

tees, Mr. Seddon, Mr. Fraser and Mr. Hamersley. In addition I have been fortunate in having the services, as Clerk of Parliament, of Mr. Leake; and as Clerk-Assistant, of Mr. Sparks, whose duties, more especially towards the close of the session are most exacting and call for infinite care to avoid mistakes.

To the gentlemen of "Hansard," and the gentlemen of the Press I wish to record gratefully the obligations of the Council and of myself, and to all associated with the Chamber who have helped with our work. Happily, the dark cloud of war that has, for years, hung over us has disappeared. Though sad gaps have been left in our lives, the sacrifices of those who fought and suffered and died were not made in vain for, by the grace of God, the Empire has passed victoriously through what has been the most perilous period in its history. In this spirit I re-echo to all the wishes expressed for a happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE CHIEF SECRETARY** (Hon. W. H. Kitson—West): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.55 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Friday, 14th December, 1945.*

	PAGE
Questions: Railways—(a) as to Fox theory for eliminating sparks .....	2381
(b) as to Swan View tunnel deviation .....	2382
Legislative Council, as to ages of members .....	2382
Eggs, as to surplus production and export .....	2382
Education—(a) as to Tasmanian examination system .....	2383
(b) as to new school at Tambellup .....	2383
Infant foods, as to shortage of supplies .....	2383
Malaria, as to supplies of salaria .....	2383
Soldier settlement, as to dairy farms available .....	2384
Legislative Assembly, as to ages of members .....	2384
Wool Handling Delays Select Committee, report, etc., presented .....	2384
Bills: South-West State Power Scheme, Council's amendment .....	2384
Council's message .....	2017
City of Perth Sanitation, returned .....	2385
Council's amendment .....	2020
Commonwealth Powers, Council's further message .....	2385
Conference managers' report .....	2390
Council's message .....	2018
Government Employees (Promotions) Appeal Board, conference managers' report .....	2017
Council's message .....	2017
Milk, report, 3r. ....	2900
Appropriation, Message, all stages .....	2917
Returned .....	2922
Marketing of Eggs, Council's amendments .....	2918
Justices Act Amendment, 2a. ....	2916
Com. ....	2922
As to 3r. ....	2922
Municipal Corporations Act Amendment, Council's amendments .....	2024
Council's Message, Assembly's request for Conference .....	2932
Council's further message .....	2031
Conference managers' report .....	2932
Council's message .....	2932
Timber Industry (Housing of Employees), 2a., referred to Select Committee .....	2922
Factories and Shops Act Amendment, 2a. ....	2931
Annual Estimates: Votes and Items discussed .....	2981
Com. of Ways and Means .....	2911
State Trading Concerns Estimates .....	2911
Complimentary remarks, close of Session .....	2932
Adjournment, special .....	2932

The SPEAKER took the Chair at 11 a.m. and read prayers.

### QUESTIONS.

#### RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Fox Theory for Eliminating Sparks.*

Mr. SEWARD asked the Minister for Railways:

1, Has any progress been made in affording Mr. Fox facilities for proving his theory that by making certain alterations to railway engines, he can eliminate sparks when using Collie coal?

2, If so, what is the result?

3, Have any railway engines been equipped with the necessary apparatus, and if so how many?

4, What is the result of their use?

5, If no progress, referred to in Question No. 1, has been made, what is delaying matters?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2, 3, 4, Answered by No. 1.

5, Mr. Fox had a full discussion with the department's Chief Mechanical Engineer and the conclusion arrived at by the latter was that Mr. Fox was not able to offer a reasonable chance of success.

(b) *As to Swan View Tunnel Deviation.*

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Railways:

What is the cost of the deviation around the tunnel at Swan View?

The MINISTER replied:

Although the deviation is in use, all the work is not yet complete, and final costs are therefore not available. However, it is expected that the total cost will approximate £85,000.

## LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

*As to Ages of Members.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

How many members of the Legislative Council are—

(a) between 65 and 70 years of age;

(b) between 71 and 80 years of age;

(c) over 80 years old?

The PREMIER replied:

(a), (b), (c), This information is not available to me.

## EGGS.

*As to Surplus Production and Export.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Agriculture:

1, What surplus number of eggs is there at present (a) in Australia, (b) in Western Australia only?

2, Is Great Britain prepared to purchase the whole or some of these eggs and if only some then how many?

3, Why have such eggs as Great Britain is prepared to purchase not been despatched

there or are they likely to be despatched in the near future, and if not what prevents or delays despatch?

4, Is any market available other than Great Britain?

5, If the surplus of eggs is unlikely to be disposed of in the near future within Great Britain or elsewhere, is it desirable to relieve the pressure on the industry by disposal of the eggs in some other way?

6, If not, why not?

7, If it is desirable to dispose of them will the Government recommend to the Commonwealth Government that a gift of the whole or a substantial portion of such eggs be made by the Commonwealth to Great Britain to relieve the severe shortage there and the surplus here?

8, If not, why not?

9, If lack of shipping is an obstacle to the disposal of eggs either by gift or purchase will he state what action has been taken to improve this position and what relief is anticipated in the near future?

The MINISTER replied:

1, (a) Information is not available; (b) The surplus number of eggs over local requirements from the 1st July, 1945, to the 1st December, 1945, was 2,280,613 dozen.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6, Following upon the cessation of hostilities and the termination of certain contracts with Allied Services, Great Britain has modified the original agreement, and arrangements have been made to purchase the surplus eggs in the form either of eggs in shell, egg pulp, or egg powder. Owing to the contracts with Allied Services for egg powder being cancelled at short notice, a greater demand for the export of eggs in shell occurred. Because of the difficulty of obtaining materials for handling the whole of the available surplus for export in shell, and also manpower difficulties, it was impossible to arrange for the export of the full quantity required in shell by Great Britain. The Controller of Egg Supplies has already made arrangements for the disposal of surplus eggs to Great Britain and elsewhere, and active steps at present are being taken to prepare for the disposal of the surplus production during 1946-47. A limited market other than Great Britain exists in New Zealand and may be developed in Ceylon and Singapore.

7, 8, 9, The surplus eggs are being handled by the Controller of Egg Supplies on behalf of producers, and the question of a gift of these eggs would involve consideration regarding ownership, treatment, the provision of cases, fillers, cold storage, and also shipment. It is extremely doubtful if these materials could be found to export the large quantity of eggs involved in shell. The question of shipping is a matter for negotiation between the Commonwealth Government and the British Ministry of Food which has undertaken to supply shipping for the surplus foodstuffs available within Australia.

### EDUCATION.

#### (a) *As to Tasmanian Examination System.*

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Education:

1, Has he seen the statement of the Director of Education in Tasmania in his annual report that the work carried out in high schools in that State had changed very much for the better since the abolition of the junior examination and the substitution of a system of accrediting?

2, Has consideration been given to the adoption of the system in Western Australia?

3, If investigations have indicated favourable possibilities what categories of children would be affected, and dating from when?

4, If not, what are the reasons for the rejection of the scheme?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Yes.

2, 3, 4, All aspects of a system of accrediting as referring to this State are receiving the fullest consideration.

#### (b) *As to New School at Tambellup.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

1, What is proposed in regard to provision of new school at Tambellup?

2, Is much delay anticipated before this work can be commenced?

The MINISTER replied:

1, The Department proposes to erect a three-roomed school and teacher's quarters at Tambellup.

2, Yes, having regard to the present building position.

### INFANT FOODS.

#### *As to Shortage of Supplies.*

Mr. J. HEGNEY asked the Minister for Health:

1, Is he aware that there is a very serious shortage of baby foods such as Lactogen condensed milk, etc., which is causing worry and grave concern to mothers feeding infants and to infant health clinic nurses who give advice to nursing mothers?

2, Is he aware that such shortage has continued for a number of months past and that supplies are not coming forward regularly?

3, If he is aware of the shortage, will he inform the House what action he has taken to overcome the difficulty?

4, If no action has yet been taken, will he take immediate and appropriate steps to secure adequate supplies to satisfy the demand for such foods?

5, If the scarcity is due to shipping difficulties will he immediately make representations to the Commonwealth Minister for Shipping to remedy the position?

6, Because of the urgency of the supply needs of infant foods, will he give serious consideration to the securing of supplies by alternative means of transport, i.e., by air or rail?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. A temporary shortage did exist owing to 12 weeks' delay to a loaded ship caused by a strike of Greek firemen. Supplies have now arrived, sufficient for several weeks.

### MALARIA.

#### *As to Supplies of Atabrin.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Health:

1, Is the drug known as atabrin in short supply in Western Australia?

2, Is it true that in country districts returned men suffering from malaria are unable to have prescriptions for atabrin filled by local chemists?

3, If there is not a sufficient supply in this State, will he take steps to remedy this condition of affairs?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No.

2. The Repatriation Department has had no complaints and could have satisfied them if received.

3. Answered by 1 and 2.

### SOLDIER SETTLEMENT.

*As to Dairy Farms Available.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Lands:

1, How many farms suitable for dairy farms have been set aside for returned men for occupation under the Federal-State Agreement?

2, How many applications have so far been lodged for these farms?

3, With how many milking cows is it proposed to stock each farm to provide a reasonable living?

4, Are sufficient cows available to the Government to provide such cows promptly?

5, If not, how many suitable cows are available and when will the balance be provided?

The MINISTER replied:—

1, 50 farms passed as suitable, 250 being examined.

2, 275 applications have been received from ex-servicemen to become dairy farmers.

3, The minimum of 25. Some properties passed are capable of carrying up to 60 cows.

4, No.

5, The Government has been handicapped in its purchases by the limitations of agistment but other plans for purchase are in progress to meet the demands.

### LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY.

*As to Ages of Members.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Premier: How many members of the Legislative Assembly are—

(a) between 65 and 70 years of age;

(b) between 71 and 80 years of age;

(c) over 80 years of age?

The PREMIER replied:

(a), (b), (c), This information is not available to me.

### WOOL HANDLING DELAYS SELECT COMMITTEE.

*Report, etc., Presented.*

Mr. WATTS brought up the report of the Select Committee, together with a type-written copy of the evidence referred to in the report.

Ordered: That the report be received and printed and its consideration made an Order of the Day for the next sitting of the House.

### BILL—SOUTH-WEST STATE POWER SCHEME.

*Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The Council's amendment is as follows:—

Clause 3, (1)—Definition of "Undertaking"—in paragraph (e), on page 4:—Add after the word "power" in line 4 the following words: "The term does not include money, credits, book debts, or securities held for moneys invested."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The amendment made by the Council is one to which the Government agrees. The Government certainly does not desire, when taking over this undertaking, to possess itself of the various items mentioned in the amendment. However, the Government is anxious that some consequential amendments should be made if the Council's amendment is to be accepted. I therefore move—

That the amendment be agreed to, subject to consequential amendments being made to Clause 8 of the Bill as follows:—After the word "undertaking" where it occurs in lines 12, 18, 24 and 29 on page 6 insert the words "or any part thereof."

The purpose of these proposed consequential amendments is to ensure that the principles of the Bill will apply irrespective of whether the undertaking is regarded as a whole or in parts. These consequential amendments are considered necessary by the Solicitor General. I trust, therefore, that the Committee will endorse them.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment, as consequentially amended, agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

#### **BILL—CITY OF PERTH SANITATION.**

Returned from the Council with an amendment.

#### **BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS.**

##### *Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendment insisted on by the Council, and had appointed the Honorary Minister, Hon. L. Craig and Hon. H. S. W. Parker as managers for the Council, the President's room as the place of meeting and the time 2.30 p.m.

#### **ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.**

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

Resumed from the previous day; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

*Vote—Railways, Tramways, Ferries and Electricity Supply, £4,613,500, partly considered:*

**MR. J. HEGNEY** (Middle Swan) [11.14]: I was pleased to hear the Minister say that the department is acquiring 50 more trolley-buses. Whilst there is an agitation that they be used here, there and everywhere, I wish to submit the claims of the eastern suburbs. I think they are deserving of some consideration in the matter of their transport system, particularly the inauguration of the trolley-bus system. Some eight or nine years ago the Government of the day set up a committee to report and advise on the development of metropolitan transport. Amongst the recommendations is one dealing with the extension of the transport system along Guildford-rd., over the Garrett-rd. bridge, and back into the city through Belmont. When the trolley-buses are obtained I urge that the Guildford rd. Maylands route be one of the first to be improved.

Last night the member for Pingelly made reference to the irritating delays where the loop system prevails. That system operates on the Maylands route which serves the Maylands and Bayswater districts. If the

trolley-buses operated through these districts, not only would they assist the Bayswater area, but also that section mentioned by the member for East Perth, served by the buses operating in Peninsula-rd. It has been urged, in connection with that proposal, that the Peninsula-rd. buses should be extended further to serve the needs of the people far distant from Guildford-road. I put it to the Minister that the time is overdue for his department to carry out the recommendations agreed to many years ago in connection with the development of modern transport. People at Bayswater have been complaining because, although a private omnibus system serves the area beyond the terminus, it is not able always to cope with the traffic so that on occasions fully loaded buses leave intending passengers standing on the side of the road.

My claim here also applies to the Beaufort-street extension. The service there is undoubtedly one of the best paying propositions in the tramway system. Whilst that service is reasonable I say that the development and extension of a modern system is warranted. An extension was made along Beaufort-street some years ago, and there is now an agitation for a further extension. Long tram routes in this State are not economical. We need to have a faster system beyond a distance of three miles. I hope, therefore, that no further tramway extensions will be made in Beaufort-street, but that trolley-buses will be instituted.

Mr. Cross: They would be infinitely better than trams.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: Yes. If we can get more trolley-buses road construction difficulties will be obviated because there will not be the same wear and tear as with road traffic. Much of the money now spent on the maintenance of roads for the upkeep of trams will not be necessary. Recently submitted to the Minister for Railways and discussed with the Chairman of the Transport Board a proposition to establish a connecting link between the Beaufort-street tram and Guildford-road. The reply, unfortunately, was that there were neither buses nor men available to effect such an improvement.

The member for Guildford-Midland, who is absent from the State for the time being, represents another portion of the eastern

suburban districts, and on his behalf I also raise these matters for consideration in the interests of his constituents.

There is another section of the transport system that should receive attention. What applies to the Bayswater and Maylands districts applies equally to the Belmont area. In the last mentioned district a private bus service operates and I have had complaints regarding that service generally. In connection with the recommendation I made, to which I alluded earlier, it was suggested that a round system should be adopted whereby the transport would run from the city through Guildford, over the Garrett-road bridge and back to Bayswater. A scheme of that description was recommended 10 years ago or perhaps more. The time is rapidly approaching when effect should be given to the recommendation in that respect.

Another matter in which I have been interested ever since I was first elected to Parliament—interest has also been taken in it by the member for Guildford-Midland—concerns the residents of Meltham Heights between Maylands and Bayswater. Development is taking place there at a fast rate and a little over 12 months ago, in reply to a submission I made for an improved transport service there, the department advised that a solution of the difficulty would be the construction of a new siding. I have introduced deputations to almost every Minister for Railways apart from the present occupant of the office urging that the work should be taken in hand. Many people in the district bought their blocks 18 or 20 years ago when they were told the time was not far distant when adequate transport facilities would be provided. Ever since then the residents have had to walk long distances to avail themselves of transport, and they are getting rather exasperated because of the long delay that has occurred in providing the requisite facilities. Some years ago it seemed as though it was almost within sight of being brought to fruition, but then something happened and it is now as far away as ever.

I am pleased to see mentioned in the report of the Commissioner of Railways of an amount of £6,000 having been set aside for the construction of the siding at Meltham, and I desire particularly to draw the Minister's attention to that with a view to his taking action as soon as possible. I hope he will

take note of the fact that deputation after deputation has dealt with the matter over the past 18 years or so, and I trust that he will do what he can to assist. To indicate how costs have increased, at one stage it was estimated that the work could be carried out for £3,700 but today, as I mentioned, the Commissioner of Railways has set aside £6,000 for the provision of the siding. However, I trust the Minister will deal with the proposition at the earliest possible date. While I realise that the manpower position has been difficult and that men are not returning from the war as quickly as we would like, I expect that before another 12 months have elapsed the position will be considerably relieved and that labour will be available to carry out essential works.

I notice that £28,000 has been set aside in connection with the conservation of Collic coal at Midland Junction. For many years past what is known as Hooley's Dam has been gradually filled in and it is now intended to make use of it for the conservation of coal to provide against any emergency that may arise. I think the department has decided upon that in the nick of time because the filling-in process has been going on for years. Hooley Dam served the railway system for water supply purposes in the early years, but the intention now is to dump coal in the dam so that it will be covered by the water and thus preserved from deterioration. I hope the matters I have mentioned will receive the attention of the Minister, and that at an early date appropriate action will be taken in the interests of the residents of the eastern suburbs.

**Mr. MANN** (Beverley) [11.28]: I listened with interest to the very long speech delivered by the Minister for Railways in introducing his Estimates last night. During the course of his remarks he dealt with the various transport activities in Western Australia. He painted a very gloomy picture, and we can well be gloomy regarding the position of our transport system. I do not think that anywhere else in Australia could we find railways in a more deplorable condition than those in Western Australia. The Railway Department has practically a monopoly over the whole of our transport system. It was said last night that when motor tyres and petrol are available to meet the public demand, there will be no passengers

carried by the railways and that that may be so at no far distant date. Take even the fast Diesel coaches! A trip by Diesel coach from Beverley to Perth takes four hours whereas the journey can be accomplished by motorcar in two hours.

Let members consider the position in the outer parts and they will realise that the public will not take into consideration the effect upon revenue or the augmenting of the deficit that will be implied. They will not care about that but will avail themselves of the easiest and fastest means of transport procurable in order to get to the city expeditiously. I saw in "The West Australian" this morning an illustration of the elaborate passenger train that is to be installed on the service between Perth and Fremantle. If that step has been taken at the instigation of the present Minister for Railways, I think the train could well be named "William Mortimer Marshall". The Minister has at least earned that honour for himself. I think it would look very well in a colour scheme with green and yellow predominating, and the Minister's name could be superimposed.

The Premier: What colour would you suggest?

Mr. MANN: Very definitely—gold.

Mr. J. Hegney: But the Minister does not believe in gold!

Mr. Smith: No, he is off the gold standard.

Mr. MANN: The Minister quoted what Professor Soddy had to say and according to him the position is perfectly clear that there will be no chance of recovering from our public indebtedness.

I had occasion recently to go to Kalgoorlie and I wish to paint to the Committee a picture of the conditions I encountered. The train had been held up in Perth for 24 hours owing to the strike, and at breakfast in the dining-car on Sunday morning, the steward serving at the table wore the filthiest coat I have ever seen and the napkin he used on the plates was filthier still. Many of the people travelling east that day did not worry about having breakfast, and the majority of those who did decided to have boiled eggs, believing that there would be at least some safety there. In the kitchen, conditions were no better; the cook was a greasy Greek, or some other foreign-looking individual.

When I returned on the Trans. line, I found the conditions a credit to the Com-

monwealth. Many of the passengers had been making their first trip to Western Australia and were utterly disgusted with the conditions on our section of the line. Compared with the Trans. train, our train looked dilapidated, and it was stuck up at Coolgardie for 20 minutes before it was able to pull over the hill. The weather was frightfully hot and no consideration was given to the comfort of the women and children.

The Minister for Lands: No beer on the train?

Mr. MANN: Yes, and it was in the ice-box, instead of the ice being made available for the women and children on the train. The women and children were just a secondary consideration.

The Minister for Lands: Who owned the beer?

Mr. MANN: Some of the passengers, but apparently the officials thought it wiser to put the beer into the ice-box than to make the ice available to the women and children. All they had to drink was tepid water. I think I have said enough to indicate the dilapidated condition of our railways and the shocking meals that are served. I was only sorry that the Minister was not on the train to see for himself the filthy condition of the dining-car attendant. I dare say if he had been there, he would have wanted to know the reason why. The member for Pingelly spoke about the railway refreshment-rooms. At Spencer's Brook at least, the traveller finds decency and gets attention, but at Chidlow the sandwiches that are served often contain tinned meat, and are a disgrace to the State. At Northam, one can get a bottle of coffee.

The Minister for Lands: It is pretty good, too.

Mr. MANN: The pie usually served at these refreshment-rooms is badly cooked, or half-cooked, or badly burnt. Why should the lessees of these refreshment rooms be compelled to pay exorbitant prices for their leases? I understand that the lessee at Chidlow pays £1,600 a year and the lessee at Spencer's Brook £800—anything to make a little more revenue for the department rather than give the travelling public the decent service to which it is entitled. The Railway Department seems intent upon grinding out of the public every penny it can possibly get.

The Premier: I suppose tenders were called and the lessees offered those amounts.

Mr. J. Hegney: Are you blaming the Government for the bad pies that are supplied?

Mr. MANN: I am blaming the supervision. When a tenderer is granted a lease of refreshment-rooms, he should supply public requirements decently, or the lease should be cancelled.

The Premier: At times I should like to have a few of those pies here.

Mr. MANN: So would I.

The Minister for Works: But not to eat them.

Mr. MANN: I wish Ministers had to eat some of those pies; it would have the effect of stirring them up a little. I repeat that the department is evidently determined to get every penny of revenue it can from these leases. If the Government put in a staff of its own to run the refreshment-rooms, provided the employees did not adopt a go-slow policy or an attitude of "take it or leave it", some good might result. There should be a system of periodical inspection of these refreshment-rooms.

The Premier: Attendance is vital, too.

Mr. MANN: It is. The lessee at Chidlow is paying such a high price that he probably has to screw and scrape to make any profit out of the business. On the other hand, he might be making excessive profits. It would be a good idea to have these tenders and details of the profits laid on the Table of the House and then we would be able to gain a better knowledge of the position. We would certainly learn whether or not the public was being fleeced.

I cannot refrain from painting a gloomy picture when I deal with the railways. I have been a member of Parliament for 15 years and each year there has been the same old tale to tell. If I am still here three years hence, I wonder whether any alteration will have been made.

The Minister for Lands: Do not be pessimistic!

Mr. MANN: The Minister told us last night that a committee had been appointed, but then went on to state that the committee had been so busy dealing with other questions that it had not been able to make any investigation of transport matters. If the

Government were wise, it would appoint an outsider with a wide knowledge of transport administration and let him put the whole business in order. If the Commissioner of Railways is not doing the job, he should be removed. In matters of this sort, sentiment no longer counts. If the head of the tramways and electricity supply is not efficient, get rid of him!

The Minister for Works: What about the member for Beverley?

Mr. MANN: If he is not efficient, he, too, should be got rid of. The electors decide my fate, but Parliament has the responsibility of dealing with the officials I have mentioned. Let us have courage and, where necessary, say, "You cannot do the job and so we must appoint somebody who can." There has been far too much softness in our administration. Is it that the Secretary or the Commissioner or other officials of the department are able to bluff Ministers?

I wish to discuss the question of the construction of the standard-gauge railway from Kalgoorlie to Perth. Has any decision yet been made by the Government? I understand that the Minister for Railways attended a conference recently and, according to a Press report, the conference agreed upon the adoption of a standard gauge for Australia.

The Premier: That subject is almost sub-judice.

Mr. MANN: The Minister last night stated that the Government had not yet come to a decision. I understand that the Premier will shortly be attending another conference to decide the issue. I should like to know what is going to happen. Will the standard line follow the route of the existing line from Kalgoorlie to Northam, or will the new line be taken through Hyden, Corrigin and Brookton to Armadale, thus serving a vast area of new country? Will the Government have any say as to the route to be adopted?

Mr. Withers: Why not build lines on all the routes that have been suggested?

Mr. MANN: Let us be logical in the matter. The State Government should have some say on the question of the route, unless all our rights have been handed over to the Commonwealth. Is the line to be constructed from Kalgoorlie via Toodyay to



Northam or is a fresh survey to be made of the route recommended in the Stileman scheme?

The Minister for Railways: You first have to be sure that such a railway is coming into existence.

Mr. MANN: The Minister said that a conference had been called to decide upon the gauge and I understand the Premier will shortly attend another conference on the same matter. What is the position? Let us hear what the Government knows about the route to be adopted! Is this just a farcical idea or is it intended to be brought to fruition? All I get is silence, which is characteristic of the present Government.

The Premier: But action when necessary.

The Minister for Lands: Silence is also golden. Let us have a bit of it!

Mr. MANN: I doubt the wisdom of silence on a question of this importance. We, as His Majesty's Opposition, have responsibility in the matter and are entitled to be given the information. I observe that the Premier nods. If he has nothing to tell us, will the Minister give us the information?

The Premier: I will tell you nothing by interjection in answer to irresponsible questions.

Mr. MANN: These are not irresponsible questions. I asked whether it is a fact that we are to have a standard-gauge line, and whether it is the intention that the line shall run parallel with the existing railway from Kalgoorlie to Northam.

The Minister for Railways: You have first to know that a standard line is coming into existence.

Mr. MANN: Then the Government does not know whether it is coming into existence?

The Minister for Lands: That sour look does not suit you.

The Premier: This is my answer to your questions, that all the interests of Western Australia will be closely watched.

Mr. MANN: I thank the Premier for that answer. The trouble is that we do not know what the policy of the Government is.

The Minister for Works: You are talking with your tongue around the back of your neck.

Mr. Thorn: That is an unfair remark.

Mr. MANN: The Minister with his peculiar name and frame, might be able to adopt the attitude he suggests, but I cannot. When I ask such questions, I speak with sincerity and have no intention of wasting the time of the Committee. Owing to the lack of information, I have been compelled to ask the questions; otherwise I might have finished my remarks in the space of a few minutes. All we want is some information. I wish to pay this tribute to the Minister for Railways that he has introduced one innovation and that is the bus service to Narembuen. I believe many other parts of the State should be similarly served, and I appreciate what the Minister has done.

The Premier: We can perhaps call the bus the James Isaac Mann.

Mr. MANN: I am not seeking publicity of that sort, though I appreciate the Premier's kindly suggestion. The tramway system is very unsatisfactory. The steps of the cars are very high and some of the trams are very uncomfortable. If I were a member of the Tramway Employees' Union and were instructed to drive one of those small trams, I would ask the union to declare it black. It is not right that men should be asked to drive those rickety, jerky things for six hours a day.

The Premier: Are they not green?

Mr. MANN: Why is it that a larger type of trolley-bus is not adopted in this State?

The Premier: To run on the tram lines?

Mr. MANN: There is no need for the Premier to be facetious. Now that the war is over, admittedly there will be tremendous congestion at the peak periods. Other States have adopted buses of the double-decker type, which are quite effective. We still have the old type of trams in use with an exit at each end only, instead of having other exits also in the centre. Surely the Minister should be prepared to introduce some new ideas to meet the increase of traffic!

The Premier: I think there is something wrong with your liver today.

Mr. MANN: I never felt in a happier mood. Another innovation that the Government might well adopt is the institution of morning sittings for Parliament. I hope

that when the next session arrives we shall meet earlier, and then there will not be the need for so much talk at night. I feel sure that members talk more when they are feeling tired.

The Premier: You must have been up late last night.

Mr. Thorn: That was the Premier's fault.

Mr. MANN: I presume it is unnecessary to wait for Parliament to meet again. I do not know when that will be—whether it will be in March or April—

The Minister for Lands: Another fishing expedition!

Mr. MANN: —or whether it will be in next July. Apparently the Minister has no idea.

The Premier: I will send you a wire the day we decide.

Mr. MANN: I hope the committee the Minister has appointed to investigate transport problems will make its findings public. I would like to know the personnel of the committee. The Minister says the members have been very busy and have been unable to complete their job; but the committee should have nothing else to do except investigate this matter. Will the Minister assure the Chamber that when the findings have been made, they will be given to the Press for publication so that the people will know the position? Silence again!

The Minister for Lands: More gold!

Mr. MANN: It seems to be impossible to get anything out of the Government. It is useless to plead; and, as I am not accustomed to engaging in abuse, I will not resort to that. I do hope there will be some improvement in the transport system because the railways belong to the people and all heavy traffic will have to be carried over the railways, and not over roads; though there will doubtless be feeders for the railways. Irrespective of what happens with regard to the development of air transport, most of the heavy traffic will be taken by rail, but I see a sad picture—

The Minister for Lands: Do not look at me when you say that!

Mr. MANN:—showing that when tyres and petrol are freely obtainable the railway deficit will be increased, because people will not travel by train and they will not be stopped from going by car.

The Minister for Lands: Quite right, too; this is a democracy.

Mr. MANN: Who is to meet the burden of debt except the taxpayer? The introduction of additional modern buses such as those being tried out in the Naremburn area and at Kojonup would bring revenue to the State, because they would be run by the Government and not by private enterprise. Let us have that revenue so that we may continue to build up our State. It must be admitted that our railways are in a sad condition. Year by year they have declined and the burden of debt has increased. Instead of a local committee, which might tend to be parochial, somebody from outside should be appointed to make a thorough investigation of our transport problems. Let us pay a competent man a fee and accept his findings. If it transpires that the unions are running the State, let the Government do so instead. If the Commissioner is found to be incompetent, get rid of him. I am afraid that if the committee happens to be contaminated by the Railway Department its findings will be in favour of the department and not in the interests of the State. We should obtain the services of a man from outside, who has practical business experience and can formulate a suitable policy. That will not be done by any local body the members of which are interested in holding their jobs.

**MR. McLARTY** (Murray-Wellington) [11.48]: I have only a few observations to make on this vote. I think the Commissioner is receiving a considerable amount of blame that is not justified. A capital account amounting to over £26,000,000 is not a fair thing for the Commissioner. The suggestion has been made in this Chamber that he should be relieved of portion of the burden, and I consider that should be done. I know that if we relieved the Commissioner of that burden, the Treasurer would still have the responsibility of finding interest on the money and of eventually paying it. But it is natural that when the Commissioner is faced with this huge interest burden, he will seek to keep down his deficit. The Treasurer is anxious to do the same. But I would point out that a good deal of this work has been of a developmental character. Railways have been constructed in areas with no possible hope of their meeting interest obligations or paying their way. Yet we book this up

against the Commissioner and criticise him because of his deficit. There should be some attempt to relieve the Commissioner of portion of this capital debt—that portion which could be termed developmental. That would give him more heart to carry out many of the improvements that have been suggested.

I want to say something about railways as they affect the South-West of the State. I am prepared to make due allowance for war-caused conditions such as belated repairs. All those belated repairs that have to be attended to, plus the many improvements asked for in the way of buildings, etc., will be debited to capital account, and the amount of £26 800,000 which we have in the capital account will be considerably increased; hence our interest bill will mount. I want to draw attention to the passenger service on the South-West line. As the Minister knows, the South-West is the most thickly populated part of the State, so far as country areas are concerned. If we take that portion of the line between Perth and Bunbury, we find there is only one train per week on which people can travel up and down and allow themselves time in which to conduct business while in the city. There are mixed goods trains, but they run so irregularly that it is unsafe for people to rely on catching them to Perth in order to do business.

Mr. W. Hegney: Did you say there was only one train a week?

Mr. McLARTY: Yes; it leaves Bunbury on Friday at 5.30 a.m., and leaves Perth at 5 p.m. the same day. The only other trains that could be caught would be one leaving Bunbury at 11 p.m. and reaching Perth at 8 a.m. next day or else mixed goods trains from Brunswick. Sometimes the goods train gets in only an hour or so before it is necessary to catch a train for the return journey. The Railway Department is able to run about 20 trains to Armadale on what is called the outer suburban service. I have seen trains running practically empty between Perth and Fremantle. If that is the case, surely the Minister can give us at least one more passenger train per week between Perth and Bunbury, similar to the one running on Fridays. I think we are entitled to an improved passenger service on that line. I would remind the Minister that the passenger service on the Perth-Bunbury line

today is not as good as it was when I was a boy. So we have not made much progress with regard to improved passenger services on that route. I would ask the Minister to discuss the matter with the Commissioner with a view to seeing whether the necessary improvements can be effected.

I would like to refer to the transport of stock. Saleyards are being opened at quite a number of centres throughout the South-Western districts. I suggest to the Minister that in order to bring about the necessary improvements in regard to transport, he should call a conference between himself, the Commissioner and stock agents. If he did this, I think the necessary requirements would be indicated and the Commissioner would have a plan to work upon. Before the war arrangements were made to supply electricity to the Mundijong-Serpentine district. Poles were on the job and plans were in hand to proceed with the work immediately. Owing to the outbreak of war the project was cancelled. If that matter were regarded as a first priority before the war, it should still be considered a first priority. There are added reasons why this work should be put in hand.

Mr. Seward called attention to the state of the Committee.

Bells rung and a quorum formed.

Mr. McLARTY: I have nothing more to say except to ask the Minister to give consideration to the proposal to extend electricity to the Mundijong-Serpentine district.

Mr. LESLIE (Mt. Marshall) [11.57]: I sympathise with the Minister in having been obliged to introduce his Estimates so late in the session. I sympathise even more with members, because the late introduction of the Estimates must inevitably reduce, to some extent, the discussion that would take place on them, and quite possibly may tend to discourage or at any rate not encourage members to bring forward questions of vital importance. The Minister mentioned that at one stage there was only a trickle of loan funds being made available for the purpose of railway renovations, replacements, repairs and maintenance. Knowing the Minister's ideas on finance, it seems to me a pity that he was not in his present position when the availability of loan funds would not have interfered in any way—under his system—

with the efficient maintenance, development and improvement of our railway system.

I am glad to hear that a committee has been appointed to inquire into railway management. I am glad for two reasons: first, it is filling a long-felt want; secondly, its appointment indicates an acceptance that the arguments from this side of the Chamber, that there is a dire need for an alteration in the system of railway management were based on something substantial. It indicates, too, the Government's desire to assist when we do bring forward matters requiring attention. I hope the Minister will, in future, accede similarly to requests from this side of the Chamber. I want to know who are the members of the committee, as I think it should be a committee of businessmen, to overhaul not only the management of the railways but the capital system on which the railways are based. The financial system of the railways is unique and, if it is continued, in order to meet our obligations we will have to increase fares and freights to an exorbitant degree.

If the system had been run as a private concern the money required, instead of being provided out of Loan funds, would have been provided by shareholders and there would have been no call for interest payments. A sum would have been set aside each year out of earnings to meet depreciation, and that would have allowed for maintenance and replacements. Had that been done from the commencement, instead of the capital charge against the railways today being £26,000,000, and had even  $1\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. been set aside for depreciation, that sum would have been considerably reduced. Instead of the railways having to borrow money every year for replacement purposes, at added interest charges, portion of the earnings would have been used and the extra burden would not have been placed on the system. Since the commencement of the system in 1879, £30,000,000 of earnings has gone into the Treasury. That has been required to meet interest on the borrowed money, and has been insufficient, but only because of the system of finance.

Had the capital of the railways been really invested, instead of being merely loan money, we would have had an efficient railway system and a considerable amount of the £30,000,000 would have been spent without increasing the capital charge. As the Gov-

ernment has adopted the suggestion from this side of the Chamber on the need for alteration in the management, I hope it will adopt my suggestion that a committee of businessmen be appointed.

The Premier: Do you not think businessmen might decide on an increase in fares and freights?

Mr. LESLIE: No.

The Minister for Railways: They would not be businessmen if they did not.

Mr. LESLIE: Their first action would be to have an exhaustive stocktaking of the railways in order to write the system down to its real capital value.

The Premier: When that had been done, if an increase in fares and freights was warranted, what would be your attitude?

Mr. LESLIE: I cannot see that an increase in fares and freights would be warranted. The Commissioner has suggested that because we are unable to meet the interest charge imposed on the railways, and have operated this year at a loss of £518,000, he has three courses open by which to meet the deficit, one of them being an increase in freights and fares, but he has over £500,000 as the difference between earnings and working expenses. That is not sufficient to meet the interest charge, but if it was a surplus amount of money available for depreciation and payment of dividends to shareholders we would find that there would be no justification for an increase in freights and fares, because the capital value would be so written down as to make that £500,000 a considerable percentage of the actual capital employed in the business. Over half of the capital charged against the railways today has actually disappeared.

The position is similar to that of a private company that commenced with £26,000,000 and found it could only employ £13,000,000 in the business and yet continued to pay dividends on the £13,000,000 that was lying idle. If we wiped off portion of the sum that has been refunded to the Treasury I am satisfied that the earnings would be more than sufficient to provide each year for maintenance, extensions and a return to the Treasury. Before the war I saw in the Press a report that one of the Agents General of Western Australia boasted in London that the Western Australian railway system, were it a private concern, was the only one in

the world, actually operated by a Government, that would return a dividend of nearly 4 per cent. to its shareholders. That was advanced as evidence of the solidarity and potentialities of this State. If the system was run as a business concern the freights and fares could be reduced, or, if the present figure were maintained, it would provide an amount of revenue that would render unnecessary the use of loan funds to improve the system and purchase additional requirements. I warn or threaten the Committee—

The Premier: That is against Standing Orders.

Mr. LESLIE: —that I propose to go into the figures and eventually to submit an argument on these lines to prove my contention and to show, down to a unit, what would be the amount written off over a period of years on the railways, and what should be the capital value today. I believe that will prove that an increase in fares and freights is unjustified. The Minister might even see if he can get some of the £30,000,000 back from the Treasury, instead of asking for more loan funds. Earlier this year I asked the Premier to receive a deputation from people interested in the Yarramony-eastward railway.

The Minister for Lands: We thought that had died years ago.

Mr. LESLIE: That project has been mentioned repeatedly in this House.

The Minister for Lands: There is more in "Hansard" about that railway than about any other.

Mr. LESLIE: That does not lessen the merit of the project, and the claim submitted at that time is even more justified today. When I entered the House I said the golden age of railways was past and that the job of the railways in future would be heavy haulage. The Yarramony district requires either a railway or a road transport system to overcome the handicaps of the people there when compared with those served by better transport, either road or rail. I hope the Minister will make a careful examination of the Yarramony railway project. He may not have interested himself in the matter when he was a private member, but knowing him to be determined to go into all aspects of propositions submitted, I ask him to investigate the project and see if it is possible to provide the people

in that area with either a railway service or a road transport service.

Another matter causing agitation in my district is that of the fares on Diesel and steam trains. At the beginning of this month the department substituted a steam train for the Diesel train that had been running on the Wyalkatchem-Goomalling-Merredin line. I understand that the timetable is the same, but there is one factor that is causing considerable discontent. People who travel on the Diesel trains do so on the basis of a second class fare. Those of whom I am speaking have had two or three years of travel on Diesel trains, and they have been accustomed merely to going on to the station, buying their second class tickets and proceeding to Perth. Now they find they have to pay either for a first or second class ticket, according to the type of carriage they are in. Without thinking they merely get into a carriage and if it happens to be of the wrong class they find they have to pay extra. On the Diesel trains there is no distinction between the classes. I understand the substitution of one type of train for the other was merely a matter of departmental convenience and, if that is so, the passengers should not be penalised by having to pay an additional fare because they happen to travel in a first class coach.

Mr. Kelly: Is the fare the same in both cases?

Mr. LESLIE: The fare is the same for a second class carriage. When they travel second class on a steam train they may still find themselves as overcrowded as they do when they travel on the Diesel train. Those people who prefer a little more comfort of course travel first class if a steam train is available. What is required is an additional service and more accommodation for passengers. People do not like to have to travel crowded together like sheep. We have no objection to the steam train, but when people have to travel by it instead of by Diesel train they object to paying a first class fare. Without any intention of defrauding the department people unthinkingly get into a compartment, only to find en route that the ticket collector makes them pay the first class fare.

There were times when because of heavy traffic a steam train was substituted for the Diesel, and on such occasions no additional

fare was demanded if people travelled in a first class coach. Travellers are under the impression that the same principle applies today, to find that they are obliged to pay more for their journey. Early in the session I brought to the notice of the department the very unsatisfactory conditions prevailing in connection with the service available for children at school holiday periods. I received an assurance from the Minister that that would not happen again. Now is the opportunity, on the eve of the school holidays, for the Minister and the department to carry out the promise made as at that time. I ask the Minister to make certain that sufficient special trains are run at the breaking-up period with a view to removing any possibility of children having to travel to their homes not only under conditions of extreme discomfort but to a considerable extent to travel under conditions of hardship, such as those from which they have suffered in the last two or three years. The Minister is now forewarned and the matter has been brought to his attention.

I submit as a suggestion that it would be an excellent idea if the department were to advertise a few days beforehand the departure times and the conditions associated with such special trains for the transport of children from schools to their homes, and the same thing could be done at the end of the holiday period when the schools resume. I compliment the Minister on the exceptionally prompt and sympathetic manner in which he has dealt with requests made by me from time to time. I thank him for the treatment he has meted out to me. I trust that as the result of his high ideals and his determination to provide the public with something better in the way of railway transport he will not, as was the case with his predecessors, find himself up against a brick wall, a form of passive resistance on the part of others who have had positions vested in them and have assumed a security of tenure entitling them to think that they have the right to travel along a narrow road and to preserve only a narrow outlook.

**Mr. HILL** (Albany) [12.20]: Our railways have been the subject of much adverse criticism. I have before pointed out that the deplorable condition of our railways is due to the fact that we have not and never have had a sound transport administration. I

was pleased some months ago to hear over the air that the State Government had decided to appoint a Minister for Transport, but was very disappointed subsequently to learn of the job that had been given to him. In Great Britain there is an Institute of Transport. It is the practice of the chairman of that organisation, when taking office, to give an address. I have in my hand the presidential address given by Sir David J. Owen in 1932. In his concluding remarks Sir David said—

One essential point is that we should look at the problem of transport as a whole. The word "co-ordination" is very much overworked nowadays, so I use the term "co-operation." The present is a time when it is more necessary than ever to have the closest measure of co-operation in all public utility services. There is scope for considerable scientific research as regards co-operation between all branches of transport.

That it falls within the province of this Institute to study this matter I have no doubt. If the Institute is to justify its name it cannot be an Institute of railway transport only, it cannot be an Institute of road transport only or of aviation or of canals or of docks. If it is to justify its ambitions and its comprehensive title of The Institute of Transport, it cannot remain satisfied merely to publish papers on technical points relating to one or other branch of transport, but must grapple somehow with the realm of transport as a unified whole and so create a proper atmosphere in which to deal in an enlightened manner with the problems which are now looming large on our horizon.

The golden age of the railways has gone; but the railways under wise control may still have a useful function to perform—a more limited one than in the past, it is true! The self-propelled road vehicle has a wide but not unlimited scope for useful service to the community. The real service to be rendered by canals has yet to be realised. The possibilities of commercial aviation have yet to be explored. The shipping business of this country is carried on with a high degree of efficiency but there is surely scope for more transport by ships coastwise. Each of these forms of transport is capable of rendering a definite service to the community and should only be called upon to perform the work it is best fitted for. The tendency with workers in all spheres of activity is to regard their functions as the end and not as the means to some other end; for instance, the railway mind seems to look upon docks as existing for no other purpose but to feed the railways.

I visualise, however, a day not far distant when the legitimate function of each of the various methods of transport will be defined clearly and regulated in the best interests of the national needs and, in the picture that will then be on view, docks and harbours will

be seen in their proper perspective acting as efficiency links between sea transport on the one side and the various forms of land transport on the other.

Our railways have been severely handicapped because we have had no authority continually to study the whole problem of aiming at proper co-ordination and co-operation between all our activities. They have been handicapped because our ports have not been looked at in their proper perspective. There is a tendency to run this State for the benefits of its ports. I will not say anything more on that point at the moment because the subject is now being investigated by a Select Committee. I wish, however, to refer to the new train service between Albany and Perth. Generally speaking, it is an improvement compared with the previous service, but it constitutes a decided disadvantage to our southern port. Under the old service people in Albany had from seven and a half hours to 10 hours 17 minutes, when the train was on time, in which to do business. Under the present service the time has been reduced to six hours and 45 minutes. When the train is late the people who have business in Albany are at a serious disadvantage in regard to replying to letters from the metropolitan area. Friday is usually farmers' day in town, and instead of their having 10 hours 17 minutes in which to do business they now only have six hours and 45 minutes.

I point out that the port at Albany is under the control of the Railway Department. There we have a very fine example of the fact that the railways should never be allowed to administer a port. Albany could be the best milch-cow in the Commissioner's herd. A farmer does not get milk so that he may have a cow. He has to get the cow to supply him with the milk for nothing. Had the port of Albany been properly administered the railways would not have been in their present position. One of our troubles is that we are endeavouring to manage a big State with one port and one railway system. Railway administration in connection with a port means that it is trying to apply the policy of the past and not a policy for the future. Instead of saying "We will provide the facilities that the trade will need," the railways say "When the trade is there we will provide the facilities." I desire to compliment the railway staff. I consider that the employees are doing a wonderful job, particularly the engine-drivers. It is a

great credit to the railway employees that in the last five or six years they have been able to get the results they have with dilapidated and worn-out rollingstock.

Mr. Cross: You had better send a copy of those remarks to the union.

Mr. HILL: They deserve the compliment. There should be more co-operation between the employees and the railway administration. The present railway system is capable of much improvement. It would be more economical to modernise the existing system than endeavour to embark upon a 4 feet 8½ inch gauge. One of the most satisfactory railway systems in the world is found in South Africa, where the 3 feet 6 inch gauge is in use. We have a big State and I am confident that it has a great future. Its development and prosperity depend upon a complete, efficient and economical system of transport throughout. Our aim must be to have a complete system, to have our transport activities working where they can best serve the State. In the past the interests of the State as a whole have been considered only in the light of the selfish ambitions of small interests. We must work for the good of the whole State, and not from the point of view of the parochial ambitions of various different localities. Our aim must be not the minimum railway mileage that we can do with but the minimum total cost that it will be to the whole community.

MR. WILLMOTT (Sussex) [12.30]: I did not intend to speak on these Estimates, but feel that I should make a few remarks about my own district. I would impress upon the Minister the slowness of the trains in the South-West. The member for Murray-Wellington dealt with the subject and I shall carry on from Picton to Busselton. We have a good daily service from Perth to Bunbury; but there is only a mixed train from Picton to Busselton. I ask the Minister whether he cannot arrange for a passenger service to connect between Picton and Busselton twice a week, as that would be of great advantage to the travelling public.

Mr. Cross: What about a Diesel service?

Mr. WILLMOTT: We had a Diesel, but it could not cope with the service. A trailer was attached to it, but still that did not prove adequate for the service. Eventually the Diesel was replaced by a steam train,

which is quite satisfactory. If we could have a passenger train, instead of a mixed train, twice a week, it would, as I said, be of advantage. The branch line from Busselton to Nannup is only 45 miles, but the train takes over four hours, at 10 miles an hour. From Busselton to Flinders Bay is 67 miles and the journey occupies a little over seven hours. Members will agree with me that that is a frightfully slow service and I ask the Minister whether he cannot give us a faster one; if not, would the department object to a local person providing a bus service between Busselton and Flinders Bay? I put the whole proposal before the Transport Board a few weeks ago and submitted applications from four people who were willing to provide a bus service. The board was going to put the matter to the Railway Department and let me know the result. That is about three weeks ago, since when I have not had an opportunity to see Mr. Millen, but I presume nothing further has been done. I hope the Minister will consider this request, because the present service is desperately slow. Even if the bus service were temporary, it would be of great advantage to the travelling public.

There has been some discussion about refreshment-rooms. The member for Pingelly mentioned last evening that the Picton Junction refreshment-room was not run very well. He has evidently made a mistake, because that is one of the refreshment-rooms which is well conducted. There are four refreshment-rooms concerned, three of which are well run. One is not as satisfactory as the others and that is the one I presume the member for Pingelly is talking about. The Minister suggested that perhaps the department would take over the refreshment-rooms. That may be all right; but I point out that there are three on the South-West line which are conducted satisfactorily. I also ask the Minister whether it is possible to open a refreshment-room at Busselton. The train leaves Perth at 11.35 p.m. on Sundays and Wednesdays for Flinders Bay. The last refreshment-room before reaching Flinders Bay is at Boyanup, and the train arrives there at 8 o'clock in the morning, so that the passengers must then wait for refreshments until 5 o'clock that evening, when they ar-

rive at Flinders Bay. I have interviewed the Railway Department on this subject.

I was told the department called for tenders for the refreshment-room at Busselton; but, owing to some disagreement, I understand the department was not willing to assist in the building of the room. I would like the Minister to look into that matter. I think it would be possible to get someone to tender for the room. The Minister has not been in office for a very long period and we know he is endeavouring to do a good job. I think he is tackling the work in the right way and that is why I am not criticising the railways on this occasion as I have done in the past on the Estimates. The Minister has not been long enough in office to warrant his being criticised. I hope he will do his utmost for my electorate.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [12.36]: I was very sorry to see no announcement regarding air services to the South-West and southern towns. These services would, of course, compete with the railways; but I believe the Minister is favourable to the idea that there should be fast services to the southern part of the State and I feel that the railways could well encourage those services, because no doubt many people will still prefer travel on a modernised fast railway service to air transport. They are two separate services altogether and one should not fight or impede the other. At the moment there is undoubtedly some fear on the part of the Railway Department that the air services will interfere with its traffic; and correspondingly the aviation companies will be somewhat hostile to the Railway Department because they feel that, on account of the powerful influence which the department can exert, they might be prevented from carrying on their services for which, after all, the public are looking. With regard to the railways, the Minister has plenty to do. My attitude towards the department at the moment is: Let us give the Government and the Minister at least another 12 months after the war to get going. After the terrible ordeal through which we have gone, too many words at this stage will not make matters easier.

I was pleased to read in the Press that the Government is putting on a new suburban train that may be the forerunner of



many others. I am sure that on Tuesday next people will be interested in ascertaining whether the new train, apart from affording a more comfortable service, will be speedier and reduce the stopping time on the run between Perth and Fremantle. The people are looking forward to a train on the metropolitan service which will cut at least ten minutes off the existing running time between Perth and Fremantle and reduce the delays at the various stations. With regard to the standard gauge proposal, I do not think I need waste the time of the Committee on this subject. The Commonwealth authorities are investigating the matter and we may have some announcement with regard to it in January. I do not disagree with the member for Albany in his statement that money should be spent on improving local lines, as it may be 10 or 12 years before any move is made to convert our existing lines, other than the main east-west line. That matter does not need labouring at this stage. An announcement has been made of a large plan for providing additional rollingstock. I was surprised not to see in that announcement a reference to refrigerated vans.

I understand many complaints have been made because refrigerated vans are not available for the transport of perishables, so that the people in country districts may benefit by this convenience, and city-dwellers have quick transport of perishables to the city. The question is vital; it may be included in the Minister's plan, although it is not actually mentioned. I bring this matter strongly before the Minister because, in public affairs, we have now reached a stage where one question links up with another far more than it did in the past. For instance, a scheme is afoot in regard to the marketing of vegetables and fruit, which today is unsatisfactory. It is proposed that refrigerated space should be provided in the districts where the vegetables and fruit are grown. These could then be taken from the refrigerator to the railways and transported to the city. If refrigerated vans were provided on the railways, then these perishables would arrive in fresh condition in the city.

One other point of great importance was referred to by the Commissioner of Railways in his report. It is proposed that a ramp should be built at one railway station

at least to enable mothers to wheel their perambulators from the road to the platform. That is a fine improvement and I would like to see it extended to all parts of the State. Similar ramps could be provided where people have to cross bridges to reach platforms. Ramps could be provided for perambulators similar to those provided at the G.P.O. I hope this convenience will be placed at the Claremont, Cottesloe and Swanbourne stations.

The Minister for Lands: Have you any children there?

Mr. NORTH: I am not asking for these ramps for my own district only. I am only asking that my electorate should share in these general improvements. Another point of great interest to the people of Claremont and Cottesloe is the statement made by the Minister that he has ordered 50 trolley-buses. The question of interest is, where are these buses to run?

The Minister for Lands: Leederville!

Mr. Cross: South Perth has been promised trolley-buses for years.

Mr. NORTH: What chance has South Perth of getting trolley-buses?

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Claremont will address the Chair.

Mr. NORTH: The way in which we got trolley-buses for Claremont was to advocate the introduction of private buses. Let me urge upon the member for Canning, through you, Mr. Chairman, that he call public meetings in his district opposing the introduction of trolley-buses and urging the introduction of private buses. If he did that he might get somewhere quickly. In the meantime, where are these 50 trolley-buses going? Are they to augment existing services? If so, I commend the Minister on his enterprise. If they are intended for new routes, I think the Commissioner in his report would have referred to that fact. I am pleased to support the Estimates and I wish the Government good luck during the ensuing 12 months so far as the Railway Department is concerned. Now that hostilities have ceased, I hope the Government will be able to get back some of its men and proceed with its work. I have been asked by a very interested member of this Chamber who has not yet spoken to the Estimates whether the new suburban train is one class only. The answer

is "no," because I saw a picture of the train this morning, and it had "first class" marked on it. There must be two classes on the new train.

**THE MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS**  
(Hon. W. M. Marshall—Murchison—in reply) [12.45]: I wish to deal with some of the points made by members who contributed to this debate when dealing with the writing-down of some of the capital costs of the railway system. The member for Murray-Wellington, the member for Mt. Marshall and the Leader of the Opposition made reference to the necessity or the advisability of doing something in connection with this matter. I want to assure them that while there may be some virtue in their proposal I cannot be as optimistic about it as is the member for Mt. Marshall. However, as it is a matter materially affecting the Treasurer, as well as the Railway Department, and believing that there may be some virtue in the suggestion, I propose to give it serious and immediate consideration. If we can benefit our railway finances in this way, without making a distribution of the financial obligations of the railways so as to be unfair, it will be well worth investigating.

I understand that other State systems have adopted a similar proposal, but I have not had time, as Minister for Railways, to study the benefits they have secured from it, or what its actual cost has been on the other side of the State ledger. However, I give members the assurance that as soon as time permits—and that should be soon—I will give this matter serious consideration in conjunction with my leader, the Treasurer. One or two other matters of a special nature were referred to by some members when speaking on this debate. The Leader of the Opposition respectfully requested me to make a close observation of certain evidence given before a Select Committee of very recent date, by an officer of the Railway Department. I assure him that I will go into this matter to see whether he is justified in making his request.

Mr. Watts: I think you will find that the whole committee felt that way.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** Ever since I have been in this House—and I believe that I have on occasions been impudent to some of the Ministers of my

own Government who preceded me by implying that utterances made by members of Parliament should be respected—I have held the opinion that the first essential of any unit in the Civil Service is civility. I shall endeavour to impress that upon the officers in my departments. I will see, therefore, from a close examination of the evidence, to which the Leader of the Opposition has made reference, whether the imputation contained in the utterances of the hon. gentleman has any ground.

Mr. Watts: Do not imagine he was uncivil; that does not come into it.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** I shall do as the Leader of the Opposition asked me to do. The member for Beverley asked about the committee that has been appointed to inquire into and make recommendations in regard to the control of metropolitan traffic, including the railways. That committee was appointed before I assumed office, and it consists of the Under Treasurer, the Chairman of the Transport Board and the Commissioner of Railways. The same hon. member also asked me about the 4 feet. 8½ inch gauge and made reference to the conference that I attended. That conference dealt mainly with the report submitted by Sir Harold Clapp. It was called for the purpose of the States arriving at an agreement in connection with the proposed plan, or to offer some amendments to it. In other words, it was to knock the report into shape, suitable to the respective States. I say quite frankly that it was quite evident at the conference that not many of the States wholeheartedly supported the plan as submitted. I do not think that one State accepted it enthusiastically. All the States, with the exception of Western Australia, had some particular objection to offer. I point out that Sir Harold Clapp has not provided for the total conversion of the system in Western Australia, but merely for the linking of Fremantle with Kalgoorlie.

Mr. Seward: His report definitely states that the Fremantle-Kalgoorlie section is an integral part of the whole of the Western Australian system.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** No.

Mr. Seward: He does.

**The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS:** All Sir Harold Clapp states in his report is that at a later date both Queensland and Western

Australia shall make the necessary surveys and estimates with a view to conversion.

Mr. Seward: Yes, but he definitely states that the Kalgoorlie-Fremantle section is an integral part of the conversion of the system.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: I have not the time to be splitting straws. The report is definite that at some future date surveys and estimates will be made with a view to the total conversion of the systems in Western Australia and Queensland. For the purpose of standardisation and unification he asks Western Australia to take, as the first step, the Fremantle-Kalgoorlie link. As to whether this particular plan will ultimately be given effect to will depend entirely upon the next conference which will deal with the methods of financing the proposition. Until a decision is arrived at by that conference it is of little use my debating or entering into an argument as to whether the railway, proposed by Sir Harold Clapp, shall go here, there or somewhere else. We need not be concerned with the route of the proposed line until finality is reached. The Premier and Treasurer of this State will not entertain an idea of deciding the route until this Parliament has had a say in the matter. The Committee can rest assured that ample opportunity will be given to Parliament to discuss the proposed route when we know that such a route is necessary.

Mr. Seward: That is all right.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: That also applies to the point raised by the member for Mt. Marshall. Only one other exceptional matter was mentioned and that was brought forward by the member for Sussex, who asked that private buses be permitted to run between the Busselton district and Perth.

Mr. Willmott: Between Busselton and Flinders Bay.

The MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS: Yes. It is proposed that new buses, under Government control, will be used there. If the Transport Board permits private ownership to commence, a certain amount of capital will have to be invested and that will mean that when the Government wants to start running buses there it will have to buy out the private enterprise with the result that its own system will be over-capitalised. I will do what is possible and necessary with

our railway system to give a speedier and more convenient service to these people, pending the inauguration of an omnibus system with which the hon. member will be well satisfied and proud. If we permit private enterprise to come in now and start meddling, it will mean extra cost to the system, which is inadvisable. The other comments, having general application, made by members were principally dealt with when I introduced the Estimates. The extensions of electricity supplies, trolley-buses, trams and trains are matters bound up with the supply of materials and labour. As soon as possible after we get materials and labour the complaints that have been in evidence for a long time will be alleviated. I thank members for the courteous way in which they received these Estimates.

Vote put and passed.

Progress reported till a later stage of the sitting.

*Sitting suspended from 12.58 to 3.30 p.m.*

## **BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS.**

### *Conference Managers' Report.*

The PREMIER: I have to report that the conference managers met in conference on the Bill and reached the following agreement:—

Amendment No. 2—not insisted on by conference.

Amendment No. 4—the date to be fixed as 1947.

I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## **BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).**

### *Conference Managers' Report.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have to report that the conference managers met in conference on the Bill and reached the following agreement:—

Amendment No. 1—not insisted on by the conference.

Amendment No. 2—insisted on by the conference.

With regard to amendment No. 2 the effect is that legal practitioners may appear before the board. I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

**BILL—MILK.***Report, etc.*

Report of Committee adopted.

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

**ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-46.***In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

*Votes—State Batteries £36,800: Uave House £11,233—agreed to.*

*Vote—Public Works and Buildings £211,950:*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [3.35]: I propose to deal briefly with some of the many activities of the Public Works Department and the Department of Industrial Development. One of the most worrying problems with which the Public Works Department had to deal during the past year was that associated with drought conditions in portions of the State, and the responsibility of supplying to the fullest extent possible water for use in those areas. The part of the State worst affected was that known as the Lakes district in the areas surrounding Lake Grace, Kondinin, Newdegate and other such centres. Members will be interested to know that 60 road trucks were obtained from the Army for the purpose of conveying water which had been trucked by rail to different centres. The water was then transported by road by means of the trucks and delivered to individual farms. In all 1,292,000 gallons of water were hauled by rail, and 1,379,000 gallons were transported by Army trucks. The trucks were driven by individual farmers who volunteered for the work. The total cost of water cartage was £6,863.

Boring for water was carried out fairly continuously in the affected districts, but most of the results were disappointing. The average result was four successful bores out of every 16 put down. Boring for water has continued regularly since that time and the average of successful results compared with those that were unsuccessful bores about the same relationship. Work has been carried out in the direction of putting in new water supplies in certain districts and also in repairing and improving local

water catchments and reservoirs in the drier districts of Western Australia. Operations in connection with the proposed comprehensive agricultural areas water supply scheme have been carried on continuously, and a good deal of preliminary work has been done. This scheme will be based upon the Wellington and Mundaring reservoirs, the retaining walls of which will be raised substantially. This will very greatly increase the quantity of water which will be impounded in each of those reservoirs and which, in turn, will be available for use in connection with the proposed comprehensive agricultural water scheme.

Even if that scheme had not been proposed it would be essential to increase the holding capacity of the Mundaring reservoir because the draw upon it in these days even with mining restricted very severely, is such as to put the reservoir into a position where it will not be able fully to supply the demand upon it from the Goldfields and the agricultural areas along the pipeline during future years. It was thought that it might have been possible during this year to have introduced legislation to give the Government power to proceed with the comprehensive agricultural water scheme. That stage has not been reached, but the fact that the legislation in question has not been introduced will not in any way affect the carrying out of all preliminary work necessary to be done before the scheme can be proceeded with in a practical way.

A solid case has been prepared by an inter-departmental committee for submission to the Commonwealth. The idea is that the Commonwealth should assist the State with a financial grant so that the scheme might be put in on an economic basis and be within the capacity of the State to establish and operate. If the Commonwealth is not prepared to make financial assistance available, it will be necessary for the State Government to give the proposal much more serious consideration and Parliament in turn, I think, will find it more difficult to decide whether the Government should be legally authorised to proceed with the scheme. We believe that the Commonwealth Government will be sympathetic and will show its sympathy in a practical way by making a substantial grant to the State.

Mr. McDonald: The Commonwealth has already done that in the Eastern States.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There are precedents. The Commonwealth has materially assisted the South Australian Government with the large scheme to convey water from Morgan on the River Murray to Whyalla to serve the large-scale industries established at Whyalla by the Broken Hill Proprietary Co. The assurance I give members is that there is no hold-up at all of the preliminary work for the proposed scheme, and the inability to introduce the requisite legislation this year will not have any detrimental effect, because the Government is going ahead with the work to reach a stage where the scheme can be established as quickly as conditions will permit. When the case to be presented to the Commonwealth is completed, and that stage will be reached this week, it is probable that the case will be printed and a sufficient number of copies made available to enable each member to be provided with one. We shall not wait until Parliament meets to make those copies available; as soon as they have been printed, one will be posted to each member in order that he may be aware of the case that has been prepared.

I do not wish to spend any considerable amount of time in explaining just what the Public Works Department and its related departments did for the war effort, but it might be advisable to indicate briefly some of the major things. During the year ended the 30th June, 1945, the Harbours and Rivers Branch carried out a considerable amount of work for the Commonwealth Defence Department, including continuation of dredging of a channel through the Parmelia and Success banks from which 2,750,000 hopper yards have been removed since this work was commenced in 1942; new timber jetties at Rockingham and Woodman's Point; alterations at Robb's Jetty; and mooring piles and dolphins at Fremantle Harbour. Works constructed for the State includes commencement of the construction of the gantry for bulk wheat at Fremantle; extension of North Quay; building and launching ways for construction of an 80-ton floating crane; construction of a launching way at the State Engineering Works; and the construction of a slipway at Geraldton for vessels of 50 tons.

Two slipways at Fremantle, the one on the south side servicing 129 vessels and the one on the north side 24 vessels, were successfully used during the war period and will, of course, continue to be used for the purpose of repairing vessels and generally maintaining them during the years of peace. During the year five hulls were launched in the State ship yards and six vessels were completed and commissioned. Another vessel was ready to be handed over and three more were well advanced. Now that the war has ended, efforts are being made to try to obtain orders from those in a position to give them so that the ship yards might be continued in operation.

The work carried out at the State Engineering Works consisted largely of ship-ping repairs and general maintenance for the Royal Australian and Allied Navies. For the Munitions Department, work was mainly connected with the production of Philippine lighters and winches, and manufacture of iron and steel work for wooden ships. General engineering work was carried out for Government departments and private clients. Electrical work was also carried out for Government departments, Munitions Department, Allied Navies and the Allied Works Council. The department has received a considerable number of letters of appreciation from highly placed officers in the Navies of Great Britain, United States of America and Holland, and it is a wonderful tribute to the officers of the State Engineering Works particularly that such letters should have been forwarded by those authorities.

The Architectural Division has carried out additions and improvements during the year to 45 schools and hospitals. A commencement was made with the new agricultural college building at Denmark and amenities for workers have been provided at a number of Government workshops. As far as manpower and materials were available, maintenance has been carried out on a number of Government buildings. Considering the shortage of tradesmen and particularly the shortage of building materials, the work done by the Architectural Branch during the last financial year has been almost amazing. I had a list of the work done during the year and was astonished to find how many different schools and buildings had received

attention, and some of the jobs were on a fairly large scale. This branch will be built up as more tradesmen and more building materials become available. We realise fully the great accumulation of arrears of repairs and maintenance to schools, hospitals and other buildings brought about by war conditions and that it is necessary to overtake the leeway as quickly as circumstances will permit.

Members are aware that during the year the Government set up a day labour construction branch of the Public Works Department for the purpose of building houses. I know that there can be a sharp difference of opinion as to the wisdom of this decision. I do not propose this afternoon to argue the wisdom or otherwise of the decision because any argument would be more or less fruitless. Those who believe in the principle would argue strenuously in its favour while those opposed to the principle would argue just as strongly the other way, and nobody would be any better off at the finish. The sensible course to adopt in relation to this new development of policy is to wait until the system has been tested, and then there will be no need at all for wordy arguments as to the wisdom or otherwise of the step. The practical test will prove the scheme to be good or bad.

Mr. Mann: We shall know this time next year.

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** We shall; and if the member for Beverley is inclined to back his opinion, financially or otherwise, I will back mine and we might possibly come to quite a happy arrangement.

Hon. N. Keenan: What is the "otherwise"?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** That will have to be worked out at a private conference between the member for Beverley and myself. I am able to say that at this moment the organisation is well established. It has been operating very well. It has been up against the same difficulties as private builders in connection with building materials; and, because of the very wet and late winter, the organisation hit all the difficulties associated with many wet days, especially those during August. Like the private builders, it was in some trouble in that regard. Those are difficulties that oc-

cur in the building trade; and they just have to be faced as they arise, and the best made of them. However, I look forward very confidently to speaking on this question in 12 months' time, when I feel we shall be able to prove that the departure of the Government in this direction was well justified.

A great deal could be said of industrial development but we do, during the year, discuss this question apart from the Estimates. On this occasion, therefore, I propose, in connection with the potash industry at Chandler and the charcoal-iron and wood distillation products industry now being established at Wundowie, to read to members the expression of opinion as set out in writing by the board of management in each instance. The board of management of the Wundowie plant has provided me with this opinion.

1. Progress on construction has been retarded by wartime conditions, particularly shortage of manpower and materials. Serious delays have occurred in the delivery of special equipment from England and the Eastern States. Steel for the furnace ordered over 12 months ago is only now coming to hand. These delays, together with a general upward trend in prices, are responsible for the original estimate of construction cost being exceeded. However, even with the higher capital cost, the latest estimate of production costs indicates that the project is economically sound. This favourable position is due to the application of extensive mechanisation of all plant operations, including wood and ore production.

2. The plant when completed will be one of the most modern of its kind in the world incorporating comprehensive control and efficiency devices, which will provide valuable data for the establishment of a large-scale industry.

Mr. McDonald: Who are the members of the board of management?

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS:** The Director of Industrial Development, Mr. Fernie; the Under Treasurer, Mr. Reid; the Government Mineralogist Analyst and Chemist, Mr. Bowley; and an engineer representing the workers in the plant. There has appeared in the Press a criticism of the industry now being developed at Wundowie. I have no objection to constructive criticism. I think it is good that this proposed industry should be discussed in Parliament, in the newspapers and elsewhere; because the more discussion there is, the more informed will the public become and the more interest will it take in the development of this vital industry in Wes-

tern Australia. Where the criticism is destructive, it is to be deplored because it has the effect of doing no good at all. It does not assist anyone, and it creates a feeling of doubt and fear in the minds of quite a number of people in the community. There are many minds that automatically accept, or prefer to accept, destructive criticism of a proposal as against accepting constructive criticism. In connection with the Wundowie project, I would also like to read a letter I have received from the managing director of McLean Bros. & Rigg, Mr. Vincent. It is written to the Director of Industrial Development, who is chairman of the board of management, and runs as follows:—

The opportunity to visit Wundowie yesterday was very much appreciated by Mr. Beeson, who returned greatly impressed with what he saw and very enthusiastic about the future of this project. Indeed, he was glowingly enthusiastic and we feel it will be some encouragement to you to hear favourable comment from one who at least is qualified to offer an opinion, as opposed to the occasional criticism one hears from people who are so utterly unqualified to express an opinion of any value. He joins me in offering congratulations and good wishes for the future.

At a later date, the writer would like an opportunity to look over the place, but perhaps it would be—shall we say, more diplomatic, to wait until the boiler has been installed.

Incidentally, Mr. Beeson's visit will also enable us to stress even more strongly than we have the necessity for Babcocks to endeavour to stand up to the anticipated delivery date.

Mr. Beeson is an engineer employed by Willcox and Babcock, boiler manufacturers. With regard to the potash industry at Chandler, the board of management, Messrs. Fernie, Reid and Bowley, have given the following opinion:—

Actual work on plant construction commenced early in 1942 and therefore the industry has had to contend with wartime difficulties due to lack of manpower, shortage of material, and delays in delivery of essential equipment. These difficulties were more serious as the Commonwealth authorities would not grant a priority to the work, despite urgent requests by the Government. However, construction proceeded as quickly as possible as it was realised that there was a pressing necessity for an Australian source of potash. Production commenced early in 1944. As is usual in the development of new chemical processes, experience in operation indicated that considerable modifications were necessary to the plant installed under the original design if economical production were to be attained.

The design and construction of these modifications were immediately put in hand; at the same time it was realised that potash was urgently required for food production and successful efforts were made to maintain production concurrently with the installation of the modifications. This policy delayed and increased the cost of the plant modifications, but it was justified by the contribution of 2,000 tons of urgently needed fertiliser.

To date, although the modifications planned are by no means complete, the output has been considerably increased and cost of production decreased. At the present time revenue is meeting operating costs, excluding debt charges. The completion of the modifications planned will further reduce the cost of production.

It is now possible with the experience gained to forecast with some degree of certainty that the plant expanded to supply the whole of Australia's requirements will produce potash in competition with foreign supplies. Although under wartime conditions the cost of the development of the original unit has been excessive, this excess was unavoidable owing to war developments, but was justifiable in view of the prospects for the establishment of a large scale chemical industry of this type in W.A.

There have, too, been favourable developments in the fishing industry in this State. I think it has been recognised for many years that the foundation for the building up of a large-scale fishing industry in this State had existed. It has been known that fish are present in great quantities at many spots around our coast; but, over all the years, only spasmodic attempts to exploit our waters have been made, and some of them were not as well organised as they might have been, with the result that failure ensued. Those failures had the effect of discouraging other people who might have been inclined to organise fishing ventures and put their money into them. The main effort now being made by the Government in this matter is to encourage ex-Service personnel—especially Naval men—to undertake fishing activities. A certain number of suitable vessels has become available. They were being constructed in this State for the Commonwealth for war requirements, but have since been made available by the Commonwealth to the State for fishing purposes. They may be obtained by suitable applicants; and when those applicants require financial assistance to secure and fully equip them, the Government is giving that assistance when satisfied on the personal equation and the experience of the persons applying for help.

Fish-processing works are operating at a number of places around the coast, and they are not all in the metropolitan area. There is one at Broome; a modern plant is being developed at Carnarvon; another is being developed at Albany, and another at Esperance; and there is a small one being developed at Hopetoun. So it will be seen that the development of this industry is being planned over a wide field; and the people who are most active in the establishment of these works are experienced, have proved their ability and have financial resources. I believe that, as a result of the expansion of the industry for the catching of fish and of the other industry for the processing of fish, we are building our fishing industry on a very solid basis and the only one likely to be successful if we look at the position from the point of view of permanency. Unless this industry can be developed on a permanent basis, it is not much use engaging in it at all.

Mr. McDonald: That means taking great care not to exhaust supplies.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It does, and the fishing operations will be carried out scientifically under the advice of experts associated with the local Fisheries Department and experts associated with the fisheries section of the C.S.I.R. The only other matter in connection with industrial development about which I desire to speak is that of Collie coal. I think members are generally aware that the Government some time ago established a Fuel Technology Bureau. I am never very happy about these high-sounding titles. I would have been just as happy if the title had been a simple one; but I understand that these high-sounding names help a local group in its negotiations with similar groups in the Eastern States, and Eastern States authorities generally. So this group we have established is known as the Fuel Technology Bureau. The Government agreed to make £20,000 available to enable the bureau to carry out investigations and experiments. A four-years' research programme has been set down. The programme of research to be undertaken is so important as to be worth explaining to members and being placed on permanent record in "Hansard." It is as follows:—

1. The State's coal resources.
2. Their composition, i.e., calorific value, proximate analysis, ultimate analysis.

3. Beneficiation.  
Washability.  
Moisture reduction.  
Carbonisation.
4. Carbonisation properties.  
Cooking properties.  
Yields and nature of volatiles.  
Tars, gas, ammonia, etc.
5. Ash examination.  
Fusability determination.  
Ash analysis.
6. Utilisation.
7. Gasification, total and partial.
8. Physical examination.  
Specific gravity.  
Keeping qualities.  
Resistance to shatter.  
Grindability.
9. Microscopical examination, including mineralogy of associated material.
10. Hydrogenation.
11. Examination of distillation products, including tars, oils and waxes.
12. Liability to spontaneous combustion.

As members are aware, the Fox process for the gasification of Collie coal was tested out at the Midland Junction Workshops in February of this year, primarily for the purpose of ascertaining whether gas could be produced from Collie coal for industrial purposes. There was a great deal of doubt as to whether that could be done, and most of those who had taken an interest in the possibility were convinced it could not be done. However, Mr. Fox was able to build a plant and carry out tests successfully, with the result that gas was produced from Collie coal. That established beyond doubt the practicability of producing gas from Collie coal for industrial purposes, and probably also for domestic purposes.

In order that further investigations might be carried out, particularly as to gas for domestic purposes, the plant has been transferred from the Midland Junction Workshops to a site chosen in the Welshpool district. It is to be re-erected there and further tests and experiments will be carried out. While the plant was being operated at Midland Junction an opportunity was taken to supply domestic gas generated by it to six household gas stoves. Equipment for scientifically testing the gas was not available but a test as to the time taken in boiling water, as compared with Perth town gas, showed that the gas produced from Collie coal compared favourably with the gas in gen-



eral use in Perth. While the tests were being carried out at Midland Junction a quantity of coke was produced in the retort. This occurrence was considered of more than ordinary importance, so much so that £1,500 was made available for special work in that direction.

It had always been contended that Collie coal could not be coked. Expert opinion had been expressed along those lines years ago and was accepted without question until Mr. Fox came to this State and carried out experiments at Midland Junction. The coking of coal on a larger scale than was done at Midland Junction is contemplated. A plant is in the course of construction at the Government Laboratories in Adelaide Terrace, Perth, to test thoroughly the possibilities of Collie coal for coking. If a successful process is developed it will be of considerable economic importance to the State. Dr. Kent has been appointed Fuel Technologist and is operating at the Government Laboratories under the direction of the Government Mineralogist. Immediate attention is being given to the beneficiation of Collie coal, particularly as to moisture reduction and an improvement in its keeping quality. An improved fuel is necessary if local coal is to be utilised for the Chandler Alunite Works and for power generation on the Goldfields.

It will be necessary at Lake Chandler to obtain some fuel other than timber, in a few years time, as the timber available in the district will not be sufficient to supply fuel indefinitely. It is probable that Collie coal will eventually be used, but before it could be used economically for that purpose considerable improvement would have to be effected to the coal, and it is felt that these scientific investigations and experiments will produce valuable results in that direction and considerably improve the keeping qualities and value generally of Collie coal for fuel purposes. As I mentioned on another debate during the week, the local authorities at Boulder and Kalgoorlie are anxious to change from wood fuel to some other fuel for their power and generating plants. The only other fuels available are coal and imported oil, and the local governing authorities would naturally prefer to use coal produced in this State as against oil imported from overseas.

Mr. McDonald: Could this laboratory undertake an investigation to evolve an efficient spark-arrester for the railways?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it could, but one of my own electors at Northam has been working for the last 12 months in an endeavour to produce an efficient spark-arrester, and I think he has succeeded.

Mr. McDonald: If he has, I hope the Government will give him a knighthood and suitable reward.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: W will probably give him a suitable reward but not a knighthood.

Mr. Doney: Will you be able to assure proper tests?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. With the co-operation of the South Australian Government tests on drying Collie coal are being carried out in that State, using the Fleishner process, and when they are completed it is thought that much valuable information will be available to the State Government. It was cheaper and more convenient for the State Government to use the organisation already established in South Australia to deal with this matter. That State had already developed a plant to do similar work on the development on the brown coal resources at Leigh Creek, in the north of South Australia and it is better from every point of view for us to use that organisation rather than to set up our own organisation for that purpose. The South Australian Government has co-operated with us and is doing this work.

MR. DONEY (Williams-Narrogin) [4.29]: Had these Estimates come along at the normal period I would have taken some time on them, but they have been postponed unavoidably, to this late day.

Mr. Mann: Why apologise to the Government?

Mr. DONEY: Who is apologising? I think members will understand that I suit my own convenience by speaking briefly on this occasion. The Minister mentioned a number of controversial matters, including shipbuilding, home-building, certain industrial undertakings, and so on.

The Minister for Works: I tried to mention them all in a kindly way.

**Mr. DONEY:** All those have been freely dealt with in debate recently and I will not indulge in repetition now. The Minister did invite criticism, especially as to the undertakings at Chandler and Wundowie. He deplored destructive criticism, and I hope the implication was not that there has been destructive criticism from this side of the Chamber.

The Minister for Works: There has been some such criticism in the Press.

**Mr. DONEY:** None has come from this side of the House to my knowledge. We are anxious to ally ourselves with the Minister in the hope that these undertakings will achieve full success.

The Minister for Works: I was referring to criticism in the newspapers.

**Mr. DONEY:** If it so happens that at a later date there are failures that with foresight might have been avoided, that will be the time for criticism. I had intended to submit a series of questions on the agricultural water supply, but the Minister has clearly set out the position of that scheme. I am obliged to him for indicating that the Government is keen to pursue that programme with all speed, and I was glad to hear that there is no likelihood of the Commonwealth Government declining to provide finance to assist with the scheme. Those of us who live along the Great Southern are more agitated over this water supply question than over any other matter. I hoped, as did other members on this side of the House, that the necessary legislation would already have been before this Chamber but, following the Minister's explanation, I take it for granted that the reason for the delay is that the case was not sufficiently well forward. I note, with satisfaction, that it is the Minister's intention at an early date to put the case on paper and submit it to members, even though Parliament be not sitting.

Through a colleague in another place the Minister replied to a number of questions submitted by a member in that place. I had intended to submit other questions in order to find out whether additional information was yet available, but I take it that the information supplied by the Minister is all that he has to give at this stage. We will therefore have to be satisfied with that for the time being. There are two small matters agitating the minds of people in the town

that is my headquarters. One is that of a level-crossing there. About 20 years ago that level-crossing was closed and the people living on either side had no means of getting across, except by crossings further north or south on the Great Southern railway, at a distance of one or two miles.

It can quite easily be understood that the property immediately adjoining east and west of the closed crossing slumped very substantially in value, something like 75 per cent of the value at the time of the closure. It might be expected, too, that the Narrogin council would lay down certain bargaining terms; and I am given to understand there is ample evidence on paper at the council office showing that when the closure took place an understanding existed between the council and the then Commissioner of Railways, Mr Short, that a crossing would be put in either overhead or by means of a subway. The closure duly took place, but the Commissioner side-stepped the bargain by omitting to construct the promised means of crossing. I bring the matter up now for the purpose of letting the Minister know that the agitation with respect to some supplementary means of getting across the line is not dead, but will be placed before him shortly.

A few weeks ago I submitted to the appropriate Minister the matter of a sale by the Government of the court house and other buildings at the corner of Federal and Fortune-streets. I do not know whether the Premier will recall this matter, but I believe that so far nothing has been done. That, too, is a question in which the council is likely to be shortly interesting itself. The idea is to sell the land upon which the buildings are erected, together with the buildings, with the object of using the proceeds to pay or help to pay, for the construction of Government offices in another but still central part of the town. There are other matters which I might have brought forward on this occasion, but I think I will avail myself of opportunities a little later on, when I see the Minister in person.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [4.34]: I shall delay the Committee only a few moments. I want to say a word or two on the comprehensive water scheme before it goes too far. Everybody is agreed that towns should be

supplied with water; that has to be done. I think it could be done for very little more than it will cost to erect the South Fremantle electric lighting plant. I say so for the reason that in South Australia water was taken 220 miles in 32-inch and 16-inch piping at a cost of £2,700,000, and that amount was £400,000 less than the estimate. That work was carried out during the war years. It is but natural to ask how it is that South Australia could get steel pipes for a scheme like that, while Western Australia cannot. The provision of water supplies for Pingelly and other towns along the Great Southern railway is even more urgent today than it was during the years I have been urging that the scheme be carried out. The people in that district have just about reached breaking point because the scheme has been held up so long. Consequently, I am sorry to learn that no legislative action has been taken this session to inaugurate the scheme.

Then there is the other scheme, to which I am definitely opposed, and to which there is rising opposition in the country. It is the scheme to supply agricultural areas with water. I appeal to the Minister now that he is not proceeding with legislation this session, to send a committee or some authority through those districts to take evidence from the farmers in regard to the scheme. I had a case in point the other day. A man had come down to see the authorities about writing off his debts. I asked him whether he had any papers and he produced some. The first was an account from the Public Works Department for £570 for water rates. He said, "I never had a gallon of that water. I am not connected with the scheme. I do not want to be, as I have all the water I require." When the Minister and I journeyed through the district last May, we asked several farmers about the scheme. Although it was the driest summer for many years, those farmers said, "No, we have all the water we require." On questioning the farmers they said that they had deep dams and narrow dams, which contained all the water they needed.

Mr. Cross: Many of those dams would not be very big.

Mr. SEWARD: I am aware of that. A better policy for the Government to adopt would be to send dam-sinking outfits complete with men and machinery to the district

and take it from farm to farm to construct dams for the farmers, of course charging them for the work, but spreading the payment over, say, five years or more. It is unfair to ask the farmers to pay for a water scheme year in and year out when they would not derive any benefit from it. The financial drain on them would be too heavy. The opportunity now exists for some authority to interview the farmers in the district and obtain their opinion. In any case a large area east of the line along which the pipeline will probably run would not be served by it. The farmers in those districts have wonderful rock catchments throughout the area, big enough to supply the towns as well as the agricultural lands.

Mr. Cross: Why does not the local authority get a bulldozer and construct dams?

Mr. SEWARD: Not many local authorities can pay £2,000 for a bulldozer; it takes them all their time to keep their roads in order. I am not agitating for anything which the farmers cannot pay for in due course, but they can have all the water they need if they have dams of sufficient capacity and so this scheme, which will cost some millions of pounds, is unnecessary so far as they are concerned. I again appeal to the Government to make the inquiry I have suggested. If, after the inquiry has been held, the farmers favour the scheme, then they must pay for it. As I said, however, there is great opposition to it.

MR. TRIAT (Mt. Magnet) [4.39]: I was pleased to hear the Minister's comments in his department this afternoon. Dealing with the water supply in my district, I feel the Government would be well advised to establish schemes there. Our schemes would not be nearly as big as those required for the farming districts. In the mining areas today one finds generally a well and probably a windmill, and the disabilities suffered by the people living there, especially women and children, are serious. I believe there is a very fine plant at Youanmi at present lying idle which, at a small cost, say £3,000, could be transferred to some big mining centre and so assist in providing an adequate water supply. The people are quite prepared to pay the cost, but doubtless would want the payment to be spread over a few years. I ask the Minister to give consideration to this matter.

I was also pleased to hear the Minister, for the first time since I have been in the House, make an announcement with regard to the gasification of Collie coal. This is the first time we have had an announcement of any consequence on that matter. Although the testing was commenced in February last, it is evident that it has not yet been completed. The Minister has told the Committee that the plant has been sent to Welshpool for the purpose of continuing the experiment. We all regret that it has taken so long to complete the experiment, especially as Bunbury was anxious to use this gas for heating and cooking purposes. There has been some dispute between the inventor, Mr. Fox, and those in authority about the use of domestic gas. The Minister told the Committee that the experiments were being continued; but from February to December is a long time and I sincerely hope it will not be long before the experiment is completed at Welshpool. If we could utilise Collie coal for the whole of this State's needs it would be most important to us, as we would then not be under the necessity of importing thousands of tons from Newcastle. Collie coal could be utilised at the Perth and Fremantle gasworks. It could also be utilised for other purposes, as the plant required would be cheap.

I am given to understand that a plant can be acquired for £5,000 or £6,000. The most costly part would be the reticulation. The utilisation of Collie coal at Chandler has been considered by experts for some time past. I remember that Mr. Fox made a statement at the time of the installation of the Chandler plant; he said that had a Collie coal gas plant been erected there much money would have been saved, as only one generator would have been required instead of five. Probably at that time not sufficient was known about the cost. Mr. Fox is definitely of the opinion that industrial gas can be produced from Collie coal and that it would be ideal for use at Chandler. I therefore hope that the Government will give consideration to installing a plant at Chandler for that purpose. Coal of good quality is not required; coal of a small size may be used. As to the keeping qualities of Collie coal, that is a serious question. It means can be devised for preserving the coal—as they can—it could be transported to Kalbarrie for use at the mines. The Minister or Mines, Mr. Wilson, and I, viewed some

coal which had been kept under a system initiated at Collie. I think the experiment had been proceeding for five years. The coal was kept covered up in an ordinary box by four or five inches of sawdust. After five years it had not deteriorated at all; it was the same as when it had been taken out of the ground. There was not the slightest sign of crumbling or of deterioration of any kind. Collie coal could easily be transported from Collie covered with sawdust. We have enormous quantities of sawdust going to waste in this State, and I hope that consideration will be given to this aspect.

Another question of great importance is the coking of Collie coal. This coke can be used in extracting iron-ore under modern methods—open hearth methods. The coke that was produced by accident at Midland Junction was a high grade metallurgical coke. I understand Mr. Fox is experimenting with it and has asked Mr. Wilson to witness a test on Monday afternoon. I intend to avail myself of the opportunity to see that test. I do not know much about coal, but I know something about coke. I know whether it is good or bad when I see it. If other members are available I hope they will come along and have a look. I think the Minister for Industrial Development has a great future in front of him, and, together with the Minister for Mines, will probably go a long way towards rehabilitating Western Australia. The fishing industry is one that has been mentioned here on many occasions. To-day it has a bright future. Canning industries have been established and they are essential in providing employment. If we are successful in carrying out the propositions outlined by the Minister, I hope that in 12 months' time we will be able to say that some of the industries have borne fruit. Coal is very important, and we should give a lot more consideration to it, and pay a lot more attention to its by-products. By doing so we would go a long way towards making Western Australia a prosperous State.

**MR. LESLIE** (Mt. Marshall) [4.46]: As Chandler is within the boundaries of my electorate I have one or two remarks to make in connection with the enterprise established there. I share the optimism of the Minister in this connection, but I must confess that my knowledge as a layman is

purely superficial. I am inclined to the opinion that this is likely to become one of major industries of Western Australia if tackled on sound lines. I think such an attempt is being made by those engaged in the industry and considerable modifications have had to be made in the original plans because it was something entirely new. I believe that, in order to secure success for the enterprise, some recognition must be given to this position when it reaches the stage of normal operations and its affairs are properly capitalised. I am going to ask that the Government indicate its confidence in the industry's future by providing the people working in it, and who reside on the spot, with amenities equal to those in other parts of the State. A townsite has been surveyed at Chandler but it is in an undesirable position.

I am going to ask the Minister who, as the Minister for Industrial Development, is the head of the enterprise, to take up with the Minister for Lands the question of surveying a townsite opposite to the present one with a view to encouraging the workers at the mine to acquire homes of their own. At present all the residences that are available are erected on mine property and belong to the industry. I have been approached by people who want to make permanent homes at Chandler because they are confident that the industry is there to stay. They want to live in as comfortable circumstances as possible. Because of the lack of social amenities, such as education and medical benefits, the type of workers that were attracted to Chandler—and I am not speaking of the present time as conditions have improved to some extent—has not been a very desirable one. From a survey I made of those engaged, I found that quite a number had very unenviable records at Fremantle and in the Police Department. That type of individual is not desired there, particularly because of the situation of the mine. It is isolated and has no resident policeman for its protection.

The result is that it is fertile ground for practices that are undesirable when it is hoped to establish this place as an attractive and major industrial centre. I hope the Minister will take that into account and endeavour to have a new townsite surveyed with a view to attracting a good class of worker. I hope also that working conditions there will be improved. People

engaged in that industry are, unfortunately, compelled to contribute to the Mine Workers' Relief Fund. Because of that, and in view of the nature of their occupation generally, they are entitled to be included in the goldfields area for the calculation of their wages. At times they are working under conditions that could not be worsened in any goldmine in Australia. If the Minister intends to reply to the debate I hope he will give us some information as to the progress being made by the Government in the manufacture of boring plants which it undertook to make available to local authorities.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Town Planning, £2,200; Unemployment Relief and State Labour Bureau, £3,305; Department of Industrial Development, £13,414—agreed to.*

*Vote—Lands and Surveys, £77,415:*

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville)** [4.54]: Lands and surveys over the last few years have been coupled with agriculture. The Premier at that time held these portfolios and naturally had a big story to tell, but agriculture has now been taken over by the Minister for Education so that there is a big gap in the vote. In addition, the Lands Department is, to a large extent, concentrating on soldier settlement which was thoroughly debated here some time ago. That leaves a short story to tell about lands and surveys. I do not propose to spend much time today on this subject. During the war most of the men of fighting age, and many of the women, of this department were released for the Forces so that few employees, other than young women, remained in the department.

During the last few years the department has been concentrating mainly on surveying and mapping for our Allies and our own Forces so that the postwar tasks had to wait. In the last few months, especially since the cessation of hostilities, the position has rapidly improved with the result that the organisation of staff, and field plans are well advanced and increasing every day as the men are returning and becoming employed. Apart from that aspect every available man and woman in the department is concentrating on soldier settlement with a view to implementing the agreement made

between the Commonwealth and the State. We are short of surveyors and valuers and could do with many more. An increase in survey expenses on the Estimates is quite noticeable and is due to provision being made for extra survey parties and the purchase of motor vehicles.

Mr. McLarty: Can you get surveyors?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Most of them are in the Army, but they are gradually coming back to us. Apart from that it is difficult to get them. At one time a good deal of surveying was done by contract surveyors, but I think there are only about two or three of them left now.

Mr. McLarty: You want some cadets?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We have some of them, too. These things are being looked after and we are training them as fast as we can, but it is impossible to train a cadet surveyor in a few weeks. The work we are doing requires more than one cadet.

Mr. McLarty: Are there sufficient offerings?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: The revenue estimated for the Department of Lands and Surveys is £210,000, comprising territorial, £192,500 and departmental, £17,500. It is anticipated that the same amount of revenue will be collected this year as last year when the actual sum was £209,489. The ordinary survey work has fallen hopelessly into arrears because of lack of surveyors. The member for Kalgoorlie wanted to know why I could not send a surveyor there to survey some land. The answer is that surveyors are rare birds at the moment. It will be impossible to overtake these arrears until the surveyors, now in the Army, are demobilised, and others appointed.

One of the unfortunate things about the demobilisation of surveyors is that keymen are not being demobilised and ours are keymen in the Army. These good men who are in the Army seem to be the last to be demobilised, and even when they do come back they cannot do very much until the keymen are released from the Services. However, that is the way of the Army, and no matter what we do we do not seem to get much further ahead. We press, and we write, and we telegraph; but we do not seem to get much result. I think the Premier must be getting rather tired of r-

ceiving so many letters and telegrams from me as the Minister for Lands, for despatch to the Army authorities. During the war period we had to make available the surveyors at our disposal for the purpose of the surveys of the Ord River Valley, which work was carried out in conjunction with the soil survey by officers of the Agricultural Department. An examination of the adjacent country was also made in connection with the soil erosion problem.

The work associated with the geodetic survey of the metropolitan area had to be stopped owing to lack of surveyors and also because of the lack of precision equipment, which was unobtainable after the instruments, which had been borrowed from the Army, were called in. The Army and departmental officers worked in conjunction on mapping operations, but since the war has ceased the military authorities have called in the instruments, which have been despatched to the Eastern States and, as I mentioned before, it is practically impossible to get the precision instruments requisite for the work. A soil survey of a large area south-east of the Margaret was carried out by officers of the Agricultural Department in conjunction with officials of the Lands Department. Plans for the subdivision of this area are now complete and are to be given effect to when required for post-war settlement. The Surveyor-General, accompanied by the Chief Draftsman, attended a meeting of the National Mapping Council at Canberra in January, when preliminary plans for nation-wide mapping control were inaugurated. It is anticipated that this will provide much work for the drafting branch and require some reorganisation and expenditure upon plant and equipment. The revaluation of the Esperance-Salmon Gums district was completed, and all the repricing of the outer areas has thus been concluded.

During this financial year it is hoped to be able to equip extra survey parties so that, in addition to the survey work proposed to be carried out in the Kimberley Division including the Ord River survey, the arrears that have accumulated may be reduced. It is also hoped to proceed with the geodetic survey of the metropolitan area, which is an urgent necessity as the lack of it is holding up the production of new standard plans of the metropolitan

area. Provision has been made for the purchase of the type of theodolites and measuring bands required for service of this precise nature. The department has had to give priority to subdivisions for the Workers' Homes Board not only in the metropolitan area but also in rural districts. As members will quite appreciate, the housing shortage has made this necessary but, in view of the lack of surveyors, it has meant that other essential work had to be postponed. The field work of the pastoral lease inspectors appointed in connection with the reappraisal of pastoral leases, which should have taken place in 1942 but had to be postponed owing to the war, is now almost complete and, in connection with this work, an inspection of portion of the pastoral areas was recently made by the new Surveyor-General, Mr. Parry.

Apart from the survey task, the general office work of the department is also in arrear. As far as possible, during the war period temporary assistance was obtained but there is much work that requires experienced officers and cannot be relegated to temporary employees. These arrears cannot be overtaken until the return of experienced officers who are at present in the Army or on loan to the Commonwealth. With regard to operations under the Farmers' Debts Adjustment Act only two applications for additional assistance under the Rural Relief Fund Act were received during last year. These were approved and involved advances totalling £256 16s. 3d. The main activities of this branch of the department are now concerned with the collection of repayments and the consideration of applications for writing-off advances. During the past year repayments to the fund totalled £10,859 13s. 10d., making the total repaid since the inception of the scheme, £34,818 8s. 10d.

Mr. Leslie: I should think you would blush at getting that money back.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: If the hon. member sees me blushing, he will know something is wrong.

Mr. Seward: It will be a reflection from the rose you always have in your button-hole!

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Possibly so. As a result of the passing of amendments to the Act in 1942, 362 applica-

tions for writing-off have been received. Approval has been given to the writing-off of the whole of the advance in 167 cases totalling £18,252 17s. 9d., while 44 applications were deferred and 59 were refused. The applications of 35 farmers are still under consideration. I discussed this matter with the Leader of the Opposition and I can inform the Committee that the Treasurer is now giving consideration to the matter with a view to a considerable writing-off being granted; and if I am capable of blushing, I fancy I shall blush at the Treasurer's generosity in this regard. As I mentioned earlier, the efforts of the officials of the Lands Department are mainly concentrated on soldier settlement matters but a matter that has been discussed in detail so recently, I shall not say anything about it and shall content myself by asking the Committee to pass the Vote.

HON. N. KEENAN (Nedlands) [5.10]

While I agree as to the necessity for curbing tailing, as far as possible, speeches at this stage of the session, there is a matter I would like to bring under the notice of the Minister. I refer to the refusal to allow returned soldiers to take up waste Crown land in the metropolitan area, land that is of no use except for residential purposes. I know of one case where such an application was made and refused for no apparent reason. What possible reason could there be? One could be that these men propose to build their own homes and do not desire to procure one through the Workers' Homes Board. Those men are in a financial position to erect their own homes and they make arrangements accordingly with building contractors. The homes were to be built to approved designs, but they could not get any land. The land they require is positively waste Crown land, absolutely useless for any but residential purposes. There are piecemeal blocks here and there in the Mosman Bay area as well as in Nedlands, Wembley Park and elsewhere.

The Premier: What was that land reserved for? Do you know?

Hon. N. KEENAN: It was not reserved for any particular purpose. I know of one particular block in Nedlands comprising about four acres. The land is of no particular value at all. I saw a report in connection with that case, and it was stated

by the Town Planning Commissioner, the Surveyor General and some other officers of the Crown that the land was of no value except for bargaining purposes, meaning that it could be used if the Crown was negotiating for some other land, in which event the area I refer to could be used for bargaining purposes by throwing it in as well. There is some reason for the refusal, and these men would like to know what it is. They are anxious to re-establish themselves in civilian life and to settle down in their own homes. Unless there is some very good reason for this blank refusal, such an attitude should cease. That is all I desire to say on this Vote. My point is parochial in a sense, but it applies not only to Nedlands for I am certain that the same set of circumstances arises elsewhere.

**MR. BRAND** (Greenough) [5.12]: In rising to speak for the first time in this Chamber, I would like to mention the unfortunate circumstances which necessitated the holding of a by-election due to the death of the late member, Flight-Lieutenant Newton, the former member for Greenough. In extending my sympathy to his relatives and friends, I would like to record the fact that he was not only willing to serve his country in the Legislature but finally to pay the supreme sacrifice as a soldier in defence of the Empire. In following in his footsteps I can only, as a returned man myself, do the very best I can to make the sacrifices he was prepared to make himself. As the festive season was mentioned during the speech of the member for Beverley, I fully appreciate the general atmosphere of this House and therefore rather than indulge in a long speech, I shall recognise that brevity will be appreciated at this stage of the session, especially as we are hopeful that Parliament will again meet early next year.

The question of land settlement is most important to each and every one of us and that applies especially throughout the district that I represent. I realise that at this stage the big task ahead is that associated with the rehabilitation of land settlement. The Government is faced with a tremendous responsibility in tackling the problem of ascertaining the total area of land available for settlement by the right type of soldier settler. I hope those two aspects will be co-

ordinated and that we shall not have to re-live through mistakes such as those that followed so closely upon the land settlement scheme after the 1914-18 war. In my district—I do not wish to be parochial, but I think it well to speak of matters of which I have some knowledge—the problem of subdivision of land is a vexed one. There are several large holdings that if subdivided would provide a number of excellent farms. Irrespective of party or policy considerations, at this juncture I feel that a farm of 50,000 acres of first class country should provide a living for between 30 and 40 returned soldier settlers. In that case the question of the interest of one or two men should not be allowed to carry undue weight when provision is made for settling returned men on an area such as 50,000 acres.

On the other hand, we must bear in mind that it would be useless to subdivide large farms that are being operated successfully in producing the food products that are so necessary to feed the starving millions throughout the world. It would be far better to settle men on first-class land that is at present available. I hope the Minister, and the Government generally, will consider that question. It is well known that in the areas around Yuna, Mullewa and east of Morawa, there are many vacated farms which were left by settlers during the dry period. The land there is first-class, but I feel that although the season just closed has been a good one, returning soldier farmers should not be encouraged to adopt the view that following seasons will be similar to it and take up land as far east as Southern Cross, in which event we might have a repetition of the trials and tribulations of which we have heard so much in the past. I stress that point because I know that in the northern sections of Western Australia there are large stretches of light land, which are to be found not only in the drier areas, but from Dongara to Three Springs, where there are many thousands of acres of second-class land heavily covered by shrubs and wattle thicket, which could be made available after the first-class land had been taken up.

That land could be made use of for barley. When speaking to me recently, a member of the Barley Board suggested that the area would be excellent for the produc-



tion of that commodity and he expressed the opinion that if development took place along those lines, instead of importing barley for the production of ale and so forth, Western Australia could well provide for all her requirements in that respect and have a surplus for export, if the areas I mentioned were cleared and put under crop. I suggest that one or two 2,000 acre holdings of this light land where the rainfall is assured and where there is a subterranean water supply be used for experimental purposes, not as a State farm or a research station, but merely to ascertain what can be done with that land. Similar experiments might be tried not only at Dongara but also in other areas because the climatic and rainfall conditions of the State vary so greatly.

In connection with the productivity of our soil, there arises the serious problem caused by noxious weeds. On the Table we have the report of the Royal Commission on Vermin in which mention is made of several new noxious weeds on the Nangetty Station at Mingenev. I refer to the rapistrum weed which we have reason to fear as being one of our worst menaces. Four years ago, this weed covered an area of only a quarter of an acre, whereas it now covers 1,200 acres. I say that the spread of this weed has resulted from the apathetic attitude, not of the Government, but of the people themselves. If we are going to resist the spread of such noxious weeds, we must arouse the people from their apathy to the problem in general and also to the danger of this particular problem. It is too late to ask for Government assistance and, all said and done, it is difficult to cope with the problem without local organisation.

The same remark applies to vermin, about which much has been said during this session, but I point out that rabbits are increasing in number. Once again I stress the importance of introducing legislation early next session to co-ordinate the organisations of the Government and the local authorities and make this a national question. In conclusion, I hope that not only shall we settle soldiers in the South-West, but also that every avenue of productivity, both north and south, will be explored with a view to building up a well-balanced rural State on which we can raise a happy and contented people. I stress again the

need for putting soldier settlers in areas that get rain in the winter, because they must have a sense of security. I ask the Minister to consider the north as well as the south when framing his Estimates in future.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Farmers' Debts Adjustment £1,350; Rural and Industries Bank, £5—*agreed to.

*Vote—Labour, £1,585:*

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. A. H. Pantom—Leederville) [5.20]: I shall not spend much time on these Estimates because they deal largely with routine matters, but the member for Pingelly asked for information about the holiday arrangements for the Christmas season. I do not know exactly what the hon. member's complaint is, but every year we have to decide which days shall be observed as holidays.

The holidays come under three headings: (1) the bank holidays under the Bank Act; (2) the Public Service holidays under the Public Service Act; and (3) the holidays gazetted by the Government for shops, etc. This year Christmas Day falls on Tuesday—it is the first time this has happened since 1934—and this particular day of the week always makes it more difficult to arrange the other holidays. The Government gave close consideration to the matter because so many implications were involved.

The banks, almost without exception, desired the holidays under the Bank Act which meant Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in Christmas week and Monday and Tuesday as the New Year holidays. I do not suppose it makes much difference to the banks what holidays they have because there are no perishable goods associated with banking. People who want to lodge money in a bank can make arrangements to do so, and those who want to withdraw money do so beforehand and there is nothing perishable about that unless they take it to the races.

Before the war, public servants were invariably granted three holidays in Christmas week and two in the following week. During the war, the number was reduced to two in Christmas week and two for the New Year. Deputations waited on me and strenuously urged that we revert to the pre-war practice and grant three holidays:

over Christmas. The Commonwealth Government at that stage was proposing to close down its offices from Christmas Eve till the day after New Year's Day. Of course, State public servants wanted a similar concession, but to this the Government could not agree. Then the desire was to have Wednesday and Thursday, but our idea was that they would get a better break if we granted Monday instead of Thursday. As civil servants do not work on Saturday, this ensured a holiday from Friday night till Wednesday morning, which was better than breaking the period by having them work on Monday. That is the arrangement for the Public Service.

Then came the question of dealing with the more difficult section—the shops. Obviously, if we closed the shops on Monday, as well as Christmas Day and Boxing Day, tremendous inconvenience would be caused to the people. The last opportunity the womenfolk would have to buy perishable goods would be Saturday morning and then they would not be able to get fresh supplies until Thursday morning. This proposal was considered inadvisable because every home has not a refrigerator or an ice-chest, and sometimes ice is not obtainable. Therefore, we decided to gazette the shop holidays for the metropolitan area as Christmas Day and Boxing Day and the following Monday and Tuesday.

When it came to dealing with the country, we adopted a similar arrangement, except that in those towns that have the Wednesday half-holiday—which would fall on Boxing Day—we decided to meet requests from shopping districts by declaring holidays on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Thus, people who ordinarily would have a half-holiday on Wednesday, will be compensated by getting a holiday on Thursday. Since the holidays were gazetted, we have received one or two small requests. One came from the butchers in Kalgoorlie, which of course has a hot climate. They requested to be permitted to open until 11 a.m. on the Monday before Christmas Day and until 11 a.m. on New Year's Day, but we made the time till 11 a.m. on the Monday before New Year's Day. It is a difficult problem to deal with the whole of the State, particularly when Christmas Day falls on a Tuesday. On looking up the data as to what was done in 1934, I found

that the same holidays were then granted as have been decided upon on this occasion.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [5.26]: I thank the Minister for the explanation, but the holidays gazetted for the country will create a big difficulty. The business places will be open on Monday, but they will not hold their cash from mid-day on Saturday until Thursday, and this means that the bank manager, or one of his clerks, will have to be available on the Monday to receive cash and lock it up in the safe. Then the banks will open on Thursday, but the business places will be closed on that day. What is the use of having two or three banks in a country town open on the Thursday and all other places closed? I admit that it is awkward to arrange the matter. I recall that in my time in a bank, when Christmas Day fell on Tuesday, we had to work on Monday and received Christmas Day and Boxing Day as holidays, and we also received New Year's Day, and the following day.

The Minister for Labour: Only those towns that observe the Wednesday half-holiday will get a holiday on Thursday.

Mr. SEWARD: Pingelly observes a half-holiday on Wednesday, and so the Thursday holiday will apply there. I thank the Minister for his explanation, but difficulty will be created.

Vote put and passed.

*Votes—Factories, £7,960; Arbitration Court, £5,200; State Insurance Office, £5—agreed to.*

This concluded the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

*In Committee of Ways and Means.*

**THE PREMIER AND TREASURER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.29]: I move—

That towards making good the Supply granted to His Majesty for the services of the year ending the 30th June, 1946, a sum not exceeding £9,057,685 be granted from the Consolidated Revenue Fund.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

## STATE TRADING CONCERNS ESTIMATES, 1945-46.

### *In Committee.*

Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the State Trading Concerns for the year ending the 30th June, 1946, now considered, Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

*Divisions—State Engineering Works, £110,022; State Quarries, £250; West Australian Meat Exports, £140,900; State Brick Works, £59,955—agreed to.*

*Division—State Hotels, £72,503:*

Mr. SEWARD: This is a division that arouses my curiosity. It seems extraordinary that we should be budgeting for a deficiency of £1,503, because so far as I know conditions are fairly good for hotels this year.

The Minister for Lands: There is a shortage of beer.

Mr. SEWARD: There has been, but conditions are not too bad. My reason for speaking on this division is some comments appearing in the tabled report of the State Hotels Department. There is one report from the manager of the Wongan Hills Hotel referring to furniture and a refrigerator. It states—

Portion of the old furniture is still in Perth and will be disposed of to the best advantage, and when final valuation is made by the Public Works Department, the necessary adjustment will be made.

I find that the Wongan Hills Hotel was built in 1940 and that £1,220 worth of furniture has been lying in Perth for the last two or three years. That seems extraordinary in view of the price that furniture was bringing during that period. I am surprised that it could not be sold or passed on to some other State Hotel.

The Minister for Lands: It was being renovated to make it saleable.

Mr. SEWARD: In view of the prices prevailing, I should have thought it would not have been worth renovating; that more value would have been obtained by selling it as it was. With regard to the refrigerator from the old building, a report from the Public Works Department indicates that it has been stored in Perth and has deteriorated to such an extent as to be practically useless. That calls for some explanation. I do not know what was the value of the plant, but it must have been of some value to have been left until it became of no value at all.

The Minister for Lands: If it was any thing like the old Wongan Hills Hotel it was not worth very much!

Mr. SEWARD: Surely it must have been worth something to have been sent from Wongan Hills to Perth! The report of the Auditor General indicates that four State hotels reported an increased turn-over and the other three showed a reduction on the figures of the previous year. The report points out that a comparison of the returns from the seven hotels disclosed fairly wide variations in the gross percentages. This according to the report, is not unusual and satisfactory explanations have been received but the variations disclosed by the percentage returns from some of the hotels during the last two years when conditions have not altered to any extent requires further investigation and will be followed up with the management. Five of the seven hotels are situated in agricultural townships and the other two in industrial areas.

I consider that an investigation is needed into the conduct of State hotels, and I think it would be found that better results could be achieved by their being leased. The fact that they are showing losses at a time like this calls for investigation, and I hope the Minister will see that a close examination of the position is made. It must be remembered that the State hotels are not in line with ordinary hotels. Generally speaking they are without opposition and can fix their own hours in keeping with the Licensing Act provisions, whereas many of the other hotels have to run a risk through their customers coming for a drink after hours, to indulge in longer trading hours, and generally to fulfill conditions that call for added expense.

Mr. THORN: I hope the Government will take note of what the member for Pingelly has said. If it wants to make money it should consider leasing the hotels. It is only in keeping with human nature that manager of these hotels should not be greatly concerned with their efficient management and with the business side to the same extent that a leaseholder would be. We have State hotel in Bolgart. It is quite a good building, but the establishment is pitifully run. It is a shocking hotel.

Mr. Cross: I went there once, and there was nobody there at all.

Mr. THORN: It is a shocking place!

Mr. Smith: From what aspect—the residential or some other aspect?

Mr. THORN: From every aspect.

Mr. Smith: There are other shocking hotels, too.

Mr. THORN: I do not want to upset the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe. I know there are other shocking hotels; but I am talking about the hotels owned by the Government, and I am endeavouring to advance suggestions that may assist the Government to obtain revenue instead of making a loss. If the member for Brown Hill-Ivanhoe or I happened to be a leaseholder of one of these hotels, either of us would endeavour to run it efficiently because it would be to our personal interest to do so. But the Government has quite nice buildings throughout the country which are bringing in no revenue but are showing losses. In those circumstances the Government is justified in giving consideration to their being leased. In the interests of the farmers and other residents of the Bolgart district, I want to see an improvement made in the State hotel there. I think the last man in charge was a returned soldier with one arm and he worked very hard. I believe he was an improvement on the previous manager and was setting out to do his best. I think he pulled the business together a bit and showed a better percentage, but there is still tremendous room for improvement.

The Minister for Justice: It is more a matter of providing a public service than of making a profit.

Mr. THORN: Yes. It must be admitted that during the war there was trouble in getting staff and other difficulties. But those difficulties could be overcome now and there should be a big improvement.

Mr. WATTS: I intervene in this debate because I believe that greater activity and supervision on the part of the Government could make these hotels profitable, whether they be leased or not. Whether they should be leased is certainly a matter that should be given consideration, but I submit that it ought to be possible to make a profit out of them without leasing them. I venture to suggest there are no seven comparable hotels in Western Australia which are going to budget for a loss of £1,500 during the ensuing financial year; and I venture to suggest there are no hotels in Western Aus-

tralia of a comparable kind which did not show a very substantial profit last year. They would be paying from £10 to £25 a week, depending on the hotels involved, for rent to their landlords; and the proprietors would be making from £500 to £1,000 a year. That would mean that there would be from those hotels, notwithstanding the difficulty of obtaining supplies and manpower, compared with other hotels, a profit of between £7,000 and £12,000, when one includes rent paid to landlords in similar cases.

So there seems to be something wrong, and it is the worst advertisement we could have for State enterprise. The whole world knows it is extremely rare for an hotel to make a loss, so if the State cannot make a profit out of its hotels, the people will say, "Do not have State Trading Concerns." If the Government wants to remove the very strong objection which there is from a great number of people—an objection far stronger than any I might have—the best way is to establish the fact that the existing State Trading Concerns are capable of being run in the same way as other enterprises and of making a margin of profit. I agree with the member for Toodyay that some of these State hotels could be very much better managed than they are. There again, it is the question of the State setting an example. There are very strong views held by some people, and I do not know that they are not sound views in some respects, that the whole question of liquor disposal and sale should be in the hands of a State authority. Anybody who held that point of view after spending an hour or two in the hotel to which the member for Toodyay referred could be regarded as insane, because it does not compare in the slightest degree with similar premises in other country towns, no better circumstanced and serving no greater districts.

The whole thing seems to require a thorough overhaul and, even ignoring the questions I have raised, there is the position of the Treasurer, who is entitled to expect something now and then, especially when private hotelkeepers can manage to make the business lucrative by paying attention to detail. These hotels do not have to pay licenses, which gives them a further advantage. I hope the Treasurer will see that he gets something from them. They should

be made to provide a better service to the people served and to set an example for other hotel proprietors to live up to.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS:** I make no apologies, and I agree with everything that has been said on the matter. Some of the State hotels are just about as bad as they could be. We have had a strenuous time in the last few weeks, but the whole matter is being gone into, in order to bring about a thorough reorganisation. A fortnight ago I stayed at Wongan Hills, and that hotel was in excellent condition. It would be disastrous if it were allowed to come down to the level of some of the others. When the State hotels were established the idea was to give the people of Western Australia the best possible service at reasonable prices. I know of Bolgart and one or two other places where it is not nice to think that the hotels are State hotels. One or two people at Wongan Hills told me that the State hotel there is worth much more to the town than was the old hotel, because it attracts people to come 20 or 25 miles further than they used to come, to stay the night. I assure the Leader of the Opposition that there is to be a thorough inquiry into the whole business and a reorganisation. If there is anything out of which we should make a profit it is the State hotels.

Division put and passed.

*Divisions—State Shipping Service, £337,244; State Sawmills, £576,151; Wyndham Freezing Works, £186,000—agreed to.*

This concluded the Estimates of the Trading Concerns for the year.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

## **BILL—APPROPRIATION.**

*Message.*

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

*First Reading.*

In accordance with resolutions adopted in Committees of Supply and Ways and Means, leave given to introduce the Bill, which was read a first time.

*Second Reading.*

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne) [5.47]: I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [5.48]: I wish to refer to a statement by the Minister for Lands on the Lands Estimates, relating to the Rural Relief Fund. I am glad to hear that, since the conversation I had with him, and to which he referred, he has taken steps to have consideration given to the writing-off of the whole or a portion of the amount involved in the indebtedness of farmers to the Rural Relief Fund. As is well known, the money, amounting to approximately £1,250,000, was, as far as the finances of the State of Western Australia were concerned, a gift from the Commonwealth. It has always seemed to me that it should not have been made a charge on the properties of the farmers concerned. I have frequently expressed that view, and more recently to the Minister himself, and I am glad that the matter is now being reconsidered.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee, etc.*

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

Bill read a third time and transmitted to the Council.

## **BILL—SOUTH-WEST STATE POWER SCHEME.**

*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the consequential amendment made by the Assembly to the Council's amendment.

## **BILL—GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES (PROMOTIONS APPEAL BOARD).**

*Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

**BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS.***Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

**BILL—MARKETING OF EGGS.***Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of eight amendments made by Council now considered.

*In Committee.*

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; the Minister for Agriculture in charge of the Bill.

No. 1. Clause 7 (2): Delete the word "five" in line 30 and substitute "six."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This deals with the constitution of the board. Another place has taken action the effect of which is to constitute the board almost on exactly the same lines as originally proposed in the Bill.—I move

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 2. Clause 7 (3): Delete the word "five" in line 32, and substitute "six."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This deals with the same matter and is really consequential. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 3. Clause 7, (3): Delete all words contained in paragraph (a) and substitute the following words:—"one shall be a person nominated by the Minister and who is a commercial producer whose main source of income is derived from poultry farming;"

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: This amendment is not altogether the same as the original proposal in the Bill, but it is in conformity with an amendment I placed on the notice paper with the intention of moving it. I did not do so because by way of an amendment one member was deleted from the board. In the circumstances, the amendment is acceptable, and I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. Watts: Will you tell us how the board will be constituted now?

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:**

Yes. One member is to be a person nominated by the Minister, who is a commercial producer whose main source of income is derived from poultry farming. That does not affect the principle that was embodied in the Bill but makes the position more specific. Then there are two persons to be nominated by the Minister to represent the consumers and one of those consumer-representatives at least is to be a person of mercantile and commercial experience in the marketing of eggs. That is slightly different from what was suggested in the Bill, because it sets out that at least one of the members must have mercantile and commercial experience in the marketing of eggs. Then there is a person who is to be nominated by the Minister and that person is not to be engaged or financially interested in the business of producing or selling eggs and he is to be the chairman of the board. That is slightly different from the provision in the Bill.

Question put and passed: the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 4. Clause 7, (3): Delete all words contained in paragraph (b) and substitute the following words:—"two shall be persons nominated by the Minister to represent the consumers, one of whom at least shall be a person of mercantile and commercial experience in the marketing of eggs;"

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 5. Clause 7: Insert a new paragraph after paragraph (c) to stand as paragraph (d) as follows:—" (d) one shall be a person nominated by the Minister, who is not engaged or financially interested in the business of producing or selling eggs and who shall be the chairman of the board."

The MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The Bill originally provided for the Minister to nominate a person who was not engaged in the business of producing eggs. The Council has added that the person shall not be interested in the selling of eggs. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 6. Clause 24, (1): Delete the word "except" in line 9, and substitute the word "whether."

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** During the debate when the Bill was before members in this Chamber, the Leader of the Opposition raised a point regarding the words "wholesale or retail" in relation to business and I undertook to have the matter looked into. It was discovered that the word "whether" should have appeared instead of "except."

Mr. Watts: I knew there was something wrong.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** This amendment was inserted in another place to rectify the matter. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 7. Clause 40: Delete the words "until the thirty-first day of December one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight or" in lines 40, 41 and 42.

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** This deals with the duration of the Act. When we provided for its operation for five years we left in the words "until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and forty-eight or for five years" whichever was the later. The disparity between the terms was regarded as too wide, and the amendment is to adjust the position. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 8. Clause 40, line 44:—Delete the words "whichever is the later date":

**THE MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE:** These words are no longer necessary as the five-years period is stipulated. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolutions reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

## **BILL—JUSTICES ACT AMENDMENT,**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [6.7]: This Bill provides that justices shall not be per-

mitted to sit on the bench and hear cases after reaching the age of 70 years. When speaking on the Address-in-reply, I indicated that, if a Bill were introduced providing for the abolition of justices of the peace, I would cordially support it because I consider the time has come when the work should be performed by stipendiary magistrates. However, that is not provided for in this Bill.

Mr. Watts: You would need more of them.

Mr. SEWARD: Undoubtedly, but I think they would be worth the additional expense. I cannot see myself supporting this Bill to prevent justices sitting on the bench just because they have reached the age of 70. I might be singular in my view, but I consider that the most valuable attribute of a justice is the experience he has gained through his lifetime. We frequently hear the statement, "Youth must be served" and that we should appoint younger men for these positions. My view, however, is that a man, when sitting in judgment on his fellows, needs the attributes that come from long experience. If a man has not had such experience, he is apt to form a wrong judgment on the actions of his fellow-men. Simply because a man has reached the age of 70, it does not follow that he is not able to discharge the duties of a justice. Many men appear to be old at 60, while others seem to be little more than middle-aged even after they have passed the 70 mark. In these matters, it is impossible to generalise.

Many men and women who are filling the positions of justices of the peace are more or less advanced in years. They have probably retired from active business, but are still in full possession of their mental faculties, and by reason of that fact are competent to carry out the duties just as well as ever they were. Thus it is not feasible to provide that, because a man or woman has reached the age of 70, he or she shall not sit on the bench. Especially does this apply to a man sitting in the Children's Court. A young man cannot have acquired the experience possessed by older men for dealing with children that come before the court, and I think it essential to have a man with experience to guide him before he passes judgment on children.

The sponsor of the Bill told us that some types of cases tried by justices here would not be heard by justices in some of the other States. In Victoria, some such cases would be

dealt with only by a magistrate, but the point is that such cases are sent on for trial by some higher court. During recent years it has been difficult to get justices, and some young and very inexperienced men were appointed—men who were not mixers in life—with the result that their decisions were often upset by higher courts. We want to avoid that sort of thing. If younger men are appointed, it would be advisable to arrange for them to sit on the bench with experienced men who would be able to give them a little guidance. Recently I read a letter over the signature of a friend of mine and of the member for Williams-Narrogin dealing with this question. He has probably reached the age of 70, but I would defy anyone to say that he is not fully capable of discharging his duties as a justice of the peace. He has carried out those duties for many years as an honorary justice. I oppose the second reading.

**MR. DONEY** (Williams-Narrogin) [6.11]: I would dislike this Bill at any time, but I particularly dislike it in a session crammed as this one is with a lot of legislation, necessary and unnecessary, especially when the Premier is exerting every effort to restrict the notice papers to measures calculated to benefit the State. Ability and a capacity to exercise judgment do not cease at the age of 70 years.

**Mr. Abbott:** That is the age provided for the retirement of judges.

**Mr. DONEY:** I am not discussing judges. I am merely saying that capacity for judgment does not cease at 70; nor does it necessarily cease on the attainment of 75 or 80 years. To push all justices out arbitrarily at the age of 70 would be absurd, and I am wondering why the sponsor of the measure in another place should have achieved the success he did. The great Churchill himself was not too old at 70; in fact, I imagine that he must have done his very best work at about that age. Every member can call to mind scores of such men who are just as capable now as they were at any time of their lives.

If there is a desire to cleanse the justices' roll, ample means are available to do it in a proper way and in a way far more efficacious and less invidious than is proposed in this Bill. The measure is really an affront to scores and possibly a couple

of hundred good solid men who have given a tremendous amount of valuable and unpaid public service to the State. The member for Pingelly mentioned a man who had written a letter on the subject a few days ago. He is a man of wide experience and knowledge, and conducts all the coronial inquiries in the town, besides doing a great deal of work in the children's court and ordinary bench work.

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

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [7.30]: I regret that my colleague, the member for Williams-Narrogin, having been called away to attend to an urgent matter in his electorate, is unable to finish the remarks he was making; and I feel disposed, to the best of my ability, to finish them for him. I do not approve of the proposal in this measure, and I hope the House will not agree to it. I suppose I have had as much experience of honorary justices of the peace in court work as any other member in this House, because they are much more frequently employed, if I understand the position aright, in the country areas than they are in the metropolitan district—at least as far as the appearance of legal practitioners before them is concerned. I say without a shadow of hesitation that some of the best justices I have seen—who, because of their experience and knowledge, were mentally capable of dealing with matters that had to come before them in the absence of resident magistrates who were frequently absent from those centres—were over 70 years of age. I do not for one moment suggest every justice of the peace, whether he be over 70 years of age or under, deserves to remain on the Commission of the Peace. But I suggest that the proper remedy is to take any man off whom it may be desired to remove, and to issue a new Commission of the Peace, if necessary, without his name thereon.

**Mr. North:** There is power, is there not?

**Mr. WATTS:** The Premier's Department, which creates justices of the peace, has absolute power, if it wishes, to issue a new Commission which does not contain a justice's name, no matter what his age, if he is found unsuitable or incompetent. So it seems that it would be reasonable to suggest that the obligation to deal with a mat-



ter of this nature should be placed upon the proper department, and that there should not be an invidious distinction against men who have been appointed to a purely honorary position, such as is proposed in this Bill. I do not know what is the age of our hon. colleague from Netherlands; but I venture to suggest that he has by now at least passed three score years and 10.

**Mr. Cross:** He is an exception.

**Mr. WATTS:** There are many more. I would not like to suggest that he should be excluded, were he a justice of the peace, under a proposal of this kind. A stipendiary magistrate who retires when he is 70 because he is an employee—and even then continues five years longer than the average Government employee—if this Bill were law, after all his knowledge of the law and after all his years of experience, would be unable, the day after his retirement, to sit upon the bench and decide a case of small importance, although he would be mentally equipped in every way to deal with it. So it seems to me that we would be much better advised not to pass this measure but to leave to the proper department the obligation of dealing with individual cases, if there chance to be any where that power should be used to remove an offending justice, whatever his age, from the bench, because in my experience we have just as much satisfaction from men who are prepared to sit upon the bench and who are over 70 years of age as we receive from men under that age.

There comes a time when the average man who has been appointed a justice of the peace and reaches a considerable age is not anxious to take any part in court work at all but much prefers not to have anything to do with it. In those circumstances, he is wise to keep away from it. It is not reasonable, bearing in mind all the facts mentioned in the House today, to pass this legislation and simply say that no matter who a man is or what his service has been or what his profession has been, because he has attained the age of 70 he may not sit on the bench in an honorary capacity.

Lastly, it seems to me to be a very poor compliment to the Legislature itself if we are going to say that a man over 70, no matter what his mental attainments, cannot sit upon the bench; and yet be willing—as I

think we should be, because it is the electors' business to say who shall represent them and not ours—to allow a man over 70 years of age, if the electors select him, to sit here and take part in the most important business transacted in the supreme court of the land, if I may use that phrase—Parliament itself.

**Mr. Abbott:** We do not know that we are. There is no Bill providing for that.

**Mr. WATTS:** At present there is no restriction on the age of members of Parliament, and I submit there is no need for any, because the electors are their employers; and, in the same way as any other employer can dismiss his employees, so the electors can dismiss their representatives at any time after they have been three years in Parliament. If we think that in those circumstances there are men over 70 years of age fit to represent the people in Parliament, then I submit there are men—and the matter should be at the discretion of the department concerned—fit to sit on the bench over that age, and for that reason we should not pass this legislation.

**MR. CROSS (Canning) [7.37]:** Some time ago we passed a Bill which compelled judges of the Supreme Court and of the Arbitration Court to retire at 70 years of age, because it was considered that at that age they had outlived their usefulness. We do not take notice of exceptional cases but consider the average.

**Mr. Thorn:** It was not done for that reason at all. It was a matter of policy, and you know it!

**Mr. CROSS:** As a matter of fact, none of these people will lose a penny as a result of this change. They will retain their Commission. All that will happen is that they will be prevented from sitting on the bench. If the stipendiary magistrates and judges are retired at 70 years of age, then honorary justices should be retired as well. In order to be consistent, we must carry this measure. For that reason, I intend to support the Bill.

**MR. THORN (Toodyay) [7.39]:** I do not think the member for Canning should be allowed to get away with the statement he made, because he absolutely misled the House.

**Mr. Cross:** Do not talk rot!

Mr. THORN: See how angry he gets when he hears a home truth! The fact of the matter is that judges and stipendary magistrates are retired at the age of 70 in accordance with Government policy. It is quite right, too. The policy is to give younger men an opportunity to occupy those positions, and the hon. member knows it. It is not that those men have outlived their usefulness. It is not that they are incapable of occupying their positions but it is done for the reason I have stated. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. W. Hegney: Of course you would!

Mr. THORN: Why should I not? If we are going to agree to a measure of this description, it is a great reflection on the Legislature of this State. If such a principle should apply to justices of the peace, it should apply also to members of this Parliament.

Hon. H. Millington: Hear, hear!

Mr. THORN: As we have no intention of making it apply to this Parliament—because we know we can get from older members of this Parliament judgment just as sound as, and indeed sounder than comes from the new young brooms that enter the House and want to sweep everything before them.

Mr. Abbott: You are looking ahead are you?

Mr. THORN: Yes; and I hope the hon. member is, because he looks further ahead than I at present.

Mr. Abbott: Quite right.

Mr. THORN: No, I am only trying to apply commonsense to any decision we may reach in this Chamber. Gentlemen occupying these positions, particularly in the country, are fulfilling a very useful purpose; and if the work they are doing were analysed, it would be found that their judgment is quite sound. Moreover, they are doing the work in an honorary capacity; and we should not reflect on them but give them credit for the services they have rendered in the past and allow them to continue. We should not pass legislation of this kind, and I hope this Bill will receive the treatment some of our Bills receive in another place.

MR. GRAHAM (East Perth) [7.43]: I agree that the retiring age is a matter of Government policy as it has been given

effect to in a number of instances, in certain cases at 65 and in others at 70. I think the principle has been sufficiently well established to be continued in all directions where the Government has any say with regard to appointments. Mention has been made of the fact that there is a retiring age for judges and stipendary magistrates. There is no retiring age for members of the Licensing Bench, but I understand that the Government has decided that when a person reaches 70 he shall not be re-appointed to that office. I feel that while there are occasions when persons retain their mental faculties to the full to ages far beyond 70, nevertheless the principle is sufficiently important to embody in the amendment that is before us. After all, the position under review is a most responsible one and if there be cases—even if they be few—of persons whose outlook and mental wisdom have been affected to some extent on account of the onset of years, surely that is a risk we should not be prepared to allow.

I do not think it can be denied that those who are advanced in years are in the main persons who make themselves available most for services on the bench, because of the fact that there is a generally accepted retiring age; and after those persons have ceased their normal occupations, sitting on the bench becomes a happy pastime, something with which to occupy the spare hours on their hands. Unfortunately, very few people are able to assess their true value in the positions they occupy. If there is a possibility of injustice being done no risk of that should be taken. I am surprised that there should be opposition to this measure, as it has long been an established principle that there should be a retiring age. That applies to magistrates and judges, who discharge a function similar to that of justice of the peace when sitting on the bench. Surely that principle should be extended to the justices of the peace. I support the second reading of the Bill and hope it will be given effect in order that there may be consistency, that those who have passed the prime of their mental faculties shall not be allowed to sit on the bench, and so that those born not only in the last generation but the generation before may not be in a position to give rulings on matters occurring at the present day.

With the passage of time the outlook and code of ethics changes and those who have so many years behind them cannot fully appreciate that. Many of the bitter expressions heard from time to time from various organisations as to the conduct of youth are heard because the majority of the members of organisations I have in mind are mentally on the decline, and their own adventures or escapades of perhaps 50 years ago have been forgotten, so that they have a totally different outlook on the matter. Surely it is obvious that if magistrates are retired at the age of 70, for the purpose of providing opportunity for advancement to young men, justices of the peace should also be retired. There should be a guarantee that men cannot continue indefinitely until they reach their second childhood. I hope the Bill will be passed.

**MR. STYANTS** (Kalgoorlie) [7.50]: I am yet to be convinced of the necessity for this measure. The only argument of any weight that I have heard in its favour is that on the score of consistency, put up by the member for East Perth. We have passed legislation to make a retiring age of 70 compulsory for judges and magistrates, and the same might be applied to justices of the peace. I would have expected those favouring this measure to put up evidence of cases where justices of the peace, over 70 years of age, have given decisions contrary to the spirit of justice and fairplay.

Mr. Leslie: Now you are getting on to something.

Mr. STYANTS: That has not been done. I could quote many instances where those in higher positions than that of justice of the peace have given most erratic decisions, and I refer to people considerably below 70 years of age. I have in mind a case where a lumper at Fremantle was given three months' imprisonment because he was found with two tins of whitebait in his possession, while another man, who had a motor tyre and a considerable quantity of material that he admitted having stolen from the defence authorities, at a time when those articles were most sorely needed, was tried before the same magistrate and was bound over on a bond of £20 to be of good behaviour for 12 months.

Mr. Abbott: Were there previous convictions in either case?

Mr. STYANTS: There was no reference to previous convictions of the lumper, in the newspaper report. A few weeks ago a case was heard in Perth before a magistrate. A man, drunk in charge of a motor vehicle, dashed out of Wellington-street and over the Horseshoe Bridge and collided with another vehicle there. He pleaded guilty to having been drunk and was fined £5. If the sponsors of this measure brought forward cases such as that, I would be prepared to give some consideration to it.

Mr. Abbott: You cannot urge those facts without full consideration of all the facts.

Mr. STYANTS: Not much consideration is necessary when a man pleads guilty to being drunk in charge of a motor vehicle in Wellington-street and to having collided with a vehicle on the Horseshoe Bridge. A magistrate in the North-West meted out severe punishment to a man there. That man appealed and the appeal judge in Perth made some caustic criticism of the magistrate's decision, and upheld the appeal. When it comes to decisions that are difficult for the layman to understand, such decisions do not come only from justices of the peace. I believe justices of the peace are, in the main, men who have taken up that work as a hobby and who have shown themselves to be above the average in intelligence and ability, and there is no doubt that they are in full possession of their faculties after reaching 70 years of age. The measure proposes only to prevent such men sitting on the bench. To be consistent it would have to deprive them of their other rights. If their faculties are not sufficiently active to allow them to decide whether a man was drunk on Saturday night, or what the penalty should be on Monday morning, they should not be allowed to sign important documents or witness signatures.

Mr. Abbott: Do you not believe in the Government's policy of retiring them at 70?

Mr. STYANTS: I believe that to a certain extent the Government's policy is to retire these people in order to allow the promotion of younger men, and to that extent I support that policy. I think there should be some means of promotion for

younger men, and it is only on that score that I believe magistrates and judges should be retired at 70.

Mr. Thorn: If people such as that could act as justices of the peace, and carry on, their services would be of advantage to the State.

Mr. STYANTS: That is so.

The Minister for Justice: A number of ex magistrates are acting in that capacity.

Mr. STYANTS: It must be remembered that the position of justice of the peace is entirely honorary. There are people who are anxious to be made justices of the peace, who are prevented from obtaining that honour because there are already sufficient appointees in the district concerned, but I do not think that argument has a great deal of weight. If a justice of the peace, through misfortune or advancing years, has not retained his mental faculties and does something that is not a credit to him, his commission can be revoked. Until such time as the sponsors of the measure can prove that those holding commissions have done something contrary to the ethics of the position, or have meted out decisions that are tainted with injustice, I do not propose to support the measure.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [7.55]: It can not be claimed that anybody will lose any money because of this measure. The position of justice of the peace is a matter of reputation and honour. I think the right course would be to provide that all present justices of the peace should carry on for as long as they wish but that all justices appointed after this year, should retire at the age of 70. We must realise that unless we provide for the younger people to have a reasonable number of years in their occupations, there will be chaos and the old men will be hated and pointed at by the generation coming on, for holding on to their positions. I think the Bill is a pointer to the future. I support the Bill with the reservation that those who are now justices of the peace be allowed to carry on.

Mr. MANN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

Mr. MANN: I move—

That the debate be adjourned to a later stage of the sitting.

Motion put and passed.

## BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Council's Amendments.*

Schedule of 27 amendments made by the Council now considered.

### *In Committee.*

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: The first ten of the amendments moved by the Council are as follows:—

- No. 1. Clause 3:—Delete.
- No. 2. Clause 4:—Delete.
- No. 3. Clause 5:—Delete.
- No. 4. Clause 6:—Delete.
- No. 5. Clause 7:—Delete.
- No. 6. Clause 9:—Delete.
- No. 7. Clause 10:—Delete.
- No. 8. Clause 11:—Delete.
- No. 9. Clause 12:—Delete.
- No. 10. Clause 13:—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Amendments Nos. 1 to 10, inclusive, deal with the question of plural voting. I move—

That amendments Nos. 1 to 10, inclusive, be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not agreed to.

- No. 11. Clause 14:—Delete.
- No. 12. Clause 15:—Delete.
- No. 13. Clause 16:—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These amendments deal with the prohibition of meetings being held before 7 p.m. In order to meet the Council in a spirit of compromise, I am prepared to accept these amendments, and I move—

That amendments Nos. 11 to 13, inclusive, be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments agreed to.

No. 14. Clause 21, proposed new Section 219A:—Insert the words "or purchase" after the word "purpose" in line 31.

No. 15. Clause 21, proposed new Section 219A:—Insert the words "sold under contract of sale or be" after the word "be" in line 31.

No. 16. Clause 21, proposed new Section 219A:—Insert the word "leased" after the word "such" in line 33.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These amendments deal with the question of municipal councils being given power to purchase houses for the purpose of selling or leasing them. I do not propose to accept them, and I move—

That amendments Nos. 14 to 16, inclusive, be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not agreed to.

No. 17. Clause 21, proposed new Section 219A:—Delete from the proviso the words "no freehold estate in any such land shall be granted to any employee and that" in lines 37 and 38.

No. 18. Clause 21, proposed new Section 219A:—Insert the proviso, after the word "land" in line 40, the words "or the purchase of any such house."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These amendments deal with municipal employees purchasing houses from municipal councils. It was decided that it would be unwise to give the councils the right to sell houses and that it would be wiser to enable them to lease them. I move—

That amendments Nos. 17 and 18 be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not agreed to.

No. 19. Clause 21, proposed new Section 219A:—Add to the proviso at the end thereof the words "or out of the ordinary revenue of the council."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This amendment seeks to restore to the clause certain words struck out in this Chamber. We agreed that moneys used for the building of houses should come out of loan funds, but the Council seeks to give municipal authorities the right to finance such propositions out of revenue. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 20. Clause 21, proposed new Section 219B:—Delete proposed new Subsection (6), page 8, and substitute a subsection as follows:—

"(6) The rents and profits derived by the Council from the leasing of houses, and the net proceeds derived by the Council

from the sale of houses, under this section shall be used and applied for payment of interest and sinking fund contributions or otherwise for the redemption of the loan from which such moneys were taken."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This matter was mentioned in Committee here, but it was difficult to frame the necessary amendment at the time, so it was inserted in another place. I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

No. 21. Clause 32:—Delete.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This again concerns plural voting. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 22. Clause 34, (c):—Delete subparagraph (vi), on page 14.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: This deals with the clause giving the discretionary right to a municipal council to assist in the maintenance of school grounds. I move—

That the amendment be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment not agreed to.

No. 23. Clause 36:—Delete.

No. 24. Clause 7:—Delete.

No. 25. Clause 38:—Delete

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These again deal with plural voting. I move—

That amendments Nos. 23 to 25, inclusive, be not agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments not agreed to.

No. 26. New clauses:—Insert new clauses after clause 7, to stand as Clauses 8 and 9, as follows:—

Amendment of s. 77.

8. Section seventy-seven of the principal Act is amended by inserting at the beginning thereof the words "Subject to section forty-four of this Act."

Amendment of s. 78.

9. Section seventy-eight of the principal Act is amended by inserting at the beginning thereof the words "Subject to section forty-four of this Act."

No. 27. Insert a new clause after Clause 34, to stand as Clause 35, as follows:—

Amendment of s. 483.

35. Section four hundred and eighty-three of the principal Act is amended by deleting the word "mayor" in the last line of the section and inserting in lieu thereof the word "councillors."

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: These amendments are consequential upon the extension of the term of a mayor from one year to two years. These provisions should have been included originally in the Bill but were overlooked by the draftsman. I move—

That amendments Nos. 26 and 27 be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendments agreed to.

Resolutions reported and the report adopted.

A committee consisting of Mr. Watts, Mr. Withers and the Minister for Works drew up reasons for not agreeing to certain of the Council's amendments.

Reasons adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

Resolved: That the Council's attention be directed to a clerical error in the Bill whereby in Clause 25, page 11, line 6, after the word "of" the words "wood and partly of" were omitted and that the Legislative Council be requested to agree to the insertion of the words so omitted.

### BILL—APPROPRIATION.

Returned from the Council without amendment.

### BILL—JUSTICES ACT AMENDMENT.

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from an earlier stage of the sitting.

MR. SMITH (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe—in reply) [8.20]: Opponents of the Bill have obviously had great difficulty in advancing any valid objections to it. We might regard it as a very great impertinence that Nature has made us in such a way that our mental faculties begin to decline at least on our reaching 70 years of age and very often before that, but we have to accept the inevitable. The member for Kalgoorlie agreed that this Parliament had passed legislation making the retiring ages for judges, stipendiary magis-

trates and the President of the Arbitration Court as a very good reason in support of the Bill. Does he not think that when that legislation was before Parliament, the various aspects of the question as to whether 70 was not a reasonable age at which to retire men acting in a judicial capacity were not discussed at length and all the arguments discovered and debated? The cases he quoted of magistrates giving invalid decisions on certain occasions had no bearing on this proposal except that they tend to justify it.

If a magistrate, a man we can presume whose faculties are not declining, can make these errors, what errors might not a justice make after reaching the age of 70? And we must not overlook the importance of the jurisdiction vested in justices. The member for Pingelly spoke about the experiences gained by justices. What about the experience that has been gained by judges?

Mr. Thorn: We want to make use of them after 70.

Mr. SMITH: What about the experience gained by stipendiary magistrates and the President of the Arbitration Court? Have they not gained experience while they were reaching the age of 70? Yet the Legislature agreed that that was the age at which they must retire.

Mr. Thorn: Tell us why.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member, in speaking against the Bill, asserted that the retirement of judges, stipendiary magistrates and the President of the Arbitration Court was a matter of Government policy. It is not.

Mr. Thorn: Of course it is.

Mr. Mann: Whose policy is it?

Mr. SMITH: It is a matter of Parliamentary policy provided for by statute.

Mr. Mann: Who brought it in?

Mr. SMITH: It might be said that the retirement of civil servants at the age of 65 has been adopted as a matter of Government policy, but how can we say that the retirement of judges and magistrates is a matter of Government policy only when the Legislature has agreed to it. The member for Pingelly raised the old question about some men of 70 not having lost their mental faculties while some had lost them at 60. Have we to go all over that argument again? We have selected a reasonable age when those of us with a bit of commonsense realise that, much as we dis-

like it, the average man begins to decline in his mental alertness and vigour. It is no argument that some men retain their faculties at that age. Why has the Queensland Legislature agreed that judges must retire at 70, and New South Wales, too?

Mr. Styants: A matter of Government policy, as here.

Mr. SMITH: There is no great need to make room for the promotion of judges. There is not the upstream for filling positions in the judiciary that there is in the Public Service. Entirely different conditions prevail.

Mr. Mann: What is the motive behind the Bill?

Mr. SMITH: Commonsense.

Mr. Thorn: I do not think so.

Mr. SMITH: Our duty is to protect the public and give a service through the judiciary. Electors have an opportunity of choosing members of Parliament even though they might be over 70 years of age, but they have no opportunity of electing justices. That is our duty. The greatest care is exercised before appointing a man a justice of the peace. He is not selected haphazardly; investigation is made into his character and capacity, and the care we bestow in making an appointment should be exercised throughout the years of his service. It cannot be said that justices as human beings differ from others or that their faculties do not begin to decline at the age of 70. When they are reaching an age at which the mental faculties of the average man begin to decline, we as reasonable beings should say, "Now is the time for you to retire from this responsible position." Perhaps nine out of ten of them do little more than sign documents. It was suggested that we should not only prevent justices of 70 from acting in a judicial capacity, but that we should also prohibit them from witnessing signatures. I would not go so far as to suggest that a man was not possessed of full mental capacity even if he were over 70 years of age, unless he were in a lunatic asylum, and that he could not witness somebody's signature. To ask him to do so is not throwing on him a very great responsibility. But for him to sit on a bench and exercise jurisdiction over the various matters that come before him under the Justices Act is indeed a great responsibility.

It rests with the members of this Chamber to ensure that such positions are filled by men qualified to hold them. I do not think that even the experience gained by these older men can be taken into consideration in this issue. There are many justices of the peace in Western Australia; the member for Williams-Narrogin said that 200 would be affected by this measure, and they are preventing younger men from being appointed. There is a great desire throughout Western Australia for the appointment of younger men, in possession of their full faculties, to fill the position of justice of the peace. It is not possible for us always to make accurate decisions in all cases, but we must assume that the younger men are fully qualified. The member for Kalgoorlie said that he would vote for the measure if it could be demonstrated that the present justices of the peace had declining mental faculties, if we could bring them here and demonstrate that.

Mr. Styants: I did not say that.

Members: No.

Mr. SMITH: That would be an absolute impossibility.

Mr. Styants: I did not say anything of the kind.

Mr. SMITH: The hon. member said if we could quote cases where we could prove that the faculties of these men were declining we could withdraw their commission.

Mr. Styants: That does not prove that I said to bring them here.

Mr. SMITH: If we are not going to bring them here, how can we prove it? Are we to travel throughout Western Australia to prove it, and how are we to prove it? That is what I ask the member for Kalgoorlie. It is impossible for anyone to prove such a proposition and no-one with any commonsense would attempt to do so. I hope the second reading will be passed.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	..	16
—					
Majority for	..	..	..	..	3
—					

## AYES.

Mr. Abbott  
Mr. Brand  
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver  
Mr. Graham  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. J. Hegney  
Mr. Holman  
Mr. Leaby  
Mr. McDonald  
Mr. McLarty

Mr. Millington  
Mr. North  
Mr. Rodoreda  
Mr. Smith  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. Triat  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Withers  
Mr. Cross  
(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Kelly  
Mr. Leslie  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. Marshall  
Mr. Needham  
Mr. Nulsen

Mr. Pantan  
Mr. Read  
Mr. Shearn  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Thora  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Willmott  
Mr. Seward  
(Teller.)

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; Mr. Smith in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 29:

Mr. McLARTY: I move an amendment—

That in line 1 of the proposed further proviso to Section 29 after the word "Justice" the words "appointed after the first day of January, one thousand nine hundred and forty six" be inserted.

This will make the Bill conform to the Judges' Retirement Act, and to the provision dealing with the retirement of magistrates. If judges and magistrates are retired at the age of 70 years then, to be consistent justices of the peace should also be retired at that age; but I point out that that provision did not apply to judges holding office at the time of the commencement of the Judges' Retirement Act. So it is desired that justices of the peace now holding office shall not be subject to this Bill.

Mr. SMITH: I oppose the amendment. There is no analogy between judges and justices of the peace with respect to the point raised by the member for Murray-Wellington. Judges were appointed under a definite contract, at a definite salary and under the provisions of an Act.

Mr. Watts: You drew the analogy just now and cannot depart from it this time.

Mr. SMITH: I can, so far as this aspect is concerned.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: The retirement age for stipendiary magistrates is 70 and for ordinary magistrates, 65.

Mr. SMITH: If the amendment is agreed to, it will simply undermine the Bill.

Mr. Abbott: In some cases there is no appeal from a decision of the justice of the peace.

Mr. SMITH: That makes it more important still.

Mr. Styants: Do not place too much reliance on that legal advice.

Mr. SMITH: Nevertheless it is legal advice, and this Bill was introduced by a legal gentleman in another place as the result of his own experience in the courts. It is only a matter of commonsense, I think, and of appreciating the fact that men's faculties begin to decline after they reach 70 years of age. If there is any justification in respect of new appointments after 1946, the justification exists in regard to those who are over 70 years of age.

Mr. NORTH: Those men appointed now may not for many years attain the age of 70, and the whole of the 1,000 magistrates on the list will be able to carry on after that age under this provision. I suggest that if this amendment is lost, it would be possible to make a much more drastic change by striking out after the word "who" in line 2 of the proviso the words "has attained" with a view to inserting the words, "after 1945 attains." That would mean that any person now 69 would not sit on the bench when he became 70.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	20
Noes	..	..	..	13
Majority for				7

## AYES.

Mr. Brand  
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver  
Mr. W. Hegney  
Mr. Holman  
Mr. Keenan  
Mr. Kelly  
Mr. Leslie  
Mr. Mann  
Mr. McLarty  
Mr. Needham

Mr. North  
Mr. Nulsen  
Mr. Pantan  
Mr. Read  
Mr. Shearn  
Mr. Styants  
Mr. Thora  
Mr. Watts  
Mr. Willmott  
Mr. Seward  
(Teller.)

## NOES.

Mr. Abbott  
Mr. Graham  
Mr. Hawke  
Mr. J. Hegney  
Mr. Leaby  
Mr. Marshall

Mr. Millington  
Mr. Smith  
Mr. Tonkin  
Mr. Willcock  
Mr. Wise  
Mr. Withers  
Mr. Cross  
(Teller.)

Amendment thus passed; the clause, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.



Bill reported with an amendment and the report adopted.

*As to Third Reading.*

**MR. SMITH** (Brown Hill-Ivanhoe): I move—

That the third reading be made an order of the day for the next sitting of the House.

Motion put and passed.

**BILL—CITY OF PERTH SANITATION.**

*Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

*In Committee.*

Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair; Mr. Cross in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Insert after the word “shall” in line 2 the words “without the consent of the Minister.”

Mr. CROSS: It was pointed out in another place that when a building is being erected it is the common practice for builders to provide accommodation for their employees by the erection of a temporary building; and that under this clause, in doing that, they would be breaking the law and would be subject to a fine of £20. It was therefore decided that these words be inserted. I do not think it makes any difference and I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

Resolution reported, the report adopted and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

**BILL—TIMBER INDUSTRY (HOUSING OF EMPLOYEES).**

*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 4th December.

**MR. WILLMOTT** (Sussex) [8.56]: We all know that the timber industry is one of the main industries in Western Australia, and I therefore consider the Bill should be given earnest consideration. The gross value of our forestry products in 1943-44 was £1,500,000, and in that year we exported timber to the value of £614,000. That indicates the importance of the industry. Those figures relate to the war years during which the industry was handicapped by

shortage of manpower. We know that the Forests Department has a long term plan. The hardwood timber industry can be looked on as a permanent industry of our State. I do not intend to deal at any length with this Bill because the Minister stated, when he introduced it, that it was intended to appoint a Select Committee to go into the details of the measure. But there are one or two points I would like to mention that may be of assistance to the committee. I am dealing principally with the smaller mills—the sleeper mills—and I presume that they would come under this measure, because most of them have from 10 to 20 years of life and the owners would have to build houses for their employees.

Just to point out what may happen I will state this case. One of those mills had a lease which would last from 35 to 40 years. But as the leases are renewed every year by the Forests Department, half of that particular mill's lease was taken away last year because it was contended the owner was not making enough progress in the removal of the timber. If that mill-owner, under this Bill, had had to erect necessary buildings for his employees, he would have been involved in big expense only to find that the period of his lease had been cut from 35 to 40 years to from 15 to 20 years. In those sleeper mills there are generally 10 to 12 married men, and he would have to erect that number of houses at a cost of, say, £500 each. The millowner would, therefore, have to spend about £5,000 on a site with a life of perhaps only 10 or 12 years. I think the Honorary Royal Commission should go into matters such as that.

I agree that mill workers should have good accommodation. The Minister also said that they were to be connected up with electric light. That may be all right when the South-West power scheme is in operation, but I do not think all the small mills should have to put in plant to supply electric light for the employees. The water supply at some of the mills is a problem, though clean drinking water is always provided from rainwater tanks. I think that the laying on of water pipes to all the houses for washing and bathing would be a difficult job for some of the smaller mill-owners. The larger mills would be in a better position, as most of them have a long life ahead of them, but the smaller mills

may have a moderately short life, and I do not think they should be put to the expense that the Minister asks in this Bill. I agree that mill workers should have good houses and I feel sure that the millowners will also agree to that. The Honorary Royal Commission that is to be appointed can deal with all those aspects.

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [9.3]: We, on the Opposition side of the House, support the Bill, and as the matter is going to a Select Committee, I will content myself by simply repeating that we support the Bill.

**MR. HOLMAN** (Forrest) [9.4]: I am pleased that the Government has introduced this legislation, for which we have been battling for a long time, and I was pleased also to hear the member for Pingelly say that the Opposition will give this measure its support as it is proposed to appoint a Select Committee to investigate the matter. I cannot let this opportunity pass without referring to some of the matters mentioned by the member for Sussex. This measure has been brought forward to provide for the proper housing accommodation of employees engaged in the timber industry. Members would be surprised to read the correspondence I have received from timber centres since it was announced that the Government intended to bring down this measure. I will not read that correspondence now but will bring it forward when the Honorary Royal Commission is appointed. Plans have been made for the installation of new mills and bigger mills in the lower portion of the South-West, but even though we wish to see those mills built in a proper manner with provision for the comfort and housing of the employees, we must see that certain provisions are made for the existing mills. The member for Sussex need not be afraid that the smaller mills will be penalised, as the Bill provides that the Minister may exempt holdings or portions of holdings, as he thinks fit, provided sufficient reason is given. If it is seen that a small mill cannot bear the expense of providing for these adjustments, the Minister can use his judgment in the matter.

I have a complete list of the estimated lives of the mills and, though quite a number of them have long lives ahead, some have a short life, less than five years. It

may be thought that other means should have been used to provide proper housing and it has been suggested that the Road Districts Act should have covered the matter, but we must visualise what has not been done, rather than what might have been done. It has been suggested that the Health Act might have covered the position in a certain respect, but I have been assured by the department that it was impossible for it to do anything in the matter of housing accommodation. The measure will only apply to certain holdings, and may not necessarily apply to any mill in a city or town, because it would probably be amply covered by the local governing bodies and building by-laws. There are various points that I intend to bring before the Honorary Royal Commission. The Bill provides for the inspectors under the Timber Workers' Regulation Act to be the inspectors under this measure, but I am afraid that that Act will have to be amended in some way to make that arrangement workable.

I notice that no provision is made in the Bill for ventilation. Provision has been made that the walls of the rooms shall be of a certain height, and that the floor space shall be of a certain area, with window space—I think—one-tenth of the wall space. It is provided that each room shall have at least one window, but nothing has been said of ventilation. In some bush houses there is no ventilation at all, and when there is a window in the side of the room it may have to be closed, either through heat or wet weather, and then again there is no ventilation. Some provision should be made to ensure that the rooms are properly ventilated. If the Bill goes through in its present form the member for Sussex need have no fear as to electric lighting, because the measure provides only that the installation shall be made in the building for the lighting of the rooms. Are we still to expect people in the timber centres to do without electric light?

Mr. Abbott: Electric light is hard on the eyes.

Mr. HOLMAN: Candle light is worse. If I have my way electric light will be installed. I congratulate the Minister on introducing the Bill and I hope that when it comes to the final stage in this House these matters will be speedily adjusted. As it

is proposed to appoint the Select Committee as an Honorary Royal Commission I will await my opportunity to place my views before that body.

**MR. ABBOTT** (North Perth) [9.12]: Undoubtedly it is a matter of great importance that people who live under conditions such as those of the timber workers should have reasonable accommodation for their wives and families, but, as the conditions under which the accommodation is to be provided vary so greatly, I think it wise that a Select Committee should be appointed fully to consider the matter. In those circumstances I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*Referred to Select Committee.*

On motion by the Minister for Lands, Bill referred to a Select Committee consisting of Mr. Hoar, Mr. Holman, Mr. Mann, Mr. Willmott and Mr. Styants—Mr. Styants to be chairman—with power to call for persons, papers and records, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned and to adjourn from place to place: to report on Friday, the 4th January, 1946.

## **BILL—FACTORIES AND SHOPS ACT AMENDMENT.**

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR LABOUR** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [9.15] in moving the second reading said: The first genuine attempt to obtain the Saturday half-holiday in the metropolitan district was made, so far as I can remember, at the end of 1910 or the beginning of 1911, and after considerable agitation and propaganda it was obtained. Shortly afterwards the late shopping night was abolished in the same area. In 1921 the present Act, which had been considerably amended, came into force and from time to time many alterations have been made to it. This Bill contains three principles, namely, provision for universal closing on Saturday at 1 p.m., abolition of the late shopping night throughout the State, and the closing at 5.30 p.m. of all shops, other than those mentioned in the Fourth Schedule and small shops. As this measure is of grave importance, particularly to people in

the country areas, I propose only to move the second reading and leave the measure at that stage until next session. This will afford members from country electorates an opportunity to consider the questions involved, discuss them with the people in their districts and come here next session fortified with their views. The closing hour of 5.30 is at present in force throughout the State under National Security Regulations.

There are 119 shop districts in the State created under the Act of 1920-37. The great majority already observe the Saturday afternoon holiday. Only 40 observe Wednesday, five Thursday and one Tuesday. Of the 40 observing the Wednesday half-holiday, only 12 have been decided by referendum of the people. I remind members that the Act provides that, if the necessity arises, a referendum shall be taken as to the day on which the half-holiday shall be granted. A number of districts have voluntarily changed from Wednesday to Saturday during the last two or three years, while none has changed from Saturday to any other day in the week. A lot of correspondence is being received from districts asking for the Saturday half-holiday, and a reply has been sent referring the writers to the proposal in this Bill. An interesting survey was made amongst shopkeepers at York only last week and it showed nine to one against reverting to the late shopping night and six to three against opening on Saturday afternoon.

In the State there are 7,496 registered shops employing a total of 28,327 persons. Of that number only 883 shops, employing 1,380 males and 933 females, are affected by the provisions of the Bill. The existing law, which remains unaffected by these proposals, allows shops carrying perishables—fruit, vegetables, bread, milk, refreshments, cooked meats—as well as newspaper offices, dining-rooms, fish shops and even undertakers to remain open, if they so desire, till 11 p.m. on every day of the week, whilst newsagents, stationers, booksellers, florists and tobacconists may remain open till 8 o'clock on every day of the week except Sunday. All this happens at present and is quite irrespective of what is contained in this Bill, because those shops come under the provisions of the Fourth Schedule and are what are known as small shops. "Small shops" include shops conducted by widows and elderly couples, and provide for hard cases

where the chief inspector, subject to the Minister's approval, may declare them small shops, and they enjoy certain concessions over other shopkeepers, provided they do not employ any assistants.

Since March, 1942, shops generally throughout the State have been closed at 5.30 p.m. and the late trading night was abolished. This was done under the National Security Regulations, which will disappear after the official declaration of the end of the war. It served, however, to prove that trading could be reasonably conducted within the shortened hours, as not one complaint was received. On the contrary, responsible officials had been informed on several occasions, both by proprietors of businesses and by executive officers of associations, that the abolition of the late trading night and the earlier closing of shops were good things which they hoped had come to stay. I have a very vivid recollection of the part I took in the early days in the fight for the abolition of the late shopping night and for the Saturday afternoon half-holiday. When shops were kept open till 10 p.m., there was always somebody who would arrive at 10 or five minutes to the hour to do a little shopping. Shopkeepers in the metropolitan area would certainly not revert to the late shopping night or forego the Saturday afternoon holiday.

The main advantage, in the opinion of both employer and employee, is that the Saturday holiday adds to the opportunity to join in family life and enjoy week-end hobbies and pleasure trips. Many country people greatly appreciate the advantage, as it permits of visits being paid to friends at a distance or living in the metropolitan area. Other States of the Commonwealth, in particular Tasmania including the whole district of Hobart, observe the complete closing of shops generally all day on Saturday, and the Launceston district is falling in with the idea as a result of a request from the wholesale meat trade. As I have stated, I desire to let the Bill stand over at this stage so that members may consider it carefully during the recess. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Thorn, debate adjourned.

*Sitting suspended from 9.24 to 9.30 p.m.*

## **BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it insisted on its amendments Nos. 1 to 10, 14 to 19, and 21 to 25, and that it had agreed to the adjustment of the clerical error in Clause 25 as requested by the Assembly.

### *In Committee.*

Hon. J. B. Sleeman in the Chair; the Minister for Works in charge of the Bill.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Assembly continues to disagree to the amendments made by the Council.

Question put and passed.

Resolution reported and the report adopted.

### *Assembly's Request for Conference.*

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I move—

That the Council be requested to grant a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council, and that the managers from the Assembly be the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Withers, and the mover.

Question put and passed and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

*Sitting suspended from 9.37 to 9.45 p.m.*

## **BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Council's Further Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the Assembly's request for a conference on the amendments insisted on by the Council and had appointed the Honorary Minister, Hon. Sir Hal Colebatch and Hon. F. E. Gibson as managers for the Council, the Chief Secretary's room as the place of meeting, and the time forthwith.

*Sitting suspended from 9.18 to 10.30 p.m.*

## **BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Conference Managers' Report.*

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: I have to report that the conference managers

met in conference on the Bill and reached the following agreement:—

Amendments Nos. 1 to 10, inclusive, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 25 were insisted on by the conference.

Amendments Nos. 14 to 19, inclusive, were not insisted on by the conference.

I move—

That the report be adopted.

Question put and passed, and a message accordingly returned to the Council.

*Sitting suspended from 10.30 to 10.35 p.m.*

## **BILL—MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Council's Message.*

Message from the Council received and read notifying that it had agreed to the conference managers' report.

### **COMPLIMENTARY REMARKS.**

**THE PREMIER** [10.37]: That concludes the business of the House and I desire to extend to you, Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees and his deputies, the officers of the House, the "Hansard" staff and the Press the compliments of the season. To my Ministerial colleagues and to the members who sit with me on this side of the House, I desire earnestly to express my appreciation of their assistance and loyalty, and the great help they have afforded me in this, my first session, as Leader of this House. I appreciate very much the solidity of their support and their kindly assistance to me. To our ex-Leader, Hon. J. C. Willecock, I can only express my gratitude for the kindly help and advice he has always given me and to wish for him better health so that he may be long with us in the enjoyment of good health.

To the Leader of the Opposition and to the Leader of the Liberal Party I extend my thanks for their courteous consideration and assistance. It can be said this has been a most harmonious session, and in the handling of the business the maintaining of a spirit of co-operation has been very marked. I think we can entertain a certain degree of satisfaction in connection with the extent of the business that has been undertaken and satisfactorily concluded. That has been accomplished only by everyone playing his part conscientiously.

It has been a hard session and there has been much business of a vital nature to the State, particularly in connection with the putting in hand of plans for rehabilitation. The retirement of our beloved leader, the illness of one Minister and the fact that Ministers have been handling different departments and services have combined to make the task rather strenuous and have occasioned some degree of difficulty. I think that we have effected certain improvements and it can safely be said that the attempt to avoid all-night sittings has been a success.

Members: Hear, hear!

**THE PREMIER**: I understand that on no occasion for over 25 years has the House adjourned before midnight on the last night of the session.

**The Minister for Mines**: More often it has been at daylight.

**THE PREMIER**: I hope that all of those who sit with us and the officials who act with us will feel some benefit from the respite they will have through the holiday period. We are entering upon the festive season in an atmosphere of peace but, of course, great difficulties are before us. I do hope that, with thankfulness in our hearts for peace and victory gained, all may have a pleasant holiday and a well-earned rest.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning): I desire to join with the Premier in wishing you, Sir, the compliments of the season and assuring you that we on this side of the House appreciate the impartiality and courtesy which you, as usual during my term here, have displayed. Those sentiments include not only yourself but your Chairman of Committees and his deputies, the "Hansard" staff and the other members of the staff of this House. They can all, without exception, be included in those expressions. I agree with the Premier that the business has been carried on very reasonably this session and I hope it is a practice that we shall be able to continue in future years. It is highly desirable that we should. For our part we have indulged in criticism where desirable, provided it has been fair to do so, in opposition where necessary and not for the sake of making opposition,

We have in consequence co-operated in passing desirable legislation whenever we possibly could.

I regret that one of the major items of legislation will not see the light of day as a result of this session of work. I refer to the Bill which the Minister for Agriculture introduced concerning the milk industry; but, owing to its length and importance and the fact that the House did not finish with the measure until 3 o'clock this afternoon, we could hardly expect that it could have received attention in time to form part of this year's work. The only thing lacking is that we have not yet found means to overcome that difficulty. Means have been found this session to meet other difficulties and I hope that in future means will be found to avoid presenting, either to this House or to another place, Bills of major importance at a very late stage of the session. To those who sit with me on these benches I wish to tender publicly, as I have done privately, my warmest thanks for their kindness and co-operation. To our friends on my left I would also extend my warmest Christmas greetings, as I do to those opposite, hoping that Christmas will be a very happy time and the New Year a very pleasant one for us all. I thank you once again, Sir, and I also thank the Premier for the courtesy that he has extended to this side of the House during the session.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth): On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I would like once again to express to you, Sir, our appreciation of your conduct of your high office and of the help you have always given us in the business of the House, and I would like to extend our thanks to the Chairman of Committees and his deputies. We also offer our appreciation to the "Handsard" staff and all the officers who assist in the conduct of the affairs of Parliament. We would like to extend to the Premier and his Ministers and to all the members who sit on the Government side of the House our best wishes; to the Premier in particular our appreciation of his conduct of the House as Leader and of the way in which the business of Parliament has been transacted during the session.

To the Leader of the Opposition and his associates we also extend our best wishes and our appreciation of the happy relations that

have existed between us in this session and in past years. I desire especially to thank my own colleagues for the wise counsel and encouragement which they have always given me. This has been our first post-war session, and naturally it has involved a very heavy legislative programme and many important measures associated with the transition from war to peace economy. I feel that Parliament has done good work in this session and laid the foundation of what I hope will be a rapid progress to equilibrium and the still greater prosperity and development of our State.

**MR. SHEARN** (Maylands) On behalf of those sitting with me on this back bench and myself, may I be permitted to express to you, Sir, the sentiments that have already been more ably voiced by the previous speakers. May I also congratulate the Premier on the way in which he has conducted the business of the session, particularly on his having been able to accomplish that business in normal working hours, when Parliament should be expected to do its work. We wish the Premier and those associated with him every happiness, and we sincerely hope that the Minister for the North-West will be restored to health and strength and so be enabled once more to resume his place in this House and take up his duties again. As this session closes, Australia stands on the threshold of what is probably the most important period in its history.

May I express the humble hope and wish that the deliberations of this session and of those to follow it will make a material contribution to that urgent sense of responsibility which rests on every member of Parliament, and which should be shared by every citizen, for helping our soldiers, who have preserved our very existence. I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that the spirit which has animated us during this session will assist in attaining that desirable end. I thank the officers of the House for the courtesy they have extended to me personally, as well as to those associated with me on this bench. I am delighted, having once spoken about the undesirability of all-night sittings, to be able to say to the Premier, Good Night, rather than Good Morning.

**MR. SPEAKER:** On behalf of the Chairman of Committees, the deputy chairmen, the "Hansard" staff, the staff of the House and of the members, I wish to thank the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Liberal Party and the member for Maylands for their very pleasing expressions about the staff. I would also like to thank them personally. I can assure them that their help and the conduct of the members during this session have lightened my duties. This is the Christmas that we have been so eagerly awaiting for many years, during which we were always hoping that Christmas would bring peace on earth. At last it has come. It may be tinged with sadness for those who are waiting for the boy who will not return; but it will be joyful for those whose loved ones have been restored to them

from the scenes of battle. One esteemed member has been absent from the House during most of the session. Members will agree with me that we have sadly missed the Minister for the North-West. We all sincerely hope he will soon be back amongst us fully restored to health. I wish all a happy Christmas and a bright and prosperous New Year.

#### ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise-Gascoyne): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn to a date to be fixed by Mr. Speaker.

Question put and passed.

*House adjourned at 10.50 p.m.*

*[By Proclamation published in the "Government Gazette" of the 28th June, 1946, Parliament was prorogued until Thursday, the 25th July, 1946.]*