby a salesman spends three days a week collecting and two days a week selling. Women like this system. It is very handy for them to pay 10s., 15s., or £1 a week; and, as they finish paying for one article, they purchase something else—such as blankets, Manchester goods, or clothing. Sometimes when there is only about £3 remaining to be paid on an article, the firm will allow them to take out a further parcel of goods. I understand that the average collection is about 18s. 4d. per week.

There is one firm with 20 years' experience of this line of selling on no deposit under the collecting system, and its losses amount to 4s. per £100, which is so negligible as not to be worth consideration. That firm is dealing with a type of article which cannot be repossessed, because clothing and Manchester goods cannot very well be repossessed once they have been used.

There is no provision in the Bill to enforce the labelling of second-hand articles as such, and the noting of the fact in the agreement. I have strong reasons to suspect that certain disreputable traders—there are not many of them—have renovated repossessed articles or goods that have been traded in and sold them as new. I feel that that can only be checked by obtaining the serial numbers through the factories. If the facts were included in the agreement, that would possibly prevent the occurrence of what is suspected to be taking place.

There is also no provision to assist the trader, who is the one that is looking down the barrel, so to speak. The finance company is well and truly covered with its agreements. Under the Bill the finance company will get a 10 per cent. deposit, which gives it an equity in the article right away. The trader has to indemnify the finance company against non-payment by the hirer; and if an article is repossessed, it is the trader who must do the repossessing at the direction of the finance company. The trader has to pay the finance company for the balance owing, and he is left with the repossessed article.

Likewise, if somebody absconds to the Eastern States or overseas, with a portable radio, or a camera, or some musical instrument, the finance company is paid in full and the trader carries the loss. There is no protection for the trader in the Bill, and there is no provision for assistance to him by the police in ascertaining the whereabouts of an absconder.

Some people change their address frequently. They will go away with a houseful of furniture and appliances obtained on hire-purchase, and sometimes they move so swiftly and so frequently that it is hard for the owners of the goods to catch up with them.

Mr. Potter: It is cheaper to move than to pay rent.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes. They may go to the Eastern States and take a portable radio or a camera with them. When the trader goes to the police, they say, "Oh, hire-purchase! We are not interested." They are not interested, though actually it constitutes stealing. There should be a

provision to compel the police to give assistance in locating the whereabouts of absconders.

As I see it, all this Bill does is to interfere with something that has been working quite well. There has been no outcry; no demand for legislation to protect anybody from anybody else; no large-scale repossession or outcry against unwarranted repossession. The public like the system. The volume of turnover indicates that they like hire-purchase. It increases their standard of living by permitting them to obtain goods that they would not otherwise be able to purchase, because they would not save the money. It is good for trade generally and assists to maintain full employment. Control is not desirable or necessary; but if the member for Leederville feels that it is, he could at least begin his experiment by bringing down two small amendments to the existing legislation to impose a 10 per cent. minimum deposit and limit interest rates to 10 per cent. maximum flat.

When the member for Claremont was speaking, I tried to obtain some information from him. But like a lot of other members in this place, he went off on a sarcastic note, and did not bother to explain what he meant. I still claim that he is wrong. He read Clause 43, but Clause 42 should be read in conjunction with it. When we are considering legislation, we must always take into consideration the relationship of one provision to another. I read Clauses 42 and 43 as dealing only with the money-lending class, and providing that no person can set up business purely for the purpose of lending money as a deposit on hire-purchase goods, as has happened in the Eastern States.

It is proposed to allow a bank to lend money on hire-purchase. But why should a bank be allowed to advance money for a deposit on an article purchased under hire-purchase? The principle is the same. Allegedly a deposit is to be demanded to protect the purchaser of the article. He will be permitted to go to a bank and borrow money for a deposit. I cannot see where there is any difference. I cannot see why—

Mr. Johnson: It would stop one having a deposit any time he happened to be temporarily overdrawn.

Mr. OLDFIELD: Yes. But take the instance of Custom Credit, which is controlled by the National Bank. Somebody referred to the bank as being a large shareholder, but I understand that it owns most of the credit. There may be a few shareholders, but I understand the bank has the bulk of the shares. What would be wrong with that bank setting up a special department to provide deposits for people who wish to have Custom Credit and lend on that condition? We could soon develop a nice old racket in that way! This Bill will benefit certain people but not the traders. It will restrict the volume of turnover of the type of item bought under hire-purchase, and would have an effect on unemployment.

In all sincerity I suggest to the member for Leederville that it is not too late to withdraw this Bill and bring down amending legislation to the existing legislation to impose a 10 per cent. minimum deposit and 10 per cent. maximum interest rate, as an experiment. I have no quarrel with regard to the interest rate, but I feel that we should not interfere with the deposit, because that is a matter for the trader concerned. If a vendor wishes to take a risk on somebody whose history he knows, it is his business if he sells on weekly instalments and no deposit.

If the member for Leederville does not feel inclined to accept that proposal, I suggest that this Bill could be referred to a select committee at its second reading. I would not move for such a select committee or act upon it, but I feel that its appointment would be justified because, at this stage, few of us know anything about hire-purchase. Those who do know something about it, still know very little: I refer to members of this Chamber and to the effect on the community generally of the hire-purchase system. I feel that the restrictions the Bill would impose on traders would not do the public any good, and it would do a lot of harm to trading. In view of all the circumstances, I can only oppose the second reading.

MR. W. A. MANNING (Narrogin) [9.28]: This Bill has some good points but also a lot of very poor ones. There are some strange things in it. One has a picture of members of this House wanting to buy something on hire-purchase and having to say to the vendor, "I must run home and get my wife's signature before I can complete this transaction." What a peculiar state we would be getting into if we had to introduce that sort of provision into our legislation!

There is another strange thing in regard to the provision of a deposit. In Clause 41 we are told exactly how this is to be produced. The purchaser must provide a deposit in current coin or bank notes or by cheque drawn by a banker or by the purchaser or proposed purchaser or the spouse of a purchaser or proposed purchaser on a banker. That is the regulation. If, for instance, a Government employee goes along with his pay cheque and wants to use that as a deposit, the storekeeper has to say, "I am very sorry, but this Government cheque is no good for a deposit. You must give me your cheque." The man must give a bank cheque, or go somewhere else, cash the cheque and then come back bringing the money with him. What a strange situation that would be. I only use those illustrations to show how strange some of the provisions are.

Mr. Johnson: Could not the storekeeper cash the cheque?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: If he can, what is the use of putting a provision like that in the Bill? After all, if this becomes an Act, it must be something sensible and the provisions must be able to be applied reasonably. There are a number of good features about the Bill and I think the one which regulates the rate of interest will protect purchasers from any feeling of imposition, which is prevalent today. In my opinion, it is a wise provision as is the one which relates to the purchase price, taking into account the various factors which make up the complete purchase price.

Also, that part of the Bill which deals with how a rebate should be provided for if payment is made before a due date, and the benefit of any insurance credits is also worth supporting. There are also provisions for the protection of the hirer, as he is called in the existing legislation, when the goods are returned or repossessed. A clause in the Bill also deals with the valuation of such goods. That is quite fair because it will protect the hirer against any trader who is not operating fairly—although there are not many of them about.

The object of these amendments is to protect hirers from those who are trading unfairly in connection with hire-purchase agreements, and we must agree that that is necessary and quite fair. I think we should give some consideration to those who have been conducting similar types of businesses under different methods. For instance, there is the method of the overdraft account on which no deposit is demanded for any particular transaction; it is more of a continuing arrangement.

Most members will have been supplied with a graph by one of these concerns. It gives the figures for the sales of various commodities in Australia and the year taken is 1954. The value of food sales in Australia was over £600,000,000; motor-vehicles and fuel nearly £500,000,000; clothing nearly £400,000,000; liquor and tobacco £300,000,000; hardware £125,000,000. Then, under three headings, there are some small items including gambling and lottery losses £100,000,000; radio and electrical sales £100,000,000; floor coverings and furniture £100,000,000.

These figures were arrived at when hire-purchase sales were allowed without deposit and it can be seen that household goods, radio and electrical, floor coverings and furniture are minor items when compared with the colossal expenditure under many other headings. The sales of motorcars is a big item and while a deposit may be desirable in that instance, it not desirable, in my opinon, in regard to smaller articles such as furniture and household goods.

I think the member for Claremont pointed out the fallacy of regulating deposits, even on motorcars. It has also been pointed out that it may be better for people purchasing furniture or household articles to pay no deposit but simply pay the first instalment rather than have them spend the money under some of the other headings I have mentioned. After all, the sale of furniture and household goods can be affected rather materially, as compared with other articles. It is better for a person to spend even a few shillings by way of instalments on something for the home than to waste money under some of the other headings I read out.

Thus, while there are good provisions in the Bill, I think the member for Leederville could well have left out that part of it which refers to deposits, because that provision seems to be the one which is getting him into all the trouble in the world—defining how a person shall find the deposit and the provision also states that a person cannot lend anybody else a deposit. How can those things be policed?

If a business concern is willing to sell its articles without a deposit, should we protect it? These businesses should pick their mark and be able to sell their goods without any help under this legislation. I believe that it is this provision in the Bill which is causing all the trouble. We have no real complaint about the present Act except the necessity for adding those matters which I have mentioned—the interest rates and repossession rules.

I have a typical agreement before me; it is used under the present Act and nobody could have any complaint at the provisions contained in it. It does not inflict any hardship on the hirer and there is nothing in it with which one could disagree. So it seems to me that we are trying to destroy an Act which is quite all right and which could be amended to suit the demands of the times, and substitute for it another Bill which has a lot of deficiencies and clauses in it which are entirely unnecessary. Some of them are really humorous, especially when we try to picture what would happen between a wife and a husband, or a husband and wife, when either of them tried to make a purchase and the purchaser having to get the consent of the husband or wife as the case may be. It could bring about quite serious difficulties in some instances.

I intend to support the second reading of the Bill only because there are some clauses in it which are worth while and because it may be possible to make it a workable piece of legislation during the Committee stage by agreeing to certain amendments. I should like to mention that if the Bill passes the second reading, I intend immediately to move for the appointment of a select committee to inquire

into it. After we have tried to sort out the innumerable amendments that will be necessary to make the Bill worth while, and if it is felt that with the introduction of those amendments the legislation will be satisfactory, I shall not go on with the motion for the appointment of a select committee.

Mr. Roberts: You are not prepared to be one of the select committee?

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I am not prepared to say at this stage. As I said, I propose to support the second reading with that reservation.

MR. JOHNSON (Leederville—in reply) [9.40]: I would like to thank all those who have taken part in this debate and I do so whole-heartedly because it is unusual to find that despite some criticism here and there, there has been a general acceptance of the major principle in this legislation. There has been complete agreement on the need for the regulation of interest rates under hire-purchase agreements. That is, I think, a degree of unanimity which people outside this House imagined we would never achieve.

There has been a limited degree of dissent in relation to the principle of regulation of deposits, but I feel there has been some slight misreading of the verbiage of the relevant clause in that whilst there is provision for a minimum deposit of 10 per cent., in relation to items not covered by regulation, there is nothing to say that regulations should not provide for a deposit lower than 10 per cent. Therefore it would appear that the verbiage makes it possible for regulations to cover any individual type of goods with a lower than 10 per cent. deposit, although once again I feel that the intention was made fairly clear and that 10 per cent. should be regarded as a minimum in all but very exceptional cases.

It has been suggested to me, for instance, that pianos stand in a class all by themselves in relation to time payments and could have a special deposit rate. There has been considerable comment on the husband and wife clauses and whilst I noted a good deal of distaste and some humorous references to it, I am not quite sure what attitude various members will take when the Bill gets into Committee. I know that there has been quite a demand for a regulation of this kind in relation to a number of articles that are sold under hire-purchase. I would not be sure whether the whole of that demand comes from women's organisations, but I would agree that the majority of it comes from them and I have a feeling, too, that there is some demand for it from that very large inarticulate and unorganised body, suppressed husbands.

It is not my intention to deal with the whole of the various complaints, suggestions and recommendations made by various speakers as this is mainly a Committee Bill. As I said when I moved the second reading, it is based on the New South Wales legislation and is largely word for word the same. I have been interested to know that at least three speakers have suggested that we should have used the Western Australian legislation, as it stands on the statute book, and amended it in a couple of places. Members will recall that that is what I tried to do last year and the proposal did not get very far. I certainly did go a bit further with the same suggestion myself, and had a preliminary draft prepared with that basis in mind. I have this preliminary draft with me and I found that even to do that it would run to 25 pages.

It is easy to say, "Just add a couple of small amendments" but we find that adding to the structure a bit here and a bit there is inclined to throw something else out of balance, which means that something further must be added to maintain that balance. After struggling with the idea of preparing a preliminary draft which was modelled on an attempt to marry the Western Australian and the New South Wales Acts, I decided that it was better to adopt in its entirety, or almost so, the New South Wales provisions which are a more complete structure and, if necessary, to accept that idea with minor amendments.

I think we would get a more workmanlike structure by doing that. I have noticed that there are not yet any amendments listed on the notice paper, and I therefore have no intention of taking the Bill into Committee on the conclusion of the second reading debate. I propose to give members a little more time to indicate on the notice paper what amendments they have in mind, so that we can all have a look at them.

However, I have, by the way, three or four small amendments relative to the drafting of minor provisions. I thought perhaps somebody else might accept that responsibility, but since nobody else has done so, it has been left to me to trim the corners; because it has been pointed out to me by various people concerned in the business that there are points here and there that require some change.

For instance, there was one point made to me in regard to the difference that existed between our Stamp Act in Western Australia and the Stamp Act in New South Wales. There are two or three points relating to principles that could be dealt with. One is the suggestion by members on the other side of the House that there is no demand for further legislation on hire-purchase. I would point out to those

members that the Minister in his speech on the subject—and speaking with the knowledge and control of the department concerned—believed there was a demand for a change in this type of legislation. I know from the contact I have had with a number of organisations outside this House that there is such a demand and that it has been growing for a long time.

I would point out that this demand comes not only from the purchasing side of the public, but in all the leading trade newspapers. There is a suggestion to this end, for instance, in "The Financial Review," and there are requests for it in the trading bank reviews, and a number of varying financial publications. There is certainly quite a demand for it stemming from the exploited people who have fallen foul of the pirates in this business. When I speak of the pirates in this business, I do not wish it to be thought that I include everybody.

There are people in this business who are doing a very useful service in the distribution of goods in a manner that makes it possible for people to get them which otherwise it might not be possible for them to do. I do part company, however, with even the best of them in relation to the amount of reward which they claim for the service they give. That is a matter of opinion. However, there are people in various sections of the hire-purchase industry who have done things which are not creditable even to the other folk in the trade.

The member for Nedlands referred to them I think as the get-rich-quick-boys, and said they always burnt their fingers. Whilst I have no regrets for them burning their fingers, I do have great regrets for the people who were exploited in the process, some of whom got badly hurt. The idea which seems to be accepted in some degree in the support given to this measure is that hire-purchase as a method of selling is of itself a good thing, and that hire-purchase as a method of selling or buying has been responsible for the increase in goods entering the home, and for raising the standard of life of the purchasing public.

That is an economic or business argument, whichever way members like to describe it, which I think is not proved. The factor that has improved our standard of life is not necessarily hire-purchase. The mass production of goods has been the background factor and, in my opinion, without hire-purchase and by the cultivation of the mass market by a steady pressure downward of prices, the same result could have been achieved. However, it has not been so, and whilst it is a very interesting exercise in imagination, I think that those who claim a particular merit for the hire-purchase system should examine their thinking, because I feel that their claim is not proved.

Hon. A. F. Watts: I think the weight of evidence shows that sales have increased by virtue of hire-purchase.

Mr. JOHNSON: Once again I would not regard it as proved. It has assisted.

Mr. Roberts: Materially assisted.

Mr. JOHNSON: Instead of having an expensive method of buying or selling under hire-purchase, if the price had been cut and the expense taken out; had selling taken place in normal cash and credit sales without the expensive hire-purchase methods, the end result would, I think, probably have been the same.

Hon. A. F. Watts: In some cases, you cannot force down prices.

Mr. JOHNSON : I have been reading something of the history of Henry Ford.

The SPEAKER: There is much too much noise, and I cannot hear the hon. member.

Mr. JOHNSON: Before the hire-purchase method was introduced, Henry Ford materially reduced the cost of motor transport to the public, and I think the graph in the downward trend in the price of motorcars during that period would be highly comparable with that since the hire-purchase era. The expansion of the market that he achieved by his reduction in price would indicate that his method could have been pursued a great deal further and in a great number of other fields —for instance, in the refrigerator field.

Hon. A. F. Watts: True hire-purchase was used even then.

Mr. JOHNSON: It was not developed to any great extent then and all Henry Ford's business up to at least the early 1920s. was done on a cash basis.

Hon. A. F. Watts: His dealers or agents dealt in hire-purchase.

Mr. JOHNSON: They had a form of credit and they were responsible for it. I do not think we could regard it as strictly hire-purchase.

Mr. Court: I think he found saturation point was very quickly reached. Once he skimmed off the potential cash market, he would have been completely stranded, and he could not pursue his policy of mass production to get costs down.

Mr. JOHNSON: I will answer that by saying that Henry Ford found that not enough of the other employers had his attitude towards higher wages, and therefore the market of consumers was not as wide as it should have been.

Whilst I agree that hire-purchase has been of value, I am not prepared to agree that all the merit for our expansion in our economy, or the increase in our standard of living can be ascribed to hire-purchase. I fancy that we could have

achieved something close to that situation without it. Accordingly, I cannot subscribe to the idea put forward by the member for Nedlands that tinkering with hire-purchase is economic dynamite. Anything that deals with economic matters is difficult and delicate.

Mr. Oldfield: Political dynamite.

Mr. JOHNSON: I do not think hire-purchase should be described as dynamite. It is far too strong and far too noisy. I have noticed a desire among members to permit the people of New South Wales to operate their Act for a minimum of 12 months before we do anything here. That is a situation to which I would subscribe if there were no demand for the control of this method of selling in Western Australia. However, there is a demand, and whilst it is not very vocal, there is no doubt about its being strong. Something needs to be done reasonably quickly in this State, and I might say the strongest part of the demand comes from those directly concerned with the industry; those who find themselves under pressure from some of the pirates in the industry who are doing things that are making trade more and more risky, and less and less likely to produce a sound profit, even if it has produced a quick and large one.

In other words, there are people in the trade who are frightened stiff by feeling that if something is not done to regulate it, the business will go. The member for Nedlands commented that in Australia only 5 per cent. of the national personal income was committed to hire-purchase. The figures he used, however, were only those relative to hire-purchase agreements that were processed through finance companies. The hon. member admitted there was a further factor which was incapable of being assessed with any accuracy.

I discovered in the tables appended to the President's report to the United States Congress for this year, that the relative figure in that country is about 16 per cent. of the total of personal expenditure. I fancy 16 per cent. would be a good deal nearer to the true total figure in Australia. We might not have reached the same degree of saturation of the industry, but there is a very big difference between 5 per cent. and 16 per cent. I do not doubt that we lie well up and even if it is only 10 per cent. it discloses that hire-purchase is an important sector of the economy.

Mr. Court: I did not follow your reference earlier to the no-deposit business having a potential effect on repeat business.

Mr. JOHNSON: I was not referring to no-deposit business having a potential effect on repeat business; I was referring to pirates in the trade ruining business to such an extent there would be no repeat. Admittedly, some of that is related to no-deposit trading, but I was not just referring to no-deposit trading but to bad traders.

Mr. Court: Referring to pirates or bad traders, what do you have in mind? People that allow excessive figures for trade ins and so on?

Mr. JOHNSON: People who do all things that we are trying to stop by this legislation. For instance, when I was down at the Model Homes Exhibition at the Claremont Showgrounds, not so long ago, I was making inquiries about some equipment which was for sale there and was told I needed a deposit. I asked the amount of deposit and was told by the salesman that it could be an electric light bulb. That to my mind is bad trading.

Mr. Court: It is virtually no-deposit business.

Mr. JOHNSON: Yes.

Mr. Rodoreda: What is wrong with no-deposit?

Mr. JOHNSON: That is a matter of opinion.

Mr. Rodoreda: I am asking you.

Mr. JOHNSON: I will tell the hon. member in Committee. One of the clauses to which the member for Mt. Lawley referred and which he thought was bad, was designed to stop that sort of business. That is the clause which permits a person to make a trade in a deposit and go back and get his deposit in cash. If these people had traded in a light globe for £40 and the purchaser demanded the deposit be paid in cash, then we would have had the pleasing situation of the trader paying the purchaser £40 for a used electric light globe.

It may seem a rather backdoor method of achieving the result, because it is not a direct control, but study it as I may, I can not see a better method. All it does is lay wide open to exploitation those who overplay the deposit angle. It will cause traders to be careful in the way they trade. Instead of having what is called no-deposit trading, we will have trading with real deposits. The thing that is wrong with no-deposit trading is very largely that to ensure the ability of doing this no-deposit trading, the value of the article is written up so that there will be a margin in which to work.

We have the position of second-grade goods in the electrical field, such as refrigerators, washing machines and so on that are not really first-class value even though they are listed at a first-class price. One can get a £20 cut on the price for a trade-in or for no-deposit but if one happens to be a cash customer and was taken in by salesmanship and advertisements and so on, one would pay a cash price of £20

more than the real value of the machine. There is no doubt in my mind that some of these forms of abuse of a customer have crept into no-deposit trading. I think there is a great deal to be said against the idea of no-deposit trading.

Mr. Marshall: Do they charge more for no-deposit than for cash?

Mr. JOHNSON: They try not to sell for cash, so far as I can see. I have not tested it myself, but I imagine that if one went in with cash to purchase one of the articles on no-deposit, one would not have to screw the salesman's hand very hard to get a cut, but if one failed to screw, they would take an extra £20.

Mr. Marshall: That would be unfair trading.

Mr. W. A. Manning: I do not think that is right.

Mr. JOHNSON: I realise that the member for Narrogin would not think that any salesman would do anything wrong, but they are not all angels. I admit that the Bill is involved, but I will not admit that it is a material change from our current legislation. It is an extension of it. It applies to the condition of minimum rates and makes provision for deposits and, if people feel it does not, they should examine it carefully. They will find that of the eight clauses in our current legislation, four of them are in the Bill and three of them are there in rewritten form with extension, and the general effect is in no way lost.

The only provision which I feel is in our current legislation and not in this is that dealing with interest payments related to overdue payments. I would point out that in hire-purchase agreements it would be unusual if there were no clause relating to overdue payments. Furthermore, there is a control over this, in that interest will still be subject to the minimum rates in the Bill. I feel that that provision is no loss.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

To Refer to Select Committee.

Mr. W. A. MANNING: I move—

That the Bill be referred to a select committee.

I have already intimated my intention of moving in this direction. Under Standing Orders, this is the appropriate stage to do so. I propose proceeding along the lines indicated if it is ultimately decided that amendments to be prepared cannot satisfactorily adjust the present Bill.

On motion by Mr. Johnson, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 10.11 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 5th September, 1957.

CONTENTS.

The President took the Chair at 2.30 p.m., and read prayers.

QUESTIONS.

UNIFORM TAXATION.

Financial Returns.

Hon. Sir CHARLES LATHAM asked the Minister for Railways:

Will he lay on the Table of the House the files containing the figures compiled by the Economics Research Officer of the Treasury between 1947 and 1952 showing the respective financial returns from uniform tax reimbursements and those that would have been available if State prewar income tax had been imposed in those years?

The MINISTER replied:

There are no official files on this matter. An economic research officer, who was at one time employed by the Treasury, made some calculations on this subject. This officer has now left the service and the State; and so far as the Treasury Department is aware, the calculations are not available.

NORTHERN HIGHWAY.

White Centre Lines.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON asked the Minister for Railways:

In view of the incidence of serious traffic accidents on the Northern Highway, would the Government make provision for white centre lines at Bindoon Hill and other selected road points between Perth and Moora?

The MINISTER replied:

The roadway at Bindoon Hill is only 16 ft. wide. The conference of Australian road authorities considered it undesirable to white-line road pavements of this width.