

# Legislative Assembly

Thursday, 14th October, 1954.

## CONTENTS.

	Page
Questions : Education, as to contract for school, North Scarborough .....	2124
Harbours, (a) as to ports of shipment of fruit. ....	2124
(b) as to proposed deep water berth, Bunbury .....	2124
Transport, as to provision for Perth-Mundaring route .....	2124
Traffic, as to "no-parking" area, Bassendean .....	2125
S.p. betting, as to action by Government .....	2125
Assent to Bill .....	2135
Loan Estimates, 1954-55, Message, Com. ....	2135
Bills : Loan, £14,808,000, 1r. ....	2125
Motor Vehicle (Third Party Insurance) Act Amendment, 2r. ....	2125
Guardianship of Infants Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report .....	2127
Mines Regulation Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r. ....	2128
Fauna Protection Act Amendment, 2r. Com. ....	2146

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

## QUESTIONS.

### EDUCATION.

*As to Contract for School, North Scarborough.*

Mr. NIMMO asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has the contract for the erection of the North Scarborough school yet been signed?

(2) If so, can he give the commencing date?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Education) replied:

The contract is to be signed within the next few days.

### HARBOURS.

*(a) As to Ports of Shipment of Fruit.*

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: Is he aware that although about 40 of the 66 ships which lifted fruit from Fremantle in 1953 were sufficiently low in draught so that they could have loaded at Bunbury, no attempt was made to have any of those 40 ships call at that port?

The MINISTER replied:  
No.

*(b) As to Proposed Deep-water Berth, Bunbury.*

Mr. HILL asked the Minister for Works: In his reply to a question from myself on the 8th September in reference to

the proposed deep-water berth at Bunbury, he said—

However, the decision to proceed was made to cater economically for anticipated greatly increased development and production from the large zone behind it.

Will he give particulars and specify the type of production which is anticipated and which cannot be more economically handled by Fremantle or Albany, and justify the Government's decision to incur an expenditure of £600,000 which is the estimated cost of the proposed deep-water berth?

The MINISTER replied:

The policy of the Government is decentralisation and in furtherance of this it is necessary to develop a number of ports in order to encourage evenness of development of various districts. Whilst the economic handling of cargo must be taken into consideration when port development is being carried out, it is not the only requirement.

The statement that the jetty extension at Bunbury would enable the port to cater economically for greatly increased development and production from the large zone behind it was a positive reference to the economics of the proposal and not a comparative one.

### TRANSPORT.

*As to Provision for Perth-Mundaring Route.*

Mr. OWEN asked the Minister for Transport:

(1) Is it true that an agreement has been entered into or that it is proposed to enter into an agreement between the Government and the Beam Transport Co. Ltd., in regard to bus transportation on the City-Mundaring routes?

(2) In the event of the answer being in the affirmative, what is the length or duration of such an agreement or proposed agreement?

(3) Is it true that the Government is subsidising or proposes to subsidise annually the Beam Transport Co. Ltd. on the City-Mundaring routes?

(4) In the event of the answer being in the affirmative, what is the amount of such annual subsidy or proposed annual subsidy and for how many years will the subsidy or proposed subsidy be guaranteed?

(5) As he stated in a letter to the secretary of the Hills Railway Protest Committee dated the 26th August, 1954, that the decision of Cabinet to close the Mundaring line was not irrevocable, will Cabinet reconsider its decision after the trial period of 12 months has elapsed, with a view to re-opening the railway?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No such agreement has been entered into; nor is there any intention to do so.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

(3) No subsidy is being paid or contemplated.

(4) Answered by No. (3).

(5) In the letter referred to, it was also pointed out that the implications of closing the line were given very careful consideration before coming to a decision and, as they had not materially altered since, it was extremely unlikely that the line would be re-opened. If, after 12 months' operation, the alternative service was found to be inadequate to meet the district needs, further consideration would be given to the matter.

### TRAFFIC.

*As to "No-parking" Area, Bassendean.*

Mr. BRADY asked the Minister for Police:

(1) Who was responsible for arranging a blanket "no-parking" area on the north side of Guildford-rd. in the Bassendean business centre.

(2) Were either the road board or business people affected consulted in the matter?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The "no parking" area was requested by the Bassendean Road Board.

(2) The request was submitted to the Commissioner of Police and the Traffic Advisory Committee, who recommended that the request be approved of. Business people were not consulted as this should be the function of the local authority.

### S.P. BETTING.

*As to Action by Government.*

Mr. YATES (without notice) asked the Premier:

To a question asked by me last session in connection with s.p. betting, the Premier answered that he would give consideration to having an all-party discussion on this question. Has any further stage been reached for the leaders of parties to discuss the matter?

The PREMIER replied:

The Government has been considering some proposals in connection with this problem. The stage has not yet been reached when there can be any worthwhile discussion between party leaders, but such a stage could be reached early next week.

### BILL—LOAN, £14,808,000.

Introduced by the Treasurer and read a first time.

### BILL—MOTOR VEHICLE (THIRD PARTY INSURANCE) ACT AMENDMENT.

*Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR POLICE** (Hon. H. H. Styants—Kalgoorlie) [2.25] in moving the second reading said: This is a short Bill containing eight clauses, most of which could be termed machinery provisions. There are a couple of them that propose to extend certain powers and the purpose of the remainder is to clarify the legal position beyond reasonable doubt. There has been some question as to what actually is the legal interpretation of the powers of the trust, and the Bill has been brought down on that account.

Each amendment contained in the measure has been discussed with and approved by the Motor Vehicle Insurance Trust. They are all designed to facilitate the administration by the trust of the parent Act. The first proposal is of a minor nature and merely seeks to improve the verbiage. Section 3(P) (2) of the Act states that the motor vehicle insurance fund shall consist of the contributions and insurance premiums and other moneys which may come into its hands under and for the purposes of this Act. The phrase "which may come into its hands" is a clumsy one when referring to an impersonal thing such as the fund and it is therefore proposed to replace that phrase with the words "which the trust receives."

The amendments contained in Clause 2 (b), (c) and (d) of the Bill are related to one another. When the principal Act first came into operation in 1943 premiums were determined on a basis similar to that operating in the other States of the Commonwealth. This was a loss ratio of 70 per cent. with 20 per cent. allowed for administration costs, 5 per cent. allotted as commission to the companies and a surplus of 5 per cent. However, the trust has succeeded in reducing its administrative costs to 6.8 per cent. and it is considered that those insurers participating in, and contributing to, the fund should receive some encouragement, particularly in view of the fact that in past years they have been carrying very substantial liabilities. The amendment, if agreed to, would allow the trust from time to time to invest any of its money either in a manner authorised by the Trustees Act or in some such other manner approved by the Minister.

It will be appreciated that the trust always has a considerable amount of money on hand, due to the lengthy periods, sometimes three or more years, that elapse before some claims are finalised. Instead of permitting this money to stand idle, the trust, although it has no statutory power to do so, has been investing and receiving interest on this money. The proposal in the Bill would validate this procedure and empower the trust to allocate the interest towards the liquidation of

losses sustained by it in past years. If there was any surplus remaining after those losses were recouped, the trust would be authorised to declare a dividend of not more than 5 per cent. to insurers participating in the fund.

The Bill will also empower the trust to recover previous losses from participating insurers in such amounts and at such times as the trust may consider expedient. The principal Act deals, in Section 7 (3) with hit-and-run cases. It provides that where death or injury has resulted from negligent driving and the identity of the responsible vehicle cannot be established, judgment may be obtained by action against the trust instead of against the driver of the vehicle, in which case the Act specifies that notice and a report must be given to the trust as soon as possible after it is known that the identity of the offending vehicle cannot be ascertained.

This proviso is not considered to afford sufficient protection for the trust and the Bill seeks to include the requirement that the person taking action has made due search and inquiry to ascertain the identity of the responsible vehicle. This requirement is in the New South Wales Act and it is designed to assist in preventing the possibility of claims following accidents in which no vehicle is concerned. The trust has been advised by senior counsel that some doubt exists as to its right of recovery against an insured person who has committed a breach of his policy conditions, such as driving while intoxicated, etc.

Section 7 (1) of the Act gives to the injured claimant the right to recover from the trust any unsatisfied portion of a judgment given against an insured person for death or bodily injury caused by negligence. Section 7 (4) states that the trust cannot deny liability in any case on the ground that the insured person had committed a breach of any term, condition or warranty of his policy. In any event, such a defence could not be submitted in an action against the trust for the unsatisfied balance of a judgment against an insured person.

The Act, under Section 7 (5), gives a right of recovery by the trust against an insured person but only where it has paid moneys and then found there has been a breach of the policy or the policy has been obtained by mis-statements or non-disclosures. As stated, the point is a doubtful one, but the trust's legal advisers consider it should be put beyond doubt by including in the Act a clear right for the trust to recover from the insured person that part of a judgment he has failed to pay and which the trust has had to meet. At present the Act gives injured third parties a similar right of recovery against the trust in respect to uninsured vehicles as it does in respect of insured vehicles,

where the driver or owner of the responsible vehicle has not satisfied in full within one month a judgment given against him.

However, where an insured vehicle is concerned, while the trust must have been notified when the judgment against the insured person came on for hearing, the Act does not provide for the trust to be notified of hearings against the owner or driver of an uninsured vehicle. This is an anomaly which the Bill seeks to correct. If this is agreed to, it will not be necessary for the driver and the owner of any uninsured vehicle to report to the trust the details of any accident causing death or bodily injury. Therefore, the Bill proposes to delete this requirement from the Act.

The proposals in Clause 6 are designed to give the trust substantially the same rights in respect of uninsured vehicles as it has with regard to insured vehicles. At present considerable differences exist between the rights of the trust with regard to insured and uninsured vehicles. Whilst prior to the creation of the trust, it was natural that such differences should exist, the trust is now, however, the insurer of all motor-vehicles, whether a policy in respect to them exists or not, because it combines the functions of all insurers and of the nominal defendant under the old Act. The liabilities of the trust arising from the negligent use of an uninsured vehicle are the same as if a current policy was held for that vehicle and it is, therefore, only reasonable that, if an owner has omitted to take out a policy and so committed a breach of the Act, the trust should have substantially the same rights as it has against an owner who has committed a breach of the warranties or conditions of the policy.

Section 10 of the parent Act sets out the procedure that must be taken by an insured person following an accident which has resulted in death or bodily injury, and also specifies certain action in regard to litigation, settlement or liability that the insured person may not take without the written consent of the trust. Section 11 deals with the power of the trust to conduct negotiations and legal proceedings in connection with any claim against an insured person. The Bill seeks to extend the provisions of Sections 10 and 11 to cover uninsured vehicles as well as insured ones.

I have already mentioned that the trust has certain rights of recovery in the event of an insured person breaching some term of his policy, such as driving while under the influence of drink. The trust, however, is concerned about the fact that the insured vehicles might be driven by some other person, who, while not a party to the contract on insurance, could breach some term of the contract and be responsible for an accident.

It is provided, under Section 20 (1) of the principal Act, that a policy shall continue in existence notwithstanding any change in the ownership of the vehicle, and any person who drives the vehicle, with or without the consent of the owner, shall be protected by the policy. However, in Section 20 (2), while any new owner is bound by the terms, warranties and conditions of the policy, no provision is made for the driver for the time being of the vehicle to be so bound. It appears therefore, that if a driver for the time being breached a warranty or a condition of the policy while being involved in an accident, the trust would have no right of recovery against him. This is considered to be most unsatisfactory. If a right of recovery exists against an owner who, while under the influence of liquor, injured another by the negligent use of a motor-vehicle, it is felt that the same right should exist against any driver who causes injury under similar circumstances, whether or not he happens to be the owner of the vehicle concerned.

The amendment now proposed would have the effect of ensuring that the driver of a vehicle who receives the benefits of a policy is under the same obligation as the owner-driver. The Bill proposes to repeal and re-enact Subsection (1) of Section 21 of the principal Act. There are two reasons for this proposal. The subsection at present provides for a period of 15 days after the expiration of a policy during which the vehicle is deemed to be insured, even though the policy has not been renewed or a new policy obtained. This extension was intended for the benefit of a person who renews his policy within the 15-day period and was not intended to extend the term of all policies to one year and 15 days. To cover this position the amendment provides that if a policy is not obtained or renewed within the 15 days, the vehicle is deemed uninsured from the date of expiry of the old policy.

The second and more important object is to meet the position which arises—

- (a) Where a vehicle is involved in an accident after a policy has expired; and
- (b) the owner then obtains a new policy.

On general principles, it is submitted that the owner should not have the benefit of the new policy to cover the accident, which occurred before the policy was obtained. It is possible, however, that if the renewal of the new policy is dated back to the expiry of the old policy, the owner could obtain such benefit. Some doubt regarding the position arises because of certain provisions of the Traffic Act and the principal Act. Section 10 (5) of the Traffic Act, which deals with the renewal of licences in the metropolitan area, provides that "a new licence when

issued shall commence and have effect from and after the date of expiry of the expired licence."

The principal Act in Section 4 (8) (a) and (b) provides, in effect, that no licence shall be issued unless—

- (a) Prior to or at the time of the issue of such licence there is paid the appropriate premium "for the class of vehicle being licensed and for the period of the licence."
- (b) Such licence incorporates a policy of insurance in respect of "the same period as that for which such licence is issued."

It can be argued that under Section 10 (5) of the Traffic Act the Police Department has no alternative but to issue a licence which dates back to the date of expiry of the old licence and that the period of insurance in order to comply with the above-mentioned provisions of the principal Act must be issued for the same period and must also date back. The amendment would make it quite clear that if the period between the expiry date of the old policy, and the date on which a new policy is obtained exceeds 15 days, the vehicle is for such period uninsured for the purposes of the Act. I believe that when these proposals are considered by members, it will be found that they are quite reasonable and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

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

## BILL—GUARDIANSHIP OF INFANTS ACT AMENDMENT.

### *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [2.40] in moving the second reading said: The Bill proposes to make one amendment to the principal Act. It is easy to understand. The amendment is considered necessary because of the substantial change which has taken place in the value of money since 1926. The section of the Act it is proposed to amend stipulates that the court cannot award payment of maintenance in respect of any infant covered by the provisions of the Act beyond an amount of 20s. a week.

In 1926 the sum of 20s. a week maintenance for an infant might have been regarded as being a reasonable amount. Nobody would agree that 20s. is a reasonable amount of maintenance for an infant in 1954. Therefore, the Bill proposes to raise the maximum amount that a court can award from 20s. to 50s. a week. If I remember rightly, we made a similar amendment last year to the Child Welfare Act.

Hon. A. F. Watts: A couple of years ago.

The MINISTER FOR CHILD WELFARE: Yes, two years ago. The necessity to make a similar amendment to this Act

was probably overlooked at that time, so this Bill is introduced to place the Act in regard to the maintenance of infants upon the same basis as the Child Welfare Act was two years ago. I am sure the Bill will have the unanimous endorsement of all members of the House and I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

**HON. A. F. WATTS** (Stirling) [2.42]: I am acquainted with the circumstances surrounding the introduction of this Bill and I think that the remarks made by the Premier, as Minister for Child Welfare, have fully covered the ground. As he mentioned, somewhat similar provisions had to be made in connection with the Child Welfare Act a couple of years ago, and now it is undoubtedly wise to bring the provisions of this Act into line with the Child Welfare Act for reasons that the Minister mentioned.

It does not necessarily mean that the court, in considering applications for maintenance under this Act, must grant the maximum amount of £2 10s. per week in the same way as it was not bound to grant £1 per week under the existing Act. In all the circumstances which exist today it is highly desirable that, in view of the great cost of maintaining anybody, the court should be empowered to grant more than the amount which has been provided in the Act for a long period of years. I therefore support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

### **BILL—MINES REGULATION ACT AMENDMENT (No. 2).**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 5th October.

**MR. WILD** (Dale) [2.46]: The Minister said that this is only a small Bill, but it is one of those small Bills we are getting accustomed to which contains a certain amount of dynamite. In his second reading speech the Minister did not give tangible reasons—I am referring particularly to the second part of the Bill in which an amendment is being sought covering the hours worked in the goldmining industry—other than to say that the relevant sections of the parent Act will bring it into conformity with the existing Arbitration Court award.

Touching briefly on the clause which provides that the Australian Workers' Union shall be notified of all accidents that occur in mines, I cannot see the necessity for its inclusion in the Act because that union already receives notification of all accidents.

**Mr. Moir**: When did that come about?

**Mr. WILD**: The hon. member has worked in the mines and I understand he has been an inspector.

**Mr. Moir**: I was a union official.

**Mr. WILD**: The hon. member knows just as well as I do that the Mines Department must be notified of all accidents.

**Mr. Moir**: The Bill does not say the Mines Department shall be notified, but the union.

**Mr. WILD**: The Mines Department is notified and the union is entitled to know from that department exactly what occurred. This provision deals with something entirely apart from fatal accidents which are already covered. The unions at present are being notified of such accidents.

**Mr. Moir**: Nothing of the sort.

**Mr. WILD**: This is another case of creating more "paper war" for the mining companies. Already they have to notify many parties and now they are called on to notify the A.W.U.

**Mr. Moir**: What is wrong with that?

**Hon. A. V. R. Abbott**: Plenty is wrong with it. You should know!

**Mr. Moir**: You get up and tell us.

**Hon. A. V. R. Abbott**: I shall presently.

**Mr. WILD**: If this clause is to be inserted in the Act, I would like the Minister to give his assurance that co-operation will be received from the union officials to be notified, and that they will discipline their own workers.

**Mr. Moir**: The union officials do co-operate with the companies to the fullest extent.

**Mr. WILD**: That is all to the good. The hon. member knows that some policing is necessary. When I worked underground in the goldmines two things which happened frequently could have been policed by union officials. I see the member for Hannans is looking at me. Frequently the workers, after firing, go back to see what the shots were like.

**Mr. Moir**: May be in your time, but not in mine.

**Mr. WILD**: That may be so. I am speaking of 1938 and 1939.

**Mr. Moir**: That was a long time ago.

**Mr. WILD**: That also happens nowadays. The hungry workman even these days goes back after firing to see the effect of the shots in order to pass the information on to his mates in the succeeding shift as to what happened. The mining companies are entitled to ask the union to co-operate to prevent workers doing this.

Coming to the other clauses which relate to Sections 36, 37 and 39 of the Act, they have been introduced with the object, as the Minister said, of bringing the Mines Regulation Act into conformity with the

Industrial Arbitration Act. I cannot see the necessity for the proposed amendments because, in the first place, the Arbitration Court issues awards. It is pertinent to examine the powers of the court. Under the Mines Regulation Act power has been given to exclude mines by proclamation from certain awards or industrial agreements. Therefore the Arbitration Court is empowered to deal with all industrial matters but by proclamation the hours to be worked in the goldmining industry are excluded. The definition of "industrial matters" in the Industrial Arbitration Act reads—

"Industrial matters" means all matters affecting or relating to the work, privileges, rights, and duties of employers or workers in any industry, not involving questions which are or may be the subject of proceedings for an indictable offence; and, without limiting the general nature of the above definition, includes all matters relating to—

- (a) The wages, allowances, or remuneration of workers employed or usually employed or to be employed in any industry, or the prices paid or to be paid therein in respect of such employment;
- (b) The hours of employment, sex, age, qualifications, or status of workers, and the mode, terms, and conditions of employment;

Then Section 61 says—

The court shall have jurisdiction—

- (a) on its own motion to deal with and determine all industrial matters, . . . . .

It is therefore evident that the court is given exclusive power to deal with all industrial matters, which include the fixing of hours in an industry. On the 4th April, 1949, under the Mines Regulation Act the following notification was proclaimed—

It is hereby published for general information that His Excellency, the Governor, in Executive Council, has been pleased under Section 5 (2) of the Mines Regulation Act, 1946, and in relation to every mine to which the Act applies and concerning which there is or shall become in force an Award or Industrial Agreement made under the provisions of the Industrial Arbitration Act, 1912-1948, affecting the hours of work or employment in or on that mine, to exempt the mine from the operation of sections 36, 37 and 39 of the Act during the currency of the provisions of the Award or Industrial Agreement affecting the hours of work or employment in or on that mine.

Mr. Moir: Which Government was in power at that time?

Mr. WILD: That has nothing to do with the matter. It was proclaimed at the request of Mr. Justice Dunphy who, in giving an award affecting the hours of work in the goldmines, desired to have excluded from such award the provisions to Section 36, 37 and 39 of the Act. The effect of this award was to give the workers in the goldmines the right to work five shifts a week only, whereas previously they worked five shifts of 7 hours 12 minutes and one shift of 4 hours on Saturday mornings.

I hope that all members in this House are agreed that the Arbitration Court should be the tribunal to determine wages, hours of work and conditions of employment. There is absolutely no necessity for us to tamper with these sections of the Act. This Bill is attempting to take more power away from the Arbitration Court and I do not know whether it is the wish of the Government to whittle down the power of the court.

With the placing of the Act on the statute book in 1946, the hours to be worked in the goldmining industry were determined, but by proclamation in 1949 which excluded certain sections, alterations were made. Everything went along harmoniously. I have not heard of any quarrel with the existing practice, but now all of a sudden, this Bill has been introduced with the idea of usurping the functions of the Arbitration Court.

Mr. Moir: That is what you assert.

Mr. WILD: The court, in its wisdom, may determine at some future time that different hours shall be worked—may be longer, may be shorter—than at present. If this Bill becomes law and the provisions are included in the Mines Regulation Act covering the hours to be worked, then the function of the Arbitration Court would be superseded by the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act. I contend that the court should be left absolutely unfettered. At present the Government has the power to exclude the goldmines, and it has done so by proclamation. The member for Boulder said that the workers are unhappy, but I have heard nothing about it. When the Government members were sitting on this side of the House they did not move any amendment along the present lines although they had an opportunity to do that for at least three years. Now all of a sudden this Bill has been introduced and it is intended to insert something into the Mines Regulation Act which had not disturbed the Government members at all when they were on this side of the House.

The Minister for Mines: This matter has aggrieved us for many years.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: The workers want to be pampered.

Mr. WILD: Members on this side of the House believe, and I hope the Government also believes, in the Arbitration Court. We want to strengthen its powers,

not whittle them away. That is all this is doing. Everyone has been going along quite happily under the existing regulations. Furthermore, if the Minister is insistent on this, why does he not frame a regulation to give the Arbitration Court the power to vary the hours under the Mines Regulation Act, as and when it thought fit.

Mr. MOIR: He could always ask the Government to lift the suspensory provisions.

Mr. WILD: Of course, but there has been no necessity to do it. The Minister said he just wanted the Bill in order to bring the Mines Regulation Act into conformity with the Arbitration Act.

The Minister for Mines: With the current arbitration award.

Mr. WILD: Very well.

The Minister for Mines: That is a different matter altogether.

Mr. WILD: If we fix the hours in this Act, we will, to a large degree, be tying the hands of the Arbitration Court, whose powers should, in my opinion, be flexible. We have given the three gentlemen who comprise the Arbitration Court, the power to fix the hours and conditions of the workers in this State, and I say that the court should be kept right away from Parliament. Seeing that the present arrangement has been working quite sensibly, and we have not heard a peep from anybody, I can see no reason for inserting this provision into the Mines Regulation Act.

Perhaps the Minister will give an assurance, as far as Clause 2 is concerned, that we will get the co-operation of the union when it is notified of these accidents, although I cannot see the necessity for its being notified. In order that that provision shall pass, it is our intention to agree to the second reading of the Bill. I can assure the Minister, however, that I cannot agree in any way to Clauses 3, 4 and 5, which endeavour to include in the Mines Regulation Act the current award that he speaks of.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [3.2]: The Bill, contrary to the assertion of the member for Dale, is very necessary. It seeks to amend Section 31 (1) of the principal Act, so that in addition to the people who at present have to be notified when an accident occurs on a mine—this is only in the case of an accident which involves loss of time to a worker—the secretary of the mining division of the A.W.U. shall be notified. Several people have to be notified, and it would be no hardship on the company concerned to duplicate an extra copy of the notification and send it to the secretary of the A.W.U.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Why is that necessary?

Mr. MOIR: The member for Mt. Lawley is apparently deeply interested in mining—

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I am.

Mr. MOIR:—although I did not know there were any mines in Mt. Lawley. However, I will give him some conclusive reasons. The unions are very concerned about accidents, and this concern is particularly evident in the mining industry because it has an unfortunate history of accidents.

Hon. D. Brand: That concern is not confined only to unions, I should think.

Mr. MOIR: I would say that the unions are particularly concerned because it is their members who suffer. An accident, whether it is caused by negligence or by some factor outside the control of the worker, is still a matter of concern to those who are charged with the responsibility of looking after the worker's industrial welfare. An individual who was connected with the mining industry would be a strange one indeed, if he were not concerned at the prevalence of accidents in the industry.

Hon. D. Brand: Hear, hear!

Mr. MOIR: Lately, hardly a month has passed without some worker having lost his life in a fatal accident on a mine.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: He may bruise his thumb, but that is an accident.

Mr. MOIR: That is a very profound remark.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: It is very factual, too.

Mr. MOIR: Somebody might lose his thumb. It is a pity that some members here did not lose their tongues.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I said "bruise."

The Premier: The answer from the member for Boulder is still the same.

Mr. MOIR: The figures show that accidents in the mines are increasing rather than decreasing. With the added mechanisation of the mines, there is evidently an added industrial hazard in regard to accidents. In the horse-and-buggy days, very few people were injured in the streets; but now that we have motorcars, we find that there is an appalling number of accidents on our highways. So it is with industries that are mechanised. The more we introduce mechanisation, the more the accident hazard is increased, despite all the precautions taken by both the workers and the great majority of employers.

The member for Dale said he hoped that co-operation would take place between the officials of the union and the mining companies. I can assure him that the utmost co-operation exists. In this industry, safety first committees are set up, not only on each mine, but on every shaft of each mine. These committees

meet the supervisors and sub-managers and exchange views for the purpose of devising ways of preventing accidents. In addition, there is an overall committee with representatives drawn from the various mines and from the workers. This committee meets the employers—the Chamber of Mines—monthly, I think, when they discuss methods of reducing accidents.

As a result of these discussions, certain recommendations are made to both the overseers or supervisors and to the men working in the mines. Large posters, warning men against doing certain things are displayed. We believe that what has been done in this regard has had quite a good effect in minimising the number of accidents. I make these remarks to show that there is probably more co-operation existing between the union officials and employers in the mining industry than in many other industries.

It would probably be better, from this point of view, if similar committees were set up in all industries operating in the State, so that these matters could be talked over and ideas gained which could be passed on to the workmen to enable them to avoid, to some extent at any rate, these accidents. It is necessary that a union official should be notified, because Section 32 of the Act provides—

Upon the receipt of any such notice, and in the absence of the inspector, the warden or mining registrar may appoint any person (where practicable one experienced in mining practice) who shall proceed to the scene of the accident, examine the place where it occurred, take down the statements of any witnesses or of any persons who can give evidence as to the cause of the accident (and such statements shall not be taken in the presence of any person interested, except when dying depositions are being taken from the person injured), and thereupon forward to the warden or mining registrar a full report.

All these people have to be notified and if an inspection is made, they have the right to be present. Only in certain circumstances is the union secretary permitted to attend.

Where a fatal accident has occurred, a representative of the union can go to the scene of the accident, but in the event of an ordinary accident, not causing immediate loss of life, the union official has no right to inspect the scene of the accident; nor would he be allowed to inspect it. Following on an accident there can be an inquiry into its cause. If the official has not had the means available to him to inspect the scene of the accident, how can he be informed of the circumstances surrounding it?

It would be highly beneficial if the union secretary were able to visit the scene of an accident, because he would then get

a very good idea of the circumstances; and this, of course, would add to his knowledge. When fatal accidents occur, he has, as an act of grace, been notified in the majority of cases, but in quite a few instances he has not been notified and so has not been able to attend. Many people in the industry consider it is highly necessary that the Act should be amended so that these inspections may be made.

The union secretary has no desire to interfere in anything that is no concern of his, but he is greatly concerned with accidents that happen to members of his union; and they are occurring all too frequently at the present time, as they have been for some time past. The fatalities on mines are very disturbing. The mining industry has always been looked on as a hazardous one. I remember that years ago we used to be perturbed about the fatalities, but today the number is higher than at any previous stage in the history of the industry, particularly when we take into consideration the fact that only about 6,000 men are engaged in it, whereas before the war there were about 15,000.

The proportion of fatal accidents today is higher than at any previous time in the history of the industry, and the position is the same with respect to the comparatively minor or less serious accidents. This is a matter of concern, not only to the representatives of the workers, but to the employers as well. As a result of the concern of both parties, we have these committees operating in an endeavour to mitigate or reduce the number of accidents.

Mr. Wild: Do you think these accidents might be caused by men trying to exert themselves in an endeavour to make more money and perhaps in the process getting careless?

Mr. MOIR: No. Mining is a heavy industry and one in which it is easy for a man to have an accident. He needs to be off his guard for only a few seconds, just at the wrong time, and an accident occurs. If he makes an error of judgment there is the likelihood of an accident. I know that some members opposite have had practical experience in the mining industry, and they know that what I say is true. Some accidents, no doubt, are due to sheer carelessness. But, on the other hand, experienced men—those who are looked upon as having great knowledge of mining practice and who are extremely careful—have accidents, too.

When a man is lifting or pushing and is exerting all his strength, his foot may slip, and there is likelihood of an accident. If he is climbing down a ladder a couple of hundred feet long and one foot slips off a rung, he can have a serious accident. If a man is riding in a kibble up a winze of 100 or 200 feet and something happens on the way to disturb the balance of the kibble, he may be thrown out with fatal results. All sorts of things



can happen in the mining industry. If a man is working a drill which is forcing its way into rock and he is exerting considerable pressure, there may be a flaw in the drill, and if it breaks he slips forward, and cases have happened where the broken end of a drill has pierced a man's body. Many of these accidents cannot be avoided when the unexpected happens. A stone could fall unexpectedly; or what was considered safe ground that had been tested maybe only half-an-hour before cave in, with fatal results. So I think this amendment to the Act is necessary.

Now I pass on to the other provisions of the Bill which deal with the regulation of hours in the industry. This question goes back a long way. I have in front of me a Mines Regulation Act of 1906, and the hours of labour were regulated in those days. They were not regulated to the same extent as they were in 1947 or 1948, but it shows that Parliament has seen fit to include in the Act a provision dealing with the regulation of hours of labour.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Do you think that is right?

Mr. MOIR: Surely the hon. member does not think I am standing here denouncing it.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I wanted to know if you really believed it was right.

Mr. MOIR: I am not responsible for the hon. member's thoughts.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I wanted to know what yours were.

Mr. MOIR: I will tell the hon. member in a moment. It is necessary that hours of labour be regulated by Act of Parliament because the mining industry is different from all others. There is not only a prevalence of accidents but there is also the question of protecting a man's health. We all know that if a man works underground in a mine for a number of years he gradually accumulates silica dust in the lungs, and that sets up the disease of silicosis, which can lead to tuberculosis. If it does not develop to that extent, it frequently, if not invariably, proves fatal. So Parliament in the past has taken the view that a limit should be placed on the time that a man shall work underground and shall be exposed to the hazard of inhaling dust.

There is another aspect, too. There are men employed in the industry who have large numbers of other men's lives in their hands. I refer to those who drive the winding or hoisting engines; there are a number of such men in the industry. I am sure everyone will agree that if a man works on a winding engine, whether on the surface or underground, he is occupying a responsible position and must concentrate on his job every second of every minute of a shift to see that he obeys

the signals which he receives from thousands of feet away per medium of the electric bell. He cannot afford to make a mistake because if he does it may mean a serious accident to one or more men, probably with fatal results.

In view of these considerations, the section of the Act that limits the time a man shall be in charge of machinery, is most necessary. This section is 36, which reads—

A person in charge of machinery used in connection with a mine, except in the case of a breakdown or other special emergency, shall not be so employed for more than eight consecutive hours on the surface and seven hours twelve minutes underground, and between every two periods of employment there shall be an interval of at least eight hours.

I think everybody can see the wisdom of that when it applies to men in charge of machinery. Those were the provisions of the Mines Regulation Act until they were suspended by the Governor, who has power to do that under the Act. It was not done on the date given by the member for Dale but was published in the "Government Gazette" on the 4th April, 1949.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: What section gives the Governor power to do that?

Mr. MOIR: Section 5, Subsection (2), page 3. It says—

The Governor may from time to time exempt from the operations of this Act, or any of the provisions thereof, any mine or class of mines, for such period and on such conditions (if any) as he may think fit.

I think that was meant to operate only in isolated cases and was not meant to be applied to the goldmining industry as a whole. All through the Act, even regarding the regulation of hours, provision is made for exceptional circumstances; the sections of the Act are not rigid. Provision is made that when certain circumstances arise the sections of the Act can be waived on the authority of an inspector, or the Mines Department and in some cases it may have to be referred to the Minister. Even Section 36 says "except in the case of a breakdown or other special emergency." I do not think the Governor's powers were intended to be exercised in relation to the whole of the industry and to wipe out certain parts of the Act.

It came about, as the member for Dale said, because the award changed the hours of labour in mines. Previously, men worked 40 hours a week in shifts of 7 hours 12 minutes on each week-day and a 4-hour shift on Saturdays. When the award, which now operates in the goldmining industry, was made, it included a reduction of weekly hours from 40 to

37½, and granted a 5-day week. The 5-day week was given largely because it eliminated one day in the week on which workers had to go underground and thus they would not be exposed to those hazards for six days. The case was put up in the Arbitration Court, and the learned judge apparently agreed with it because he awarded a five-day week of 37½ hours. However, he extended the shift time from 7 hours 12 minutes to 7 hours 30 minutes, and it came into conflict with the Act, which was amended by Parliament in 1945. Prior to that date, the duration of a permissible shift was eight hours, and in 1945 Parliament amended the Act to bring the hours of labour into line with the then-existing award, which stipulated 7 hours 12 minutes.

At the time of the suspension, Parliament was not sitting, and an awkward situation developed. The award came into operation and stipulated a working day of 7 hours 30 minutes for a five-day week, whereas the Act laid down a working day of 7 hours 12 minutes; so they were in conflict. Instead of having the Act amended, the Government advised the Governor to exercise his power under Section 5 of the 1946 amendment. The member for Dale has asked why, in the intervening years, some notice was not taken of it and representations were not made to alter the situation. I can only say that, as it has been a custom in the industry to have hours regulated and limited, nobody broke the regulation; it was strictly observed. But recently we discovered it was not being observed because newcomers are entering the industry and they do not realise the hazards to which they are exposing themselves. I refer principally to new Australians who are willing to work two shifts underground. The member for Dale made reference to hungry men. We still have hungry men working in the industry, and we find they are new Australians. I do not know of any Britisher having done this, but I do know of new Australians who want to work two shifts in the mines.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They cannot under the Act.

Mr. MOIR: They could not under the old Act, but under the suspended provisions they can. I can quote one instance which took place at Big Bell. There are other areas where it has taken place, but I will instance only one. I would like to point out to members that the organisation representing the mineowners takes a very dim view of these happenings, because when they have been reported, instructions have immediately been issued to the mine management that they should cease, and cease forthwith. But there is no compulsion in these matters, and we feel that these regulations, or these sections of the Act, should be restored.

Some people might say that if a man is foolish enough to want to work more than one shift at a time in the mines let him

do so. But, of course, we are concerned with the other people in the mines and not so much with the foolish person who is prepared to do that sort of thing. That foolish man may be in the position of working with other men and, because of fatigue, he is likely to endanger their lives and their safety. That is the position, and I am sure members can easily visualise that when people work in mines, at the end of a shift there are quite a lot of them who have reached the end of their physical endurance.

There are probably others, of course, who, because their duties are not heavy, or who, because they are physically more robust, feel they can go on for some time longer. It would be extremely dangerous having a man who has worked 7 hours 30 minutes in a mine wanting to continue for a longer period. He is not only a danger to himself but also to his workmates who probably have to depend on him for their safety. That particularly applies to a man in charge of machinery, because he has probably reached the stage of fatigue where he is not as alert as he should be, and is therefore liable to make a mistake which could quite easily result in an accident, if not a fatality. Accordingly, I say there are very compelling reasons why the Act should be amended. If the Government wished to take the easy way out, it could advise the Governor to lift the suspension.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: That would upset the award.

Mr. MOIR: Of course it would, and that is not wanted.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Of course not!

Mr. MOIR: We do not want that; but the unions feel that if they cannot have these provisions put back in the Act in order to conform to the award and regulate the length of the shift, then, rather than leave the position unprotected, they are prepared to approach the Government and ask it to have those suspensions lifted, and bring back the 7 hours 12 minutes. They do not want to do that.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: They do not want to work on Saturday morning.

Mr. MOIR: They do not have to. The question of Saturday morning work is not in dispute. At the present time, when workers are required to go all day Saturday to work on repairs underground, they do so. There has never been any question about that; the work is always done. There has not been a case of mineworkers refusing to work because they did not wish to work on that day; it is always done. None of these clauses refers to Saturday work, but there are others that refer to Sunday work.

The member for Dale does not agree that Parliament should regulate the hours of labour; he says the Arbitration Court should do that. I would ask the member for Dale, as a member of the Government

that took this action, if he would explain why other sections of the Act that govern the hours of labour were not also suspended. There are other sections of the Act that govern the hours of labour and they are not interfered with, because nowhere do they mention 7 hours 12 minutes. All sections of the Act which mention the words "7 hours 12 minutes" were suspended but others were not. Therefore they were not suspended because the Government disagreed with the principle that mine regulations should govern the hours of labour or work; it was a matter of expediency at the time in order to overcome a situation that those relevant sections were suspended.

There is just one more word I would like to say in regard to the matter of union officials having access to mines. In relation to these provisions at the present time, if anybody employs a man—even though the Chamber of Mines takes very strong exception to its members employing a man for more than 7 hours 30 minutes—union officials have no means of checking whether the man is working 7 hours 30 minutes, and that is why those clauses relating to hours are required to be restored to the Act in order that they may be in conformity with the award. There are other people who have power to police them; there are the mines inspectors who go underground and who, if they see people working over their time, can, of course, order them to stop. This is done purely from a safety point of view and not from any desire to prevent a man from earning more money. It is purely a safety precaution.

That is why those clauses were originally placed in the Act, and it is a compelling reason why they should be returned to the Act. They should be returned to the Act on the score of the safety of the worker, if on no other. They should be restored in the interests of the foolish man who is prepared to work more than his shift time, and in the interests and safety of his fellow workers who are compelled to work with him. It would be doing a service to the mining companies because they are not short of labour. There is plenty of labour, and there are long lists of men who have their names down for work in the mines. Strange as it may seem, there are some people who prefer to work in the mines rather than elsewhere. Accordingly, what is sought in this legislation would be doing a real service to the companies because it would be reducing the possibility of accident due to over-fatigue. I support the second reading of the Bill.

**MR. O'BRIEN** (Murchison) [3.39]: I wish to ventilate my views on this Bill. In my opinion it is a very necessary measure despite the opposition from the member for Dale. Actually I was amazed to hear him state the views he did on Clause 2, which sets out that the secretary of the mining branch and the body known as the

Australian Workers' Union, Western Australian branch, and the Industrial Union of Workers of Boulder in this State should be notified. For many years I have worked in a mine and, as I think I previously mentioned, I was employed as an ambulance man. In my opinion this clause is very necessary because when an accident takes place the right people are notified and this enables them to carry on and, in the case of a fatality, to make arrangements to notify the relatives of the employee concerned. These provisions do assist the mine management to a great extent.

**Mr. Wild:** That is already done now.

**Mr. O'BRIEN:** Not always. I can relate an instance where I myself was not notified. I brought the matter to the notice of the management and they apologised and, as a matter of fact, the manager reprimanded the underground foreman for not notifying the union. It might happen again, and I believe it could. Accordingly, I feel that clause is of great benefit to the employees in a mine. It assists in the arrangements and helps both the employees and the mine management.

It is a rule that mine workers should report accidents and it was stated by the member for Dale that it could be greed that causes accidents. The hon. member knows, however, that these days we have most up-to-date methods, such as electric firing, and the men on a particular level must be in at the plant or at the main shaft before that lever is pulled. That is to say they work with a safety disc which is put in from the outer part on to the inside of this board, and not until every disc is put back on to the "out" is the shift boss allowed to pull that lever. He has to be double-checked, and he is.

So there is no argument about going back to see how a cut went. The point raised by the member for Dale might have applied in days gone by but not today when up-to-date methods are used. The hon. member knows what the methods are; we have up-to-date machinery, and tungsten steel is used and it is impossible for a miner to go back to a place and take any risks. Everything possible is done by the employer to avoid accidents, and the union co-operates in every way.

I was the secretary of a union covering men employed in the mining industry and I know the mine management takes great interest in trying to reduce mine accidents; even minor accidents. All these accidents are reported to the Chamber of Mines monthly, and there is great competition between mines to see which ones have the least number of accidents. Even in the case of men travelling by kipples, we find that they have safety belts, and everything possible is done to avoid an accident. Clause 2 is very necessary and would be of great assistance to the industry.

*Sitting suspended from 3.45 to 4.7 p.m.*

Mr. O'BRIEN: Before the suspension I was dealing with Clause 2 of the measure and was explaining the safety appliances in mines. The practice these days is that once a month each mine holds a meeting for the purpose of considering the accidents during the previous four weeks and the employees are lectured on the subject. The men congregate on one level—in the boss's time—and are instructed on the cause of accidents and a general report is submitted to them stating the number of accidents that have occurred and, as far as possible, giving the causes, the idea being to endeavour to reduce the accident rate.

It has been found that in the month following such a meeting the accident rate has been reduced and this practice is at present being continued by the various mines. A report on the accidents that have occurred is sent each month to the Chamber of Mines. I might add that all this makes the employees more safety-minded, with the result that where accidents were previously prevalent they have now been practically eliminated.

Clauses 3 and 4 were ably explained by the member for Boulder, but I wish to add that at present Clauses 3 and 4 conflict with the award and the regulations. The men at present commence work at say, 8 a.m. and work until firing time. They continue to work after that time until 3.30—that is the day shift—and they then have 30 minutes off for the change of shift. The next shift comes on at 4 p.m. and works until 11.30 p.m., a 7½ hour shift. The idea of the break is for the purpose of firing and, most important of all, to allow the air to be cleared of fumes.

This practice met with disapproval on the part of the employees when first put into operation because previously 48 minutes were allowed for the air to clear as against 30 minutes now allowed. Nevertheless, the men are prepared to work a five-day week of 7½ hours each day and, when called upon, they co-operate in every possible way with the management in the matter of working overtime. Of course, they receive overtime rates in those circumstances and that is only fair.

I know of a couple of cases, of men, inexperienced in the mining industry, endeavouring to work a double shift, with the result that they met with accidents. One of those men was working on a grizzly and the other was working in a winze. That proves that the work is laborious and dangerous. The miners work hard, down in the bowels of the earth and must, of necessity, be physically fit. There is little more I can add except to say that the Bill is necessary, and I appeal to members generally to support it. The measure, if passed, will be of great assistance to the goldmining industry.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

## ASSENT TO BILL.

Message from the Governor received and read notifying assent to the Mines Regulation Act Amendment Bill (No. 1).

## LOAN ESTIMATES, 1954-55.

### Message.

Message from the Governor received and read transmitting the Loan Estimates for the year 1954-55 and recommending appropriation.

### In Committee.

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

### Vote—Railways, £5,871,000:

**THE TREASURER** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.16]: All members are aware of the system that operates in Australia in regard to the loan programmes of Governments. The Loan Council set-up has now become a well-established feature of loan programmes and loan raising for Governments in Australia. The final decision on the amount of loan money to be raised technically rests with the members of the Loan Council, but in actual fact it really remains with the Commonwealth Government.

### Loan Council Procedure.

The Premiers of the States, the Prime Minister and the Treasurer of the Commonwealth, when at these Loan Council meetings, consider and debate the programmes put forward by the respective State Governments. Decisions are finally made, either unanimously or by majority vote, that the total loan programme for all the State Governments will be so much.

If the total amount agreed upon does not meet with the approval of the Commonwealth Government, that Government indicates that, in its view, the Australian loan market is capable of raising only so much and that becomes the total amount which the Commonwealth Government is likely to try to raise to provide the total loan requirements of the States and the Commonwealth itself, if the Commonwealth has loan requirements of its own.

There is, of course, much merit in approaching the Australian loan market in any particular financial year for approximately that amount which it might be considered the Australian public would be likely to subscribe. It would not be a very good advertisement for the requirements of Governments or for government finance generally, if the total amount sought from the public in any one year was far in excess of what the public during the whole of that particular year would subscribe.

Hon. D. Brand: Over the last two years all the loan money has been made available to the States, has it not?

The TREASURER: I think that particular state of affairs would cover far more than the last two years. I think it would cover the last six or perhaps more years.

#### *Position of State Government.*

Going back to the point that I was dealing with before the hon. member interjected, I would say that although what I have expressed is generally true and sound, the result for State Governments is not always a very happy one. That would apply particularly to a period which Western Australia is experiencing at present and which it has been experiencing for three or four years past. That experience is one, as members well know, where the population of the State is increasing rapidly; where the State's industries of almost every type are progressing rapidly; where new industries have been established and are still being established and where the all-round demands upon the Government for the expenditure of loan money is rising all the time.

The overall result is that the Government of this State, and maybe the Governments of some of the other States, find it financially impossible to meet anywhere near the total, urgent, essential requirements of the community. So there is, of necessity, delay in the carrying out of many works which are urgently required, and there is a total postponing of some such works because of the inability to find the necessary loan money with which to commence them.

The problem of trying to allocate the insufficient loan moneys available over all the needs which the State has in the loan expenditure field, is a problem of no small magnitude; a problem which causes those concerned a great deal of worry, especially in these days when the progress we are experiencing is not restricted to any one section but is taking place in many parts of the State.

#### *Total Borrowing Programme.*

The total borrowing programme decided upon by the Loan Council this year involves a sum of £200,000,000. Western Australia's share of that amount for the general works programme is £15,500,000, with £3,500,000 for Commonwealth-State housing undertakings; making, in all, a total of £19,000,000. The Commonwealth Government, acting on a basis of safety from its point of view, is making monthly advances to all the States, not on the total figure of £200,000,000 for the year, but on a lesser figure of £180,000,000.

I understand that this is customary practice, the view of the Commonwealth being that the loan market might not, during the financial year, subscribe the full total of £200,000,000 and therefore the Federal Government does not wish to be left in a position where the Commonwealth itself

might have to find the balance of some lesser amount than £200,000,000 as subscribed by the public, and the total figure of £200,000,000 as decided upon by the Loan Council.

The position in that regard is to be reviewed by the Commonwealth during this year or early in January next year. By that time the Commonwealth will have the experience of loan raising during the first half of the financial year and, in addition, will be in a position to measure, to a reasonable extent, just what the loan market is likely to subscribe during the second half of the financial year. On the experience so far, and on the general financial condition of Australia, I think it can, with a reasonable degree of confidence, be anticipated that the £200,000,000 will be raised by the 30th June next year.

#### *Loan Expenditure of £17,000,000.*

Therefore the Government of this State is planning its programme on the foundation that the £200,000,000 will be raised and that we, in Western Australia, will receive our total allocation of £19,000,000 under the headings which I mentioned a few moments ago. On the assumption that we will receive £15,500,000 through the Loan Council, for the general works programme, and £1,500,000 by way of loan repayments, in this financial year provision has been made in the Loan Estimates for a total expenditure of £17,000,000. That, of course, does not include the amount which will be made available by the Commonwealth to finance the Commonwealth-State housing undertakings. The details of proposed expenditure are set out in the Estimates which have been distributed to members.

#### *State Electricity Loan.*

Approval was also obtained from the Loan Council for the State Electricity Commission to borrow £2,960,000 during this financial year. Although this sum represents an increase of £960,000 over the amount raised during the last financial year, strong local support seems likely to ensure the successful raising of the additional sum. I think it is a matter for gratification that the State Electricity Commission loans have been not only fully subscribed on each occasion but also have been fully subscribed rapidly.

Mr. Bovell: In a number of instances country subscribers have not had an opportunity of investing money in the State Electricity Commission loan. I know that in Busselton several of the applicants had their applications rejected because the loan had been fully subscribed before the banks could handle their applications.

The TREASURER: The information made available by the member for Vasse is very interesting and very encouraging too, because it indicates that there is still an anxiety on the part of many people who have not yet been able to have their money

accepted by the State Electricity Commission to invest in its loan and therefore help the commission to further extend the very valuable work it is doing in so many of our country districts.

#### *Loan from Petroleum Company.*

When I introduced the Loan Estimates last year I told members that an amount of £500,000 had been obtained from Australasian Petroleum Refinery Ltd. and that it would be necessary for that loan to be repaid during this financial year. Fortunately, I think the Government has been able to make arrangements with the company to postpone the payment of the £500,000 until the next financial year. That arrangement will enable certain essential works in this State to proceed which otherwise would have had to be deferred because our loan money would have been £500,000 less in total.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: What rate of interest is paid?

The TREASURER: Speaking from memory, 4½ per cent. sterling. Although the total approved borrowing programme of £200,000,000 for all the States for 1954-55 is the same amount as was authorised for 1953-54, the share for Western Australia this year is £1,250,000 greater than last year.

#### *Provision for Water Supplies.*

In the allotment of funds, the Government has paid particular attention to water supplies in country areas, with the result that double the amount expended under that heading in the last financial year is likely to be expended this year. It is also proposed to expend additional loan moneys this year, as compared with last year, in the North-West portion of the State.

In conformity with the practice adopted this year for presentation of the Revenue Estimates, a separate section has been inserted in the Loan Estimates to embrace activities in the North-West. Apart from the normal items of expenditure, provision has been made to expend up to £100,000 on such additional work as may be authorised in the North-West during this financial year. I am sure that every member in this Chamber, and I should think every member of the general public, would be happy with the prospects which the North-West parts of the State now have, in relation to its future development.

#### *Oil Prospecting and North-West.*

That comment applies mainly to prospecting for oil which has been going on for some months and is still actively pursued by a number of companies. There is no certainty that oil in commercial quantities will be discovered. There were indications of a nature sufficient to develop a strong hope and confidence that oil in such quantities will be discovered in the

not too distant future. Whether that hope will be realised or not is immaterial, but the fact remains that the companies concerned have shown a good deal of faith in the areas in our North-West and have backed that faith very solidly by expending so far very large sums of money in oil prospecting activities.

They plan to spend even more money in the future. Even the most pessimistic person in this State in regard to the possibility of the discovery of oil in commercial quantities in the North-West, will have the consolation of knowing that the country will be thoroughly tested. I think that is a very important consideration.

Mr. Bovell: It is an interesting fact to know that this is the first oil discovered in the southern hemisphere.

The TREASURER: My own attitude towards oil prospecting in this State has been one of considerable caution because it is desirable that there should be caution in official places about activities of this description. Nevertheless, it is very satisfying to know that companies with great resources of capital, and acting on the expert reports provided by men of high technical qualifications, have been, and still are, prepared to invest millions of pounds in the North-West of our State in an endeavour to locate oil in commercial quantities.

Hon. D. Brand: They appear to be established on a permanent basis.

The TREASURER: They do indeed. I am sure we all join in wishing them complete success. We all hope that in the very near future they will see what they hope to find as a result of their investigations and work.

Mr. Bovell: This State is certainly a centre of interest in other countries.

The TREASURER: I agree. It might be true to say that Western Australia has been put more on the map of the world in the eyes of other countries through prospecting for oil than through any other single event which has occurred in this State.

#### *Problems of Expansion.*

The expansion taking place in the metropolitan area has required the allotment of further funds for water supply additions and extensions.—Provision has been made for increased expenditure on schools and hospitals generally in an endeavour to cope with the ever-increasing demands for these services. Each member must know from his own personal experience how true those words are. All of us, as representatives of electors, have frequently and regularly been approached about additions to schools and hospitals, and the provision of new school buildings. My experience in the Treasury during the last 18 months has confirmed the idea,

which is now a fact and was a fact previously, that it does cost a tremendous amount of money to carry out what seems to be a very small building project.

It is tremendously expensive for the Government to provide new buildings, and presumably the same applies to everyone else. I am sure that when the Minister for Works is told the amount of loan funds available for school buildings at the beginning of a financial year, he considers that there is sufficient money to build enough schools to accommodate all the schoolchildren in Western Australia; yet, before the financial year has proceeded very far, he finds that the allocation has been expended at a vary rapid rate, with little progress made to overcome the school building shortage.

#### *Financing Housing Projects.*

Although the allocation of £3,500,000 for Commonwealth-State housing projects is £250,000 below last year's figure, the reduction has been more than compensated for, so far as the Housing Commission is concerned, by an allotment of £1,498,000 from State funds for State housing undertakings. Expenditure on the Kwinana project is not expected to be as heavy this year, mainly because of reduced house building and water supply programmes there. Total expenditure, including dredging costs, is estimated at £1,180,000, compared with £2,390,000 last year.

#### *The Railways.*

The railways will also spend less this year, due in the main to a reduction in commitments on rollingstock contracts. When I found this was to be so, I experienced the greatest feeling of relief over any one event during the 18 months I have been privileged to be Treasurer of the State. Previously, I had formed the idea that the financial appetite of the Railway Department was not only tremendous but ever increasing.

The Minister for Railways: Insatiable.

#### *Rehabilitation Programme Nearing Completion.*

The TREASURER: We have now reached a stage where the loan requirements of the department are not as great as they have been in recent years, which is due to the fact the large-scale rehabilitation programme put into operation a few years ago is now moving towards its completion. This does not mean that the railways will not continue to require a considerable amount of loan money each year. In a department such as this, where there is much wear and tear on the rollingstock, the time does come every so often when much loan expenditure has to be incurred.

The coaching requirements of the department, for instance, could not be given great consideration in recent years because of the more urgent demands for

engines and wagons, and it might become necessary later in this financial year or early in next financial year to make some decision of a clear-cut character in regard to that phase of railway requirements.

#### *Railway Expenditure.*

The total expenditure of the Railway Department for 1953-54 was £6,588,000 or £205,000 less than the amount provided in the Estimates. This underspending was due largely to payments to contractors being less than had been anticipated owing to a production lag on some rollingstock contracts. I think that those contracts, or most of them at any rate were being carried out in England.

Of last year's expenditure £4,510,000 was for wagons, locomotives and other rollingstock, and the balance—£2,078,000—was expended, among other things, on track work, buildings, workshops machinery and equipment, and water supplies.

For the current year £5,871,000 has been allotted to the department. Of that amount, £3,070,000 is to be expended on rollingstock and £2,801,000 on track and other works, including the completion of the Coogee-Kwinana line. Contractual commitments on account of wagons, locomotives and machinery orders will absorb £2,650,000 this year.

#### *Coogee-Kwinana Railway.*

Although £119,000 was provided in last year's Estimates towards the construction of this railway, only £66,000 was spent during the year, following deferment of the work on advice from the Broken Hill Pty. Co. Ltd., indicating that completion of the line was not immediately urgent. A start was made late in the financial year, and satisfactory progress in the construction of the railway has been maintained. A sum of £100,000 has been allowed in this year's Estimates to complete the work.

#### *Rollingstock Programme.*

Expenditure during 1953-54 for wagon stock amounted to £2,800,000, the actual number of new wagons delivered and placed in service has been 1,783 plus 111 bogie vehicles. In terms of 4-wheelers, this is equal to 2,005 wagons. Since the 1st July this year, the equivalent of 388 wagons have been delivered, and there remain only 496 wagons to complete current orders. The estimated expenditure on contractual commitments for wagons in the current year is £1,448,000, and £154,000 is to be spent on the rebuilding of wagon and coaching stock in the Midland Junction workshops.

#### *Locomotives and Diesel Equipment.*

Expenditure totalling £1,500,000 was incurred last year in the purchase of diesel-electric and diesel locomotives and railcars. A further sum of £1,286,000 has

been provided in the present Estimates, including an amount for preliminary payments on 24 "VF" steam locomotives, delivery of which is expected to commence towards the end of this calendar year.

Of the diesel units, the three "Z" jetty shunters have been received and are in service; 11 of the 18 "Y" class branch line shunters on order have been received, 10 are in service, and the balance are coming forward at the rate of approximately one per month. Of eight "X" class main-line diesel locomotives received to date, six are in service and two are undergoing trials. On latest advices, the balance will be received at the rate of two per month until December and thence at the rate of three per month. Delivery of the 48 on order should be completed by December, 1955.

Of the 22 diesel railcars on order, 18 have been received, 12 have been placed in traffic and six are undergoing testing. It is anticipated that the remaining four will be shipped to Western Australia shortly.

#### *Railway Housing.*

Expenditure on housing for railway employees last year amounted to £104,000. During the year, 110 new houses were completed for occupation, two houses were purchased, and 23 were in the course of construction at the 30th June, 1954. Since then a further seven have been completed, 25 are in the course of erection, and tenders have been called for 10 more. In this financial year a sum of £245,000 has been allotted for railway housing projects, which is £141,000 more than was allocated for the same purpose last year.

The housing of railway employees is a very important angle to the working of the system. It is important from the angle of every Government department engaged in some activity or other in country districts, but most important of all, I think, for the Railway Department. We have railway lines running over nearly 4,000 miles of country, and there are some large depots in country areas.

In my experience at Northam, which is a large railway depot, I find that most of the people who come to me with housing problems are railway employees. They are, of course, subject to transfer at short notice from one place to another, although the department does its best to keep transfers to a minimum.

As a result of transfers, married railwaymen find themselves suddenly separated from their families and have to endure that separation until they can find a house in the locality to which they have been transferred. They have, of course, to involve themselves in considerable additional expense because of the fact that they are working and living in one place while their families are living in some other centre. It is therefore thought that the

Railway Department should make increasing efforts to have houses constructed for its employees in order that the housing position of these men and their families might be improved considerably above the position which exists at present.

#### *Track Work.*

During 1953-54, an amount of £890,000 was expended on relaying, ballasting, bank widening, etc., on the Eastern Goldfields, South Western and Narngulu-Walkaway lines.

Work on the Narngulu-Walkaway section has been completed and the target of 80 miles of relaying, for which provision was made in last year's Estimates over the system generally, was achieved.

Work on the Eastern Goldfields and South Western sections will be continued in the current year. A programme of 100 miles has been planned for the current financial year, but there may be some difficulty in obtaining sufficient supplies of rails.

#### *Renewals.*

Renewals of 555,998 sleepers in 1953-54 cost £817,000, exclusive of 17,642 sleepers used for special works. This year an amount of £700,000 has been allocated for sleeper renewals. The amount provided for relaying, ballasting and related work is £769,000.

Other track renewals, with renewals of bridges and culverts, telephone lines, pipelines, etc., absorbed £299,000 of last year's funds. In the current Estimates the amount provided for these items is £286,000.

#### *Track and Yard Improvements.*

Urgent track and yard improvements, such as the East Perth-Perth third road for use in connection with diesel traffic, the first stage of centralised traffic control between Armadale and Mundijong, automatic signalling between Koojeda and Spencers Brook and East Perth and Rivervale, and yard alterations at Collie, Narrogin, Armadale and Bridgetown, will absorb approximately £140,000 of this year's funds.

#### *Midland Junction Workshops.*

Expenditure for machinery, buildings and re-organisation during last financial year amounted to £84,000. The allocation for this financial year is £70,000.

#### *Tramways Expenditure.*

A sum of £32,000 was expended last year in the provision of workshops machinery, the establishment of a traction substation in North Perth, and final payments on contract for trolley-buses, under the jurisdiction of the Tramway Department.

#### *Extension and Alteration of Services.*

During 1953-54 tramcar services were withdrawn from Walcott-st., Mt. Lawley, and from William and Newcastle-sts., being



replaced by omnibuses. Extensions of services were provided in the Mt. Lawley and Bayswater districts. A new service to Hackett Estate in Floreat Park was also inaugurated, and a commencement made in extending trolley-bus overhead lines along Grantham-st., Wembley.

Provision has been made this year for expenditure of £74,000 which is for the further extension of trolley-bus services, the conversion of the Bulwer-st. tram route to trolley-buses, the acquisition of workshops machinery, and major overhauls of trolley-buses and omnibuses.

#### *Melbourne Tram Services.*

The use of trams with fixed steel rails appears to be more or less a thing of the past although, strangely enough, in the City of Melbourne tram lines are being re-laid in Bourke-st. I know, of my own experience, that trams did run in Bourke-st. years ago.

Hon. A. F. Watts: Cable trams.

The TREASURER: Yes. They were done away with and buses were substituted for them. But today, if one wanders down Bourke-st., which is one of the busiest streets in the Melbourne city area, one sees hundreds of men working like ants putting down this new electric tram track, or rather putting down the steel rails. I understand that the men work over weekends and on holidays, or, if the same men do not work seven days per week, others are brought in, and overtime is being paid in order that the job might be completed as soon as possible so that an electric tram service may operate in that street and continue out to one of the nearby suburbs.

Hon. A. F. Watts: With 5 ft. 3 in. gauge welded rails and Pennsylvania trams.

The Minister for Railways: And wide streets.

The TREASURER: Bourke-st. is a very wide street. I am not sure what the estimated capital cost of this job in Melbourne is, but I believe it to be nearly £4,000,000. From our experience in Perth, it is not easy to work out why the authority charged with the management and control of passenger transport in the city and suburbs of Melbourne would take on a proposition of this kind.

Mr. Lapham: All the wise men do not come from the East.

The TREASURER: We must, I think, grant them the concession of saying that they know what they are doing. They have had great practical experience in passenger transport. The authority in that city is not a government department but a special board set up under statutory authority, and so it might appear that the tram is not completely on the way out. As a matter of fact, this development in Melbourne, which surprised me greatly when I first found out about it, could indicate

that in some places, and to some extent at all events, trams might appear to be on the way back.

Mr. Perkins: When the buses were placed in Bourke-st. it was only a temporary arrangement. The arrangement was that electric trams would be installed as soon as possible.

The TREASURER: That might have been so, but I would think that with the passing of time after the agreement was first made, if the development of practical experience had convinced the authority that trams were out-dated, it would surely have found ways and means of avoiding the responsibility—if it was a responsibility—of putting down new tram-tracks and installing a new tram service.

Mr. Perkins: The rest of the tramways in Melbourne are efficient and seem to work very well.

The TREASURER: I suppose every tramway system is efficient within limits. I had a discussion a few months ago in Perth with the heads of the Adelaide Tramway Trust. They told me a rather sad story of their experience with the Adelaide tramway system in recent years, although that system a few years ago was looked upon as the best electric tramway system in the world.

Mr. Bovell: Have you had a recent conversation with the Sydney authorities on this subject?

The TREASURER: No. However, the point I set out to make, and which I think I have made with the help of some interjections of a helpful character, was that at a time when trams seem to be on the way out because of modern developments in passenger transport, we see in Melbourne a £4,000,000 capital investment to put in new tramlines and put a new set of trams into operation.

Mr. Perkins: You are not thinking of retaining ours are you?

Mr. O'Brien: There will always be the tramways.

#### *State Electricity Commission.*

The TREASURER: During last year expenditure from general loan funds by the State Electricity Commission amounted to £554,000. In addition, the sum of £149,000 was spent on the conversion of the metropolitan system from a frequency of 40 cycles to a frequency of 50 cycles. The balance of the commission's expenditure was met from loans raised under its own borrowing powers. During the year two public loans were raised for an amount of £2,000,000. Both loans were very successful and were closed before the advertised date.

The commission expects to spend £3,525,000 during the current year on its undertakings, other than the frequency cycle change. A sum of £565,000 will come

from general loan funds and £2,960,000 from loans raised by the commission itself. It is estimated that during the current year £160,000 will be spent on changing the frequency cycle of supply of current in the metropolitan area. By the 30th June last, over 60,000 consumers in the metropolitan area had been changed to 50 cycles.

#### *South Fremantle Power Station.*

During last year the work on the station proceeded satisfactorily. The "A" station, comprising two 25,000 kw. units, is virtually complete and only minor sums are due to contractors for retention moneys. The "B" station which is also comprised of two 25,000 kw. units, is nearing completion, and one of the two turbo-alternators and a portion of the boiler plant are already on load. The second 66,000-volt line connecting this station with the East Perth power station, is nearing completion.

#### *East Perth Power Station.*

Two new boilers are being installed at the East Perth power station, one of which is nearing completion. One additional turbo-alternator is to be installed at this station and foundation work is in progress. Work on the new coal handling plant there is proceeding satisfactorily.

#### *Bunbury Power Station.*

Foundations are well advanced and the erection of steel work for the building has commenced. Progress to date has been satisfactory. Clearing has started on the line for the 132,000-volt transmission line to connect this station to the metropolitan power stations.

#### *Electricity and Gas Department.*

The commission is continuing its policy of extending high tension transmission and low tension distribution mains throughout the metropolitan area. Work on the installation of the new carburetted water gas plant has proceeded satisfactorily.

#### *South West Power Scheme and Other Country Undertakings.*

Considerable progress has been made on the South West power scheme during the past year. All the remaining diesel stations, with the exception of the Albany power station, were closed down, resulting in more economical operation. The commission now supplies electricity from the Collie power station to towns ranging from Pinjarra to Pemberton and Margaret River. The fifth boiler at the Collie power station was completed during the year, and the second 40-cycle turbo-alternator in that station was changed to 50-cycles. The whole of the designed capacity of the Collie power station is now available to feed into the South West power scheme with a frequency of 50-cycles.

The work of extending electricity to rural consumers was continued and at the 30th June, 1954, a total of 643 rural consumers were connected to the commission's mains.

#### *State Electricity Commission Staff.*

I think it should be said at this stage that the State Electricity Commission has shown itself to be a most capable organisation. Its employees appear to take great interest and pride in the work being carried out by and on behalf of the commission. I know there is a tendency on the part of all of us, and especially on the part of some of us in this Chamber, to say, "Oh, well; this is a Government-owned and Government-controlled show and it is not likely to be as efficient as it should be. The employees are not likely to be as keen as they might be." I know there is a lot of propaganda in this sort of talk and that it is frequently circulated by those who take a special delight in running down anything that is owned, operated or controlled by the Government.

But I have never heard any word of criticism directed against the efficiency of the State Electricity Commission. I have heard complaints and I suppose in the activities of a large organisation such as it is there will inevitably be complaints and that at times some will be justified. The general opinion throughout the State regarding the commission, the work it has done and is planning to do, is very high. People also have a high regard for the standard of work carried out by the employees of the commission and the keenness which they appear to exhibit while they are working.

Mr. Yates: The condition must have changed since the Minister for Health complained in this House about the State Electricity Commission.

The TREASURER: As I say, there must be occasions in the operation of a big organisation of this kind when mistakes are made and complaints are justified. As far as I know, there is no organisation anywhere in Australia, and may be not one in the world, where something does not go wrong some time.

Mr. Wild: Would the Treasurer agree that the State Electricity Commission should be persuaded to put in transmission lines which, at the moment, it says are not payable, and allow the subscribers to pay a guarantee, the same as they do with water?

The TREASURER: I would not say that it should be persuaded; I would say that it should be convinced.

Mr. Wild: I wish the Premier would convince it.

The TREASURER: If one persuades it to do something, one might persuade it against its will and better judgment. If it is convinced that what one has in mind

should be done, then one convinces it with the merits of the argument that one puts forward in favour of the proposition.

### *Public Works.*

The major items of expenditure incurred last year by the Public Works Department were under the headings of public buildings, Cockburn Sound, and Albany harbour works, country areas and towns water supply, drainage and irrigation, and Kwinana area development.

### *Public Buildings.*

Provision has been made in this year's Estimates for an expenditure on public buildings of £2,086,000 compared with £1,451,000 spent in 1953-54. Of this year's total amount £1,224,000 will be for school buildings, including works in progress at the 30th June last. The major works in progress, and the estimated expenditure during this year include the Narrogin High School—£41,000; heavy metal trades annex at Subiaco—£60,000; Hampton Park new school—£20,000; and Margaret River new school—£37,000.

New school works to be undertaken in this financial year also include high schools at Fremantle, Mt. Lawley, Armadale and Midland Junction—to cost £200,000; and primary schools at North Scarborough, (£48,000), Bunbury, at Carey Park, (£17,000) and Goomalling (£11,000). School additions at Medina will cost £44,000.

Hospital works are estimated to cost £639,000, the main items being new hospitals at Meekatharra (£38,000) and Midland Junction (£43,000).

### *Royal Perth Hospital.*

For the second section of the Royal Perth Hospital, £223,000 is provided. As the new Royal Perth Hospital grows higher, wider and broader, I become more and more convinced that it is not in the right place. However, I would not claim to have any expert knowledge about that, but I do think that it was perhaps an extremely serious and grave mistake that it was not decided to build the new Royal Perth Hospital in some other part of the metropolitan area. Nevertheless, I was one of the Ministers of the Government at the time who made the decision and all I am able to do at the moment is, in effect, growl at myself.

### *Cockburn Sound Harbour Works.*

An amount of £545,000 is provided for the continuation of the contract work of dredging channels through the Success and Parmelia Banks in Cockburn Sound to provide a suitable shipping approach to Cockburn Sound and also to provide navigational aids for these channels. This work forms part of the Government's responsibility under the Oil Refinery Industry

(Anglo-Iranian Oil Company Limited) Act, 1952. Expenditure last financial year amounted to £524,000.

### *Albany Harbour Works.*

A sum of £231,000 was expended last year on continuance of work on No. 1 berth at Albany, rock removal in the harbour floor, and various minor works, such as levelling, reclamation and drainage. Provision has been made in this year's Estimates for expenditure of £135,000 to complete No. 1 berth to the stage of handling bulk cargoes.

### *Country Areas and Goldfields Supply.*

The total expenditure during 1953-54 was £461,000 and provision has been made in the current year's Estimates for a total expenditure of £955,000. Continuation of work on the comprehensive scheme will absorb £493,000 which will mean an expenditure of £986,000 on this work, as the Commonwealth Government provides £1 for every £1 expended by the State.

Work on the northern section includes £48,000 on pumping stations at Mundaring, Cunderdin and Kellerberrin, while £209,000 has been allowed for enlargement of several sections and duplications of sections of the main conduit. I have often wondered why they call a main pipeline a conduit. It seems to me to be a word that is out of date when referring to a pipeline, but it is a term that has officially continued to be regarded as the right one. It always seems to me that the public generally would have a better conception of what we are talking about if we described a main pipeline as a main pipeline.

For branch enlargements and extensions £24,000 will be spent, together with £37,000 for the Bruce Rock-Narembeen main and reservoir. On the southern section of the comprehensive scheme £166,000 has been provided for the continuation of the Wellington Dam-Narrogin pipeline and associated works.

Provision has also been made for expenditure of £174,000 on the existing goldfields system, where the main items of work will be £60,000 for renovations to the main conduit east of Merredin; £30,000 for improvements on the system to give improved service and reduced water losses and £30,000 to develop the Kalamunda water supply.

Mr. Owen: Very good!

### *Town Water Supplies.*

A sum of £277,000 has been provided for water supplies for towns, including major items of £71,000 for Geraldton where extensive improvements are in hand; £39,000 for Albany in continuing construction of a new service tank and other work; £28,000 for Bridgetown to make a start on requirements for this town; £25,000 for Wongan Hills to complete the catchment,

area and main and to instal pumping plant; and £40,000 jointly for Tambellup, Cranbrook and Mt. Barker water supplies.

There is no doubt that the unfortunate finish to the present season is going to emphasise very greatly the need for water supplies in many of our country districts. Just how people are going to get on in many localities for water for domestic purposes and how others are going to manage in regard to water supplies for stock purposes, is something that would not give anybody any ease of mind to think about.

#### *Drainage and Irrigation.*

Of last year's total expenditure of £54,000, the sum of £26,000 was spent in development of irrigation channels in the Harvey area. In the Estimates for 1954-55 a sum of £89,000 has been provided, including £25,000 for preliminary essential work at Wellington Dam to enable the raising of the wall to be undertaken at a later date; £25,000 for constructing further channels in the Harvey area to provide irrigation to new areas; and £14,000 for continuation of development in the Willson drainage area at Albany.

#### *Wellington Dam Work.*

Most members will know that there has been a proposal in train for several years to raise considerably the height of the retaining wall at the Wellington dam. As I remember it, I think the proposal is to increase the holding capacity of the dam from about 7,000,000,000 gallons to 35,000,000,000 gallons. If those figures are not correct, the Minister for Works and Water Supplies, when he is introducing the departmental Estimates, will be able to give members the correct figures.

The raising of the retaining wall at the reservoir is a very cheap method of impounding greatly increased quantities of water. If the proposal for the heightening of the Wellington dam increases the holding capacity by five times, that, in effect, means that we will have five Wellington dams. The Mundaring reservoir retaining wall was raised sufficiently to impound four times the water capacity that the reservoir carried previously and so, in effect, we have four Mundaring Weirs, where previously we had only one.

Naturally, it is far cheaper to impound greatly increased quantities of water by raising the retaining wall of an existing reservoir—if that is practicable from an engineering point of view—than it is to start establishing a new reservoir altogether.

#### *Kwinana Area Development.*

An amount of £209,000, apart from housing and water supplies, was expended last year in the development of the Kwinana area.

The Estimates for this year provide for a total expenditure of £160,000, of which £70,000 will be absorbed in road construc-

tion. Provision of £50,000 and £30,000 is made for land resumption in the townsite and industrial areas respectively.

#### *North-West.*

Allowance has been made under this heading for increased expenditure during 1954-55 on water supplies, public buildings, additions to jetties, and other works. As I mentioned earlier, a sum of £100,000 has been set aside for various activities in the North-West.

#### *State Shipping Service.*

Expenditure on the State Shipping Service for last year amounted to £253,000 which included a deposit of £40,000 on the new ship now under construction. The total cost of this vessel is estimated at £805,000, and it is expected to be in commission by January, 1956.

With the oil prospecting activities in the North-West and the further development of mining in that part of the State, the State Shipping Service is becoming increasingly vital. Furthermore, that service is a very valuable undertaking as it relates to the trade of Western Australia with Darwin. The population of Darwin has been increasing consistently in recent years, and the information I have is that this will continue for some time to come. Manufacturers and merchants of Perth, generally are able to write a lot of business with Darwin, with the result that goods manufactured in the metropolitan area, and goods brought into the State from other parts by our merchants, are sent in considerable, and increasing quantities to Darwin; and the State Shipping Service is naturally the cheapest method of transporting such merchandise from the metropolitan area to Darwin.

Mr. Ackland: You ought to do something to hurry up the turn-around of ships in Darwin.

The TREASURER: I understand the turn-around of ships in Darwin has been slowed down considerably by damage done by Japanese bombs. Apparently the damage has not been repaired to any substantial extent. If I have the situation properly in mind, it is my impression that only one ship at a time can be berthed at Darwin.

Mr. Ackland: There is usually only one ship at a time in; they try to work it that way. You want to watch the work going on to appreciate how slow it is.

The TREASURER: I now see the point the hon. member is trying to make.

The Minister for Railways: Tell me the old, old story!

Hon. D. Brand: Unfortunately, it is the old, old story.

The Minister for Railways: With some people.

The TREASURER: I do not desire to discuss that angle at this stage.

Mr. Ackland: If you compare the work in Darwin with that in your own North-West ports, you will get a true picture of what they are doing in Darwin.

The TREASURER: We always imagine that we can do the other fellow's job better than he can, but how we would shape if we were shot into the other fellow's place, I do not know. I always think our responsibility is to do our own job to the best of our ability and in that way set a good example to the other fellow.

Hon. D. Brand: What would be the contributing factor to the increase in population in Darwin?

The TREASURER: I suggest that perhaps the discovery of uranium, and the greater use of land under lease by cattlemen in the North-West, and perhaps developments in one or two other directions. I would make one further guess, however—and I am inclined to think this would be right—that it is due to the fact that there would probably be more Commonwealth employees in Darwin today than there were one, two, three or four years ago.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: That is the main reason.

The TREASURER: A payment of £100,000 was made last year on the "Kabbarli" in reduction of the amount due to the Commonwealth on this vessel, the balance still owing being £200,000. A deposit of £104,000 was also paid to the Commonwealth towards the purchase of the "Dulverton" and "Dorrigo."

In this current year's Estimates, £635,000 has been provided to meet progress payments of £483,000 on the new ship, a further instalment of £100,000 on the "Kabbarli" and instalments also on the "Dulverton" and "Dorrigo." As far as we are able to judge at the moment, it will be necessary for the Government in the near future to make a decision to place another order for a ship for the North-West service.

Hon. Sir Ross McLarty: Will that be to replace the "Koolinda?"

The TREASURER: That would be the objective the Government would mainly have in view—to replace the "Koolinda" and the "Kybra," both of which have been in service for many years, and have given amazingly good service to North-West ports and Darwin. In its earlier years, I think the "Kybra" used to serve southern ports.

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

Expenditure last year on the metropolitan water supply, excluding the Kwinana area, was £553,000. In the current year expenditure of £967,000 has been provided in the Estimates.

#### *Mundaring to Guildford Trunk Main.*

The most important of the works carried out last financial year in connection with the Goldfields water supply scheme was the first portion of a 30in. trunk main from Mundaring to Guildford, which will ultimately feed 10,000,000 gallons a day from Mundaring reservoir into the Perth system. Expenditure was £122,000 and provision is made for completion of that main this year at a cost of £112,000.

I think members would find it of considerable interest if, when introducing his departmental Estimates, the Minister for Water Supplies would tell them the reason why this link has been made, and explain to them that the link will not have the effect that some people in the country seem to think of taking water from the Mundaring reservoir at a time when this might leave people served by the scheme short of necessary supplies for their needs.

#### *Mt. Yokine to West Coast Supply Main.*

Provision is made this year for expenditure of £157,000 for laying the Mt. Yokine to West Coast water supply main. A sum of £14,000 was expended last year on this work for the purchase of pipes.

#### *Roleystone Water Supply.*

An amount of £12,000 was expended last year towards a water supply for Roleystone, and £17,000 is provided this year to continue the work.

#### *Trunk Main and Pipe-head Dam on Serpentine River.*

An amount of £100,000 has been provided this year for the commencement of a trunk main and pipe-head dam on the Serpentine River.

I think it was the member for Stirling who raised this matter last year, either when the Budget or the Loan Estimates were being debated. He asked that action to ascertain the water supply needs of the metropolitan area for some years ahead should be extended and speeded up, and that all the possible water supply catchments of any magnitude which might be regarded as being capable of serving the metropolitan area, should be checked in order that there might be desirable and necessary planning well ahead to meet the requirements before they occurred. This is a move in that direction and similar moves have been made in certain other areas.

#### *Water Main Extensions and Improvements.*

Reticulation mains to serve new homes and areas, and improvements to existing reticulation mains, resulted in an expenditure last year of £280,000, while £53,000 was also spent in the purchasing and fixing of new meters. An amount of £365,000 is included in this year's Estimates for further water main extensions and improvements, and £70,000 for the purchase and fixing of new meters.

*Sewerage and Drainage.*

In the sewerage and drainage section of the department, expenditure incurred last year amounted to £295,000. For the current year an expenditure of £312,000 is anticipated, made up of £74,000 for recurring works and services; £16,000 for the completion of works in progress and £202,000 for new works in Victoria Park, West Midland, North Swanbourne, Manning Park, and Floreat Park. A sum of £20,000 has been provided for stormwater drainage at Bedford Park.

*Kwinana Water Supply.*

The expenditure incurred on the Kwinana water supply in 1953-54 totalled £469,000 compared with an estimate for the current year of £298,000. During the last financial year, work was completed on the laying of the 30in. trunk main from Kelmscott to Naval Base at a cost of £120,000. A 20,000,000 gallon service reservoir at Lake Thompson was also completed at a cost of £164,000.

Construction of the outlet mains from Lake Thompson reservoir to the Kwinana oil refinery and townsite was commenced with an expenditure of £141,000 last year. The anticipated expenditure for this year to complete these mains, together with a link main to Mt. Brown tank, is £246,000.

*Mines.*

Expenditure during 1953-54 under the heading of Development of Mining totalled £124,000. This year provision has been made in the Estimates for an expenditure of £134,000. The department's deep drilling organisation is being expanded this year by the addition of two new drills. They will be utilised in the North-West and Murchison goldfields for testing gold and mineral deposits in areas selected by the geologists of the Mines Department.

The department is at present drilling at Collie, Koolyanobbing and in the Yilgarn district, and has had outstanding success in the first two areas, where excellent new coal, iron and pyrite deposits have been located. An allocation of £94,000 has been provided for this year's drilling operations, including the cost of the two new drills.

An amount of £15,000 is provided for assistance to prospectors, and £25,000 for secured loans to miners for the development and mechanisation of approved mines.

*State Housing Commission.*

During 1953-54, 263 homes were completed under the provisions of the State Housing Act, and at the close of the year 112 homes were in course of construction. They were financed from the loan of £500,000 from Australasian Petroleum Refinery Ltd., and a carryover of funds from the previous year.

This year's programme is mainly confined to the construction of standard pre-cut types of homes and further contracts have been let to three firms to produce a number of additional types. It is anticipated that 410 of those homes will be completed during the year, in addition to completing the 112 homes under construction at the 1st July, 1954. Also included in the programme are 35 houses of conventional types which will be completed during the year.

Land and road development this year is estimated to cost £197,000. Provision has been made for an expenditure of £300,000 on the Subiaco flats project, on which progress has been satisfactory.

*Kwinana Area Housing.*

At the request of Australasian Petroleum Refinery Ltd., the construction of 348 of the original 1,000 houses planned at Kwinana has been deferred. Expenditure this year will be restricted in the main to the erection of brick homes and the finalisation of the shopping centre.

*Forests.*

The sum of £78,000 was spent last year on pine planting operations and in the provision of houses for forestry employees. In the current financial year an amount of £104,000 has been allotted to plant 1,200 acres of pines and to clear a further 1,100 acres of land for future planting. Last year 1,357 acres were planted with pines.

*Charcoal Iron and Steel Industry.*

An expenditure of £66,000 was incurred last year on additional vehicles, plant and buildings, and the purchase of bricks to reline the blast furnace in connection with the charcoal iron and steel industry at Wundowie.

During this year it is proposed to spend £70,000, of which £35,000 will be for the installation of crushing and ore-handling plant at Koolyanobbing, and the balance for a blast furnace and other improvements at Wundowie. Those activities are expected to result in considerable economies in production costs. I might add that those who have cursed the charcoal iron and steel industry at Wundowie will some day come to bless it.

*Fremantle Harbour Trust.*

Last year an amount of £432,000 was expended on the construction of the No. 10 berth at Fremantle, provision of electric cranes and other equipment, and the reconstruction of the North and South Quays. The continuation of those works at a cost of £550,000 is allowed for in this year's Estimates.

*Rural & Industries Bank.*

During last financial year £1,150,000 was made available to the Rural & Industries Bank, and provision is made in the current

Estimates for a further allocation of £510,000. This total sum of £1,660,000 includes additional capital for the rural section of the bank of £1,100,000, and £560,000 for the agency section.

The additional capital for the rural section is to provide for the normal expansion of the bank's business, for which required funds have not been readily available over the past few years, due mainly to the heavy demands on loan moneys for such works as the Kwinana project and railway rehabilitation.

The provision of £560,000 for the agency section of the bank includes an allotment of £500,000 towards meeting the State's commitment under the agreement entered into with Cockburn Cement Pty. Ltd. As members know, that company is busily engaged establishing a new industry in Western Australia for the production of cement on a large scale.

#### *State Brickworks.*

The expenditure of £40,000 last year on the State-owned brickworks was mainly for the completion of the second section of the pressed-brick works at Armadale, which came into production in November, 1953. Provision has been made this year for additional brickmaking machines, a new kiln, grinding plant and other equipment at an estimated total cost of £79,000.

#### *State Saw Mills.*

An amount of £118,000 was made available to the State Saw Mills last year for the acquisition of Buckingham's mill, erection of cottages, provision of a vertical saw at the Shannon River mill, and plant for a pre-cut mill at the Carlisle yards. Additional working capital of £50,000 was also provided.

Included in the Estimates for this year is provision for the construction of re-sawing and seasoning plant at Manjimup, the installation of sawdust burning boilers at Pemberton, and the erection of cottages at Pemberton and Shannon River. The total estimated expenditure for State Saw Mills for this year is £146,000.

#### *Deficit Funding.*

The net accumulated deficit in the Consolidated Revenue Fund at the 30th June, 1952, amounted to £60,000, after allowing for amounts received from the Commonwealth, on the recommendation of the Commonwealth Grants Commission, for the extinguishment or part-extinguishment of deficits. The opportunity was taken last year to fund this amount by a charge to the General Loan Fund.

Deficits of £508,000 for 1952-53 and £103,000 for 1953-54 have yet to be cleared from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. As I stated recently when introducing the Revenue Estimates, a sum of £350,000 will be received this year as a result of a

recommendation by the Grants Commission, towards reduction of the deficit incurred in 1952-53.

Although no specific provision has been made in the current Loan Estimates to fund the balance of the deficit for 1952-53, action will be taken to do so if sufficient funds are available towards the end of this financial year. No action can be taken in respect of the deficit for the last financial year until the Grants Commission investigates and reports on our Budget results for that year.

I now submit the Estimates for the consideration of the Committee.

Progress reported.

### **BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION ACT AMENDMENT.**

#### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 5th October.

**HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley)** [5.43]: This Bill is mainly designed to improve the administration of the Act which was passed a few years ago since when some defects in the statute have been found. The provisions of the Bill were clearly explained by the Minister when moving the second reading and I see no advantage in referring to them again. Such of them as need attention may more aptly be dealt with in Committee.

However, there are a few comments I should like to make on the measure. Provision is proposed to enable a warden to search without a warrant the outhouses of dwellings, shops or other premises. That is not altogether usual. Before one is entitled to search premises, it is customary to apply to a magistrate for a warrant.

I have given some consideration to this problem and have come to the conclusion that an exception to the ordinary rule may be made in these circumstances because, if it were necessary to obtain a warrant before making the search, evidence of a breach of the Act might disappear. Therefore I consider that it would not be unreasonable to grant this power. Of course a warden would not be entitled to search a dwelling house without adopting the ordinary procedure of applying to a magistrate for a warrant.

There is another provision that I am not keen about. At present natives are entitled to kill fauna for food, but are not permitted to sell the skins for gain. The Bill proposes to give them permission to sell the skins of animals killed by them for food. I think that would be going a little too far and might encourage these people to kill a great deal more game than was required by them for food, simply for the purpose of obtaining the skins.

How any inspector or warden could say that animals had been killed for food or for commercial purposes, I do not know. I consider that the existing provisions are

quite sufficient. At present the amount of game that would be killed for food would not be of a quantity that would warrant the selling of the skins, but once permission were given to sell the skins, I fear that a great deal of game would be killed unnecessarily.

The Minister for Railways: Would you have the skins wasted?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, they could be handed over to the department. Special permission could be granted by the department when giving a general licence.

There is another provision on which I wish to comment. The Bill contains a proposal that where a person is convicted of the offence of assaulting a warden, the justices before whom the complaint is heard may, in addition to imposing any penalty, order a sum of money sufficient to cover any damage or injury sustained by the warden to be paid by the defendant. This virtually means that where a defendant would normally have to appear before a judge in the Supreme Court or a magistrate in the lower court, according to the amount claimed for damages, the payment for damages could be awarded on the hearing of the assault charge.

Where the damage was only of a small amount, that would be reasonable, but if a claim were made for a considerable sum of money, the ordinary procedure should be adopted. I have placed on the notice paper an amendment designed to limit the amount that a magistrate may award on the hearing of an assault charge to £50. With those comments, I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

*In Committee.*

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

Clauses 1 to 3—agreed to.

Clause 4—Section 10 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The Act provides that a warden may be awarded travelling expenses. It has been found that members of the committee in some cases are put to expenses which could not be classified strictly in that way. Most of the members of the committee would appear to be civil servants, already in receipt of their ordinary remuneration, and I do not think civil servants should receive extra remuneration, although they should certainly be compensated for their expenses. Members of the committee set up to hear appeals against punishments under the Police Act were given allowances to compensate them for expenses to which they might be put, but no extra remuneration. This Bill provides for remuneration, which I do not think is necessary. I move an amendment—

That subparagraph (e), lines 1 to 3, page 3, be struck out, and the following inserted in lieu:—

(e) substituting for the words "travelling allowances" in line two of subsection (8) the words "allowances for out of pocket expenses."

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I think the attitude of the hon. member is remarkable because, under the provision included by the hon. member when Minister, it has been easy for the Minister from time to time to include as a payment to members of this committee anything he thought reasonable. Three of the members are already enjoying full payment and the other three have from time to time been paid expenses. The idea of this provision in the Bill is to regularise the position.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Is it not regular now, if the Minister approves of it?

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Not only the department, but also the Crown Law authorities, think this provision necessary. The amendment does not provide for any sitting fees but only for travelling expenses.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: No, the amendment in the Bill provides for remuneration for services.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: No, only for travelling expenses. I cannot understand the hon. member's reasoning, as he was quite happy about the position when he was Minister.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: I do not remember paying them any remuneration.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: The note I have is that when Minister, the hon. member approved of a fee of £2 2s., fares and travelling expenses.

Hon. A. V. R. Abbott: Fares and travelling expenses, yes.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: Plus £2 2s. We are seeking to regularise the position under the Bill and I am assured by those responsible for drafting the measure that this provision is necessary. I do not think the Committee should agree to the amendment.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I have no objection to any member being compensated properly for any loss he might suffer in attending to his duties. But that is not what the Minister seeks to do under the Bill. He could, by regulation, pay a man any salary he liked.

The Minister for Mines: No, the Minister has jurisdiction in the matter.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so. However, I am not wedded to my amendment any more than the Minister is wedded to his Bill. But I want a man to get proper compensation for any expenses or losses he suffers.

The Minister for Mines: What would be the position of a man who had to work on Saturday and Sunday—as happens frequently? That is outside his normal hours, and do you not think he is entitled to some remuneration?



Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, I do not like this sort of thing. I think he should get a travelling allowance.

The Minister for Mines: But these men do not work on Saturdays and Sundays, and you want them to work for nothing.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: As these people are civil servants, I would not give them anything because it is part of their routine duties. I do not approve of people accepting what I call additional jobs.

Mr. May: I can employ you every Saturday and Sunday if you will work for nothing.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: We often work overtime, do we not?

Mr. Heal: How many additional jobs have you got?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I consider my job is a seven-day-a-week one.

The CHAIRMAN: We are not discussing the number of jobs the hon. member has.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I have expressed my views, so I will leave it at that.

Amendment put and negatived.

Clause put and passed.

Clauses 5 to 7—agreed to.

Clause 8—Section 17 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I have an amendment on the notice paper and I do not intend to alter the policy or intention of the provision. I have altered the language which I think will improve it and I understand that the Minister agrees with it. I move an amendment—

That the words "the excessive increase of which, have" in line 1, page 4, be struck out and the words "nature might" inserted in lieu.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I have no objection to the amendment. I think it would be an improvement.

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

Clauses 9 to 12—agreed to.

Clause 13—Section 23 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I have another amendment on the notice paper which, although it does not alter policy, improves the language and I understand the Minister has no objection to it. I move an amendment—

That the word "extinct" in line 9, page 6, be struck out and the words "unduly depleted" inserted in lieu.

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

Clause 14—Section 25 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This was the clause to which I referred during my second reading speech and which provides that a justice of the peace, when convicting

on the charge of assault, may award damages. I propose to limit the damages to a sum not exceeding £50 and I move an amendment—

That after the word "sufficient" in line 34, page 6, the words "but not exceeding the sum of fifty pounds" be inserted.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I think the member for Mt. Lawley has something here. It appears to me that it is another way of doing away with trial by jury. If the amount is large, the case should not be heard by a magistrate. I think we struck a similar provision out of another measure a short time ago. If the sum exceeds a certain amount, I think a person should have the right to decide that he be tried by a judge and jury.

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

Clause 15—Sections 27A-27C added:

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I would like to hear some of our learned friends pass comment on proposed new Section 27C.

Mr. May: Where are they?

Hon. A. F. Watts: You have not got any.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: Who is right? I think this provision will throw the onus of proof on the defendant and I would like to hear what the Minister thinks about it.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: That is not the intention or the desire of the clause. I know the member for Fremantle is always greatly concerned regarding anything of this nature. However, the wording in the proposed new section is quite clear, and the intention of the Bill is such that the defendant will not be called upon to prove his innocence. The onus of proof is on the accuser in this legislation, as in most other Acts. I can give the hon member an assurance of that.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 16—Section 28 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I received a suggestion from the R.S.P.C.A. that a provision should be inserted in this clause to enable the Minister to make regulations respecting the public display of fauna at shows, fetes and other functions. I have not had time to inquire if there is already protection in the Act to cover that point. I was wondering whether the Minister would be prepared to report progress so that inquiries could be made before passing this clause.

The MINISTER FOR MINES: I can assure the hon. member that I will get the information and, if necessary, the matter can be adjusted in another place.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with amendments.

*House adjourned at 6.12 p.m.*