

Hon. C. H. Henning: What is the total?

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I have not the full total.

Hon. A. R. Jones: They do not come up to Mr. Barker's 1,300.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: That figure was given by me, and I did not say that that number was registered at the court. I said that there were 1,334 registered at the Housing Commission, and not all of those registered at the court are registered at the commission. So members cannot get away from the actual position that has been created; and, because of that position, we have brought Parliament together early in order to discuss this Bill and do something to alleviate the distress of the needy. Mr. Watson asked me how many orders were given out of the 53 in Perth yesterday, and out of the 11 in Fremantle. For argument's sake, let us say 32 per week.

Hon. H. K. Watson: You are dealing with a population of 600,000.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: I do not care; I am concerned with the actual eviction cases awarded by the court. It would not matter if the population was a million. The fact would still remain that there are people who are out and require housing.

Hon. H. K. Watson: It shows a complete lack of proportion.

The CHIEF SECRETARY: The only proportion with which I am concerned is the proportion of people who are looking for homes and have to be provided with them. The only place that can provide them with homes is the State Housing Commission. From the figures I have produced, I have shown members that the best the Housing Commission can do is about 15 a week. We are asking members to help us by legislation to solve this problem; and I repeat there is nothing in the Bill to which exception can be taken.

The measure will not hurt anyone who is fair-minded; we want to get at the person who is not dealing fairly. I feel sure I can ask successfully for the co-operation of members in something that is fair and reasonable. I admit that retrospective clauses immediately put one on dangerous ground. But I think we will be able to get over that position in the Committee stage. I heard members ask that the Government give consideration to and meet the wishes of some members. This is a different Bill altogether to that which was introduced in another place. But the Government showed it was prepared to consider amendments that might be introduced, and make alterations where it was proved that the Bill would act unfairly.

I repeat that if members can prove to me—no doubt a number will try to show me—that there are clauses in this Bill that are unjust and will cause hardship, I will give consideration to that aspect.

From the tone of the debate, however, I believe that the second reading will be carried. This is purely a Committee Bill. I will content myself with moving the second reading and leaving the Bill to go through Committee.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

House adjourned at 8.41 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, 21st July, 1954.

| CONTENTS. | Page |
|--|------|
| Questions : Traffic, as to experiment with plastic white lines | 605 |
| Infant health centres, as to Claremont clinic | 605 |
| Housing, (a) as to reduction in rentals, Kellerberrin | 605 |
| (b) as to alternative arrangements for rent payments, Kellerberrin | 605 |
| Government Printing Works, as to new building, Subiaco | 605 |
| Swan River, as to tides at Mill-st. | 606 |
| Subiaco flats, as to purchase of adjoining homes | 606 |
| Railways, (a) as to closure of non-paying lines | 606 |
| (b) as to comparative rates and hours of steam and diesel loco. crews | 606 |
| (c) as to tabling papers | 607 |
| Education, (a) as to teachers' living-away-from-home allowances | 607 |
| (b) as to additional accommodation, Collie schools | 607 |
| Oil, crude, as to value of Exmouth and Persian products | 607 |
| Motions : Traffic Act, to disallow overwidth vehicles and loads regulation | 608 |
| North-West, as to Commonwealth financial assistance | 609 |
| Education Act, as to increasing living-away-from-home allowances | 617 |
| Bills : Companies Act Amendment, 1r. | 607 |
| Supreme Court Act Amendment, 1r. | 607 |
| Criminal Code Amendment, 1r. | 607 |
| Local Courts Act Amendment, 1r. | 608 |
| State Housing Act Amendment, 1r. | 608 |
| Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment, 1r. | 608 |
| Prices Control, 1r. | 608 |
| Stamp Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report | 620 |
| Police Act Amendment, 2r., Com. | 620 |
| Public Works Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report | 621 |
| Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report | 622 |
| Reprinting of Regulations, 2r. | 623 |
| Warehousemen's Liens Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report | 625 |

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

QUESTIONS.

TRAFFIC.

As to Experiment with Plastic White Lines.

Hon. D. BRAND asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Can he inform the House what is the result, to date, of the experiment of laying down plastic white lines in Stirling Highway during late 1952?

(2) If the experiment is successful, will he have similar "lines" laid on the Causeway—particularly the "double line"?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) "Constructalex" plastic intermittent white lining was applied to sections of Stirling Highway and the Great Eastern Highway during March, 1953.

When these experimental strips were laid they were expected to have a life of approximately three years.

It is considered too early at this stage to assess the value of plastic relative to painted lines.

(2) Answered by No. (1).

INFANT HEALTH CENTRES.

As to Claremont Clinic.

Hon. C. F. J. NORTH asked the Minister for Health:

(1) Is it a fact that the Claremont Infant Health Centre Inc. is on a different footing to the other centres in the State?

(2) In what way is this so?

(3) Does the difference mean that the Claremont centre is saving the Government money the expenditure of which would otherwise be incurred if it were run as are the other centres?

(4) Is he aware that the centre has nevertheless been refused assistance by means of the provision of Government petrol for the nurse's car?

(5) Is he also aware that the centre has to pay entertainments tax on square dances by reason of the fact that its expenses exceed 60 per cent. of the funds raised?

(6) In the circumstances will he urge the Premier to authorise the provision of free petrol for the nurse in the course of her duties, and exercise his discretion to waive entertainments tax on square dances?

The PREMIER (for the Minister for Health) replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The centre does not wish to join the departmental scheme under which all salaries of infant health nurses are paid by the department. It wishes to retain its autonomy and yet also receive that government assistance which is given to

centres that co-operate with the Public Health Department. The Government pays the centre an annual subsidy.

(3) Yes.

(4) Yes.

(5) No.

(6) Any assistance given would not be in the form of free petrol, which is not considered a desirable measure. The question of waiving entertainments tax on square dances is one for consideration by the Treasurer.

HOUSING.

(a) As to Reduction in Rentals, Kellerberrin.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware that rentals payable to the State Housing Commission for some houses in Kellerberrin are £3 7s. per week?

(2) In view of the reductions recently granted to tenants in the metropolitan area, will consideration be given to reducing rentals in the country areas?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes. This is a large five-roomed house.

(2) The adjustment in rentals applied only to imported homes, the costs of which were in excess of similar locally built houses.

(b) As to Alternative Arrangements for Rent Payments, Kellerberrin.

Mr. CORNELL asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware that tenants in Kellerberrin have to remit their rent payments by mail to the State Housing Commission?

(2) Is it not possible to arrange for the rents to be received by a local agent on behalf of the State Housing Commission?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) The road board was recently approached regarding collection of rents but has declined to act. Further inquiries are being made regarding a local collector.

GOVERNMENT PRINTING WORKS.

As to New Building, Subiaco.

Mr. HEAL asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Is it the Government's intention to continue with the building of the new Government printing works at Subiaco?

(2) If so, what is the proposed date the Government intends to resume building?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) This is uncertain because of the higher priority which must be given to other classes of Government buildings including schools and hospitals.

SWAN RIVER.

As to Tides at Mill-st.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN asked the Minister for Works:

What was the highest and lowest high and low tide at Mill-st., Perth, during the month of December for the years 1920, 1925, 1930, 1933, 1940, 1945 and 1950?

The MINISTER replied:

Complete records are available only from 1927.

| Year | High Tide | | Low Tide | |
|-----------|-----------|--------|----------|--------|
| | Highest | Lowest | Highest | Lowest |
| 1927 | 3.35 | 1.8 | 2.35 | 1.15 |
| 1930 | 3.25 | 1.7 | 2.05 | 0.85 |
| 1935 | 2.85 | 2.05 | 2.2 | 0.95 |
| 1940 | 2.8 | 1.8 | 2.2 | 1.0 |
| 1945 | 3.35 | 2.1 | 2.45 | 1.1 |
| 1950 | 3.8 | 1.6 | 2.7 | 0.65 |

SUBIACO FLATS.

As to Purchase of Adjoining Homes.

Hon. Dame FLORENCE CARDELL-OLIVER asked the Minister for Housing:

(1) Is he aware that an individual of apparent authority either under the State Housing Commission, the builder, architect, or some other persons concerned in the construction of the Subiaco flats, has approached tenants of all houses in the vicinity of the flats in Bagot and Coghlan-rds. asking them to sell their homes and offering attractive inducements?

(2) Is he aware that the explanation given is "that it is imperative to the building of the flats and amenities thereto that their properties be obtained so that sufficient garage space, etc., may be available"?

(3) Is he aware that if the properties are sold for the purpose concerned, the demolition of these good houses is wasting thousands of pounds?

(4) Will he name the buyer if he is aware of the same; or if it is the Government, from what department will the money come?

(5) Is he aware that alternative dwellings have been offered, either to be built where the sellers desire, or bought for them?

(6) Is he aware that until Monday, the 12th July, the Subiaco council was unaware of the proposal to displace these Subiaco residents?

(7) If the answer is in the negative, will he inform the House why the owners of these dwellings have been approached to sell without his knowledge?

(8) If no person authorised by any of the persons or institutions referred to in No. (1) has made any such inquiries or statements, will he take prompt steps to ascertain who has been doing so, and advise the House?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes, in Coghlan-rd. No, in Bagot-rd.

(2) No.

(3) No.

(4) State Housing Commission, from its funds.

(5) No.

(6) No.

(7) The approaches have been made with my knowledge.

(8) Answered by No. (7).

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Closure of Non-Paying Lines

Mr. HEARMAN asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) Will he tell the House which railway lines earning less than 50 per cent. of their operating costs he thinks should be closed?

(2) Has this matter of non-paying railway lines been the subject of any special consideration by the Railway Commission?

(3) If the answer to No. (2) is in the affirmative, will he inform the House of the results of the Railway Commission's deliberations and under what circumstances and conditions could members see the relevant files?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) There are a number of railway lines which, from the aspect of percentage of earnings to total operating expenses, should be closed, but before that could be done the question of future development of the area served and alternative means of transport would require full consideration.

(2) Yes, representations were made to this and the previous Government by the commission.

(3) The relevant papers can be laid on the Table of the House for members' information, if it is desired.

(b) As to Comparative Rates and Hours of Steam and Diesel Loco Crews.

Mr. COURT asked the Minister for Railways:

(1) What are the respective rates of remuneration of the crews of the new diesel locomotives as against the steam trains on the Perth-Kalgoorlie service?

(2) What are the respective hours worked by the crews of the steam locomotives and the new diesel locomotives operating the Perth-Kalgoorlie service?

(3) What overtime are the new diesel locomotive drivers receiving on the Perth-Kalgoorlie service?

(4) Is it correct that the drivers of the new diesel locomotives are credited and paid for the same hours as they would have taken (including overtime) had the Perth-Kalgoorlie run been operated by steam locos. although the full hours are not worked by the diesel locomotive drivers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) At present some goods services only are being worked between Perth and Kalgoorlie by diesel electric locomotives, and respective wage rates of engine crews are the same as for steam.

(2) The diesel electric and steam crews are rostered on the same tables for goods services, the actual time worked in each case depending on the volume of work to be performed en route on each run, and the arrangement of crossings, etc.

(3) The crews on diesel electric locomotives are not rostered for overtime. The only overtime incurred would be for late running due to abnormal circumstances encountered en route similar to steam working.

(4) No, but negotiations are proceeding with a view to basing remuneration of diesel electric locomotive crews on a system of mileage payments on similar lines as applying in other States where the locomotive is driven more than 140 miles in one shift on passenger trains only. This would apply when sufficient new locomotives are available to take over passenger services later this year.

(c) *As to Tabling Papers.*

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

Would he lay on the Table of the House the papers referred to in the question I have on the notice paper today?

The MINISTER replied:

Yes.

EDUCATION.

(a) *As to Teachers' Living-away-from-home Allowances.*

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

(1) What amount was expended in living-away-from-home allowances to teachers during each of the following financial years:—1950-51, 1951-52, 1952-53, 1953-54?

(2) Has an estimate been made of the cost of the allowances now provided for under regulation 47B, and if so, what is the estimated cost for the financial year 1954-55?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The amounts expended on teachers' boarding subsidies were as follows:—

| | £ |
|---------|--------|
| 1950-51 | 387 |
| 1951-52 | 7,219 |
| 1952-53 | 10,287 |
| 1953-54 | 9,133 |

(2) The estimated cost for 1954-55 is £3,000.

(b) *As to Additional Accommodation, Collie Schools.*

Mr. MAY asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has the Education Department any proposals in hand for additional accommodation at the Collie High and Collie Central Schools, to cope with the overcrowding which exists at the present time?

(2) If the answer to No. (1) is in the affirmative, will he state when a commencement of building operations may be expected?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) It is not intended to make further building additions on the grounds of the Collie High and Central Schools. Two further rooms will be erected at North Collie and any further accommodation required, will, in all probability, be provided by the erection of a new school at Cheetarra.

(2) The erection of the two classrooms at North Collie is due to commence in mid-August.

OIL, CRUDE.

As to Value of Exmouth and Persian Products.

Mr. NORTON asked the Minister for Mines:

(1) Will he advise the House the anticipated value per ton of crude oil of the quality which has so far been sampled from the No. 1 Bore at Exmouth?

(2) At what price per ton is the Persian Government selling its crudes to the various oil companies?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) So far, the economics in regard to the type of oil located have not been closely pursued, as the search for oil is still purely in the exploratory stage. An estimate, however, which may, of course, ultimately alter considerably, is that the crude oil could be valued in the order of 2 dollars 15 cents to 2 dollars 20 cents approximately per barrel (35 imperial gallons) on ship's side at Exmouth.

(2) We have no official knowledge of the Persian negotiations. Press statements have been to the effect that Persia would get over £2 sterling per ton of oil. A ton of oil would be equal to approximately seven barrels. There is nothing to show whether this relates to the actual value of the oil. In fact, it appears too low to do so, and may be more of a compensation payment.

BILLS (7)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Companies Act Amendment.
- 2, Supreme Court Act Amendment.
- 3, Criminal Code Amendment.

- 4, Local Courts Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Premier (for the Minister for Justice).
- 5, State Housing Act Amendment.
Introduced by the Minister for Housing.
- 6, Industrial Arbitration Act Amendment.
- 7, Prices Control.
Introduced by the Minister for Labour.

MOTION—TRAFFIC ACT.

To Disallow Overwidth Vehicles and Loads Regulation.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [4.38]:
I move—

That regulation 203F made under the Traffic Act, 1919-1953, published in the "Government Gazette" on the 23rd April, 1954, laid on the Table of the House on the 22nd June, 1954, be and the same is hereby disallowed.

I would say at the outset in moving this motion that it is possible that there are two points of view in relation to the disallowance of this regulation, and the one point of view that would possibly be against it would be that the proper course to pursue is to amend the Act. If when he undertakes to reply to my motion, the Minister assures us that he will amend the Act in certain directions which I will touch on in a few minutes, I will be quite agreeable not to press the motion before the House.

As the law stands at present, I have no hesitation in saying that the situation in regard to the moving of modern agricultural machinery, in particular along country road, is bordering on the ridiculous. Section 46A of the Traffic Act provides—

No vehicle having a greater overall width, including the load, than eight feet, shall be licensed, driven, used or towed on any road. For the purpose of this section "vehicle" includes any implement.

A person who drives a vehicle contrary to the provisions of this section commits an offence.

There is a provision in the Act that the Minister, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, may grant permits in specified circumstances, and under specified conditions, for the moving over a road of vehicles of a width greater than 8ft.; and I am prepared to believe that it was in an endeavour to extend some less cumbersome conditions to the moving of agricultural machinery over country roads that regulation 203F—which this motion seeks to disallow—was recently gazetted.

That regulation reads—

Where the Minister has, in writing, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, notified a local

authority outside the metropolitan area as to the special circumstances and conditions under which a person shall receive his permission to drive, use or tow, within the district of that local authority, a vehicle having, together with its load, if any, a greater overall width than eight feet, the local authority shall, on the application of the person, issue to him a permit to drive, use or tow the vehicle subject to those circumstances and conditions which shall be set out in the permit, and the permit shall constitute the permission of the Minister within the meaning of the proviso to Section 46A of the Act.

At first sight, it was thought by various local authorities that that regulation was gazetted earlier this year for the purpose of applying to country districts those conditions and restrictions that the Minister, on the recommendation of the Commissioner of Police, might apply elsewhere and to agricultural implements in particular, and exception was taken to it immediately, on that ground. But, on a close examination of the position, it became obvious that it was some attempt to lessen the difficulty that exists under the Act itself.

In these times, I doubt very much whether there is any modern agricultural implement that is as narrow as 10ft. But let us say that they are all as narrow as that—then they certainly exceed the figure mentioned in the Act by approximately 2ft. It is quite obvious that when the amendment was inserted in the Traffic Act to constitute the present wording of Section 46A, the probability of this state of affairs arising was lost sight of. I do not offer the slightest criticism in regard to the existing state of the Act. My only point is that we must do something to remedy what has become nearly a ridiculous situation.

It must be borne in mind that no farmer can move his machinery from one side of the road to the other without, under the present regulation, obtaining a permit from the local authority; and he certainly cannot move an agricultural implement, of the nature I have been referring to, down the road a few hundred yards without offending against the Act very considerably, unless he has that permit. Yet there are innumerable farms—in fact, I would say the majority of them—parts of which are situated on one side of the road and parts on the other; and a very great number of farms, parts of which are situated some distance down the road from the other parts. There is no possibility of communication between the two without going upon the road itself for the moving of a vehicle in the ordinary operations of the property.

Let us examine for a moment the position of a farmer at, shall we say, Needleup, which is approximately 50 miles from

Gnowangerup, the headquarters of the nearest local authority—and there are many such places in nearly every local authority's district in the rural areas, as every member who is acquainted with them will very well know. A farmer at the point I mentioned, having discovered seasonal conditions in one part of his property render it impracticable to work there any longer, must move to another place to carry on his operations; and he has to travel down the road to do it. His situation is that if he wants to comply with the existing law he has to communicate with the Gnowangerup Road Board 50 miles away and obtain the requisite permit.

The Minister for Police: I think you were responsible for the existing Act.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I said that whoever was responsible doubtless overlooked the possibility of the present circumstances arising. I offer no criticism on that score; I merely want to ventilate the matter. I recognise that the point was overlooked in previous attempts. The Minister must not misunderstand me this time. I am not criticising the hon. gentleman or the department he represents in this House.

The Minister for Police: I think you were responsible for the law.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: I would be entirely unwarranted and unjustified in doing so. I am inclined to the belief that this regulation was framed to make a ridiculous position a little better; but it still has not solved the problem. To comply with the law at all, the farmer I have mentioned has to go 50 miles to the local authority to obtain a permit. And when he has secured it, what good does it do him? He certainly saves himself from offending against Section 46A, but not in the slightest degree from any liability in the event of an accident occurring; he still has his ordinary responsibility in that regard. So far as he is concerned, he would be far better advised to dodge down the road for a couple of miles, on the quiet, say nothing about it, and hope for the best—which I venture to say a great many people do.

Personally, I am most anxious to avoid that state of affairs. I feel that an effort should be made to put the law in such a position that it would be in line with modern conditions. It should recognise that these things have to take place; and there should be reasonable provisions in the Act itself, so that in the net result everybody would know the law and would not be required to obtain permits for simple jobs of the kind I have mentioned, and would be absolved from responsibility unless actual negligence could be proved. I consider that that is a reasonable approach. The regulation does nothing to achieve anything of the kind. It simply seeks to perpetuate the existing state of affairs and to

make it really more compulsory on the person using such vehicles on country roads to obtain his permit than it was hitherto.

While I admit that if he did apply to the Minister in Perth, or to the Commissioner of Police, he would be in a worse position than applying at Gnowangerup, if he lived somewhere in that locality, nevertheless the whole procedure at the best would be extremely cumbersome. So it is my opinion that this regulation is no good. It is likely to serve no useful purpose and ought not to be here. I have asked the Minister to consider the law on the subject, generally, and to help me and the House to put it right with the advice of his experts and the Crown Law Department. I suggest that there is no objection to a farming implement being moved along the road at a slow speed during daylight hours. Some approach to the Minister along those lines might readily resolve the whole problem.

The Minister for Police: They are taken hundreds of miles by road now, under permit.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Admittedly, and I was just going to say that I do not think that provision would necessarily cover the removal of all vehicles; and that is one thing that is wrong with the Act and the regulation. The position is so general in terms that at present the same conditions can be imposed on a vehicle being travelled 100 miles or more as on a vehicle being travelled 500 yards or less. So it is quite obvious that the whole situation needs reformation. In that belief, and as a protest against the position arising under the regulation and the existing law, I have moved my motion.

On motion by the Minister for Police, debate adjourned.

MOTION—NORTH-WEST.

As to Commonwealth Financial Assistance.

MR. ACKLAND (Moore) [5.3]: Before moving the motion standing in my name on the notice paper, I would like your permission, Sir, and that of the House to make a slight alteration in the wording in order to give it the effect which it was meant to have. I ask permission to strike out the word "Parliament" and substitute the word "House" in the first line, and to add the following words at the end of the motion:—

This House also desires that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly and asks for its concurrence.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. The hon. member may proceed.

Mr. ACKLAND: Thank you, Sir. It is obvious that the intention behind the motion is that it should be passed with

the concurrence of both Houses, and I was of the opinion that by including the word "Parliament" that intention would automatically be achieved should the motion be passed by this House. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for granting me permission to alter my motion. I move—

That this House expresses its opinion that that portion of the State which lies north of the 26th parallel of latitude is incapable of being fully developed if wholly dependent upon such finance as is only obtainable from State resources.

It therefore requests—

- (a) that a programme for the development of this portion of the State be drawn up by a committee consisting of the Premier (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke, M.L.A.), the Leader of the Opposition (Hon. Sir Ross McLarty, K.B.E., M.L.A.) and the Leader of the Country Party (Hon. A. F. Watts, C.M.G., M.L.A.);
- (b) that this committee submit such programme at an interview with the Rt. Hon. the Prime Minister and the Federal Treasurer;
- (c) that a special Federal grant of £3,000,000 a year or an amount considered necessary for this work for a period of 10 years be requested in order to carry out this vital developmental work.

This House also desires that the Legislative Council be acquainted accordingly and asks for its concurrence.

In submitting this motion I assure members that I make no attempt to pose as an authority on the conditions and needs of the north and the north-west of Western Australia, but for several years I have been perturbed at the retrogression which has taken place in those parts of the State, and I have been prompted to move the motion because of what I have seen, heard and read during recent weeks. When one has only made a trip, such as I made to the North-West recently, one cannot but come to the realisation that the State Government, unaided, cannot possibly hope to undertake the tremendous amount of work involved and meet the cost of this national task. It is a task not only of development but of the rejuvenation of our pastoral industries in those parts.

So, the first portion of the motion sets out what I believe to be a self-evident fact, namely, that the members of this House are of the opinion that, unaided and without financial assistance from the Commonwealth Government it is beyond the capacity of any Western Australian Government to do the work that is necessary to be undertaken north of the 26th parallel

of latitude in this State. It is well to realise that in this huge State, which is practically one-third of the Commonwealth of Australia, we have an area of 975,920 square miles, and that at the 30th June of this year our total population was 619,942.

Of this population some 350,000 people were living in an area of 191 square miles—the metropolitan area. This means that approximately 270,000 people were spread over an area of 975,730 square miles, or the area outside of the metropolitan district. That this state of affairs has been allowed to exist, is I believe a reflection on all the Governments of Western Australia, because they have encouraged it. That is bad enough, but when we look at the conditions in the North, we can realise just what danger the State is in and why we should do something to rectify the position.

North of the 26th parallel there are 530,000 square miles of country representing more than 50 per cent. of our State, and approximately one-sixth of the whole Commonwealth. The three Legislative Assembly electoral rolls for the North which were for the last general elections during February, 1953, show that there was a total of 3,301 electors in the Kimberleys, Pilbara and Gascoyne electorates. No doubt there are more people in that area. Quite recently a North-West member in another place said that the population in the North was in the vicinity of 7,000.

We have tremendous wealth untouched in this part of Western Australia, and we all believe that oil has been found and will be taken from the earth in large quantities at Exmouth Gulf and other places in the North. Metals, which until recently have not been in great demand, are now needed by the manufacturers of the world, particularly those engaged in rearmament. In addition, greater interest is being taken in mining and prospecting in the North. We also have considerable wealth in the wool and meat produced there. It is quite impossible for such a small population—7,000 people living in the North and 619,000 people in the rest of the State—however good their intentions, to develop this country; and that is particularly so when we consider the resources available to the Government of Western Australia.

What I have stated is an axiom, namely, it is quite beyond our power, unless we have financial assistance from without, to undertake this great task. We must look at the possible alternatives. From time to time we hear of people who should be expected to speak with some authority and with a sense of responsibility, advocating that we should hand the north-western portion of the State over to the Commonwealth Government. In support of their argument they have stated that to develop and rejuvenate the North is, firstly, beyond the capacity of the State. No one can deny that statement in itself.

Secondly, they speak about the Commonwealth Government having already taken over the Northern Territory from South Australia. Before I sit down I shall have something to say on what has happened as a result of the Federal Government taking over the responsibility for that portion of the continent. Thirdly, it is said that all Commonwealth Governments have spent in the past and will spend in the future money with great abandon and will be in the position to find the necessary finance for the development of the North. They have also stated that the provision of defence measures could be more easily undertaken if this portion of the State were completely under the control of the Commonwealth Government.

It is because of such statements and because I believe them to represent a defeatist policy and a betrayal of the interests of the people of our own State, that I wanted to go a little further into the position to see for myself not only what was taking place in the north of our State, but also what was happening in the Northern Territory. So in company with some friends, I recently made a trip to the North and the Northern Territory. Some attempt has been made at ridiculing one who has had so little experience—or none at all—taking up a question of this sort.

But, Sir, I do not believe that it is necessary for one to live a lifetime in the North or to travel a thousand miles on foot there or to push a bike or ride a camel through the North to understand the situation. The position is so obvious that I have decided to push ahead with my motion. One has only to look at the statistics to learn the sad story of the North. There has been a decline in population; there has been a remarkable reduction in the sheep figures; and there has been the abandonment of tens of millions of acres of pastoral leases. The statistical position does not make happy reading at all, but I believe that there is a definite optimistic tone as a result of recent happenings. First of all, we have the discovery of oil in the North. Secondly, we have the increased interest in new metals and also those that have been in common use for a long time. Then there is the research work which has proved, to a great extent, the possibilities of tropical agriculture and the improvement of northern pastures.

Here I would like to suggest to members that if they have not already done so, they should read two articles that appear in the May-June issue of the Western Australian "Journal of Agriculture" which, although they present a very unhappy story of what has happened in this area in the past, also show that there is every reason to be optimistic if this task is tackled in the right way with sufficient funds. There is no doubt that it would call for huge expenditure, not only by private enterprise, but also by the Government itself.

Unaided, Western Australia cannot hope to take over the financial obligations that are necessary to carry on this development.

Earlier in my speech I mentioned that some of us made a trip to Darwin. At this stage I should like to express my appreciation to the Administrator, Mr. Frank Wise, for the great assistance he gave us by allowing us to see as much of the hinterland as we possibly could in the three or four days at our disposal. Mr. Wise is doing a grand job, but I think control from Canberra is sapping his enthusiasm, if it is not breaking his heart. However, the fact that wonders have been achieved in Darwin is most evident.

Whereas previously no one had security of tenure of more than 14 days, today people are getting a 99 years' lease. Instead of Darwin being a tumbled-down wreck of a place, we find that today there are approximately 100 houses being built and the merchants of the city are spending some £250,000 in the erection of business premises. Nevertheless, there are 8,000 people living in Darwin and they are not producing a thing for sale. It is a city of civil servants, salary and wage-earners—and nothing else. We found that there was not even a dairy to supply the needs of the Darwin people and an assurance was given to me that dairying could be undertaken in the vicinity.

Whilst there we were able to make inspections of experimental stations and at one of them, a place called Berrima, the authorities were experimenting with tropical agriculture, particularly pineapples and peanuts, but the fodder experiment appeared to me to be outstanding. At a place called Humpty-doo, there are reputed to be 2,000,000 acres of some of the richest rice land in the world. We were advised that as far back as 1873 the Chinese had sought permission from the South Australian Government to grow rice in this area to feed the starving people of China. Now, 81 years later, the Commonwealth is only just beginning to conduct experiments in that area. I was fortunate enough to see some of them. The land is extremely fertile and I am told that in the wet season, when the rice is flooded without any need of irrigation, the crop could possibly be grown cheaper there than in most rice-growing countries of the world.

I was told by Mr. Nixon-Smith, who is the principal of the Agriculture Department in the Federal Territory at Darwin, that it was quite a practical proposition to grow 1,000,000 tons of rice annually in this area and to fatten 1,000,000 bullocks for overseas markets. Some idea of the position is gained from inspecting the huge Vestey meatworks which are now in a state of ruin for various reasons, one being that there was insufficient stock to supply it. I understand that it is nearly 50 years since the Commonwealth Government took over the Northern Territory. Until the

last year or two no evidence of progress has been shown other than growing bodies of civil servants to administer that part of the State.

One had only to talk to such men as the Administrator himself and various departmental officers to realise the frustration they are suffering because of administration from as far away as Canberra, which was making their position practically impossible. As the north and north-west of Western Australia are further away from Canberra than that portion of Australia, anybody who is willing to hand over that section of the State would be acting against the best interests of the people in the North-West, against the best interests of the people of Western Australia and of the Commonwealth as a whole. So one should wipe out any thought of looking to the Commonwealth Government to take over this area and to administer it from Canberra. The troubles at Darwin cannot be other than an object lesson to us in this State, and should point out to us the things we must try to avoid in the development of the north and north-west of Western Australia. It is our responsibility to look after those parts of the State.

I would now like to turn to the second portion of my motion which calls for the appointment of a committee of three to approach the Commonwealth Government on behalf of this State for finance to carry out the development work that is needed. I know the McLarty-Watts Government did approach the Commonwealth Government for assistance at Kwinana. I know that it received a little, which was totally inadequate. I also know the present Premier approached the Commonwealth Government and received very meagre assistance. I happen to know the Leader of the Country Party, the member for Stirling, would have been quite prepared to join a delegation to approach Mr. Menzies with the object of obtaining financial assistance for this State.

The need for huge expenditure at Kwinana has had its repercussions throughout the State. I know that in my electorate urgent work has had to be curtailed because of our commitments at Kwinana, and every other member knows the same applies to his electorate. I consider that we should at least have been able to obtain financial assistance from the Commonwealth for the dredging of the two channels through the Success and Parmelia sand-banks in order to allow ships to have sufficient water to gain harbourage in Cockburn Sound. Therefore, in the second paragraph the motion sets out the desire of this Parliament that the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party should press the claims of this State on behalf of both Houses of the Parliament of Western Australia and on behalf of all the people in this State for assistance in this matter.

The needs of the West are tremendous. The North is languishing and going back because of lack of finance. During the progress of the Royal Commission that is being held in the Eastern States at present, some newspapers have made reference to the defencelessness of Western Australia. We admit that our defence position at the moment is very unhealthy and I believe the request for financial assistance will not be creating a precedent in any shape or form. We have heard that the Snowy River project has already cost the Commonwealth Government from £35,000,000 to £40,000,000 and also that it will cost £422,000,000 when completed.

I do not question the wisdom of that work because I am in no position to do so. I believe it is work of national importance, but I do not think it is of any greater national importance than the development of the northern part of Western Australia. We know the Snowy River project will assist New South Wales and Victoria considerably and, to a lesser extent, South Australia. I should like to read portion of an article which appeared in an issue of "The West Australian" dated the 2nd March, 1954, which reads as follows:—

SNOWY COST WILL BE £422,000,000.

Canberra, Monday.—The Snowy Mountains hydro-electric scheme is now estimated to cost £422,000,000 compared with the original estimate of £225,000,000 made in 1948.

The Minister for National Development (Senator Spooner) announced this today.

He said that the Snowy Mountains Authority had made this estimate after examining tenders from Australian, North American and European contractors for major works on the Upper Tumut River.

An earlier estimate made by the authority, in 1952, put the total cost of the scheme, including transmission, at £442,500,000.

The difference between this and the original estimate of £225,000,000 was accounted for by higher prices and by a substantial increase in the guaranteed capacity of the scheme.

The new estimate was the authority's answer to critics who had claimed that the scheme would cost £600,000,000 or £700,000,000 or even more.

The authority had not entered into the price controversy previously, said Senator Spooner, because it knew that the tender prices for the Upper Tumut works would provide a reliable basis for reviewing the 1952 estimates.

Of the estimated cost of £422,000,000, £374,000,000 represented the cost of power generation and collection within the area and the balance the cost of transmission to Sydney and Melbourne.

The works involved in the tenders would provide New South Wales with an additional 80,000 kilowatts generating capacity by 1958, and 320,000 kilowatts by the end of 1959.

In addition, they would supply an additional 300,000 acre-feet of irrigation water in the Murrumbidgee Valley by 1959, increasing during the two following years to 500,000 acre-feet.

I have no right or wish to criticise the expenditure of that money. I have not the slightest doubt that it is being spent on a project of national importance, but it is money which has been spent from revenue by the Federal Government to finance projects for the people of New South Wales, Victoria and, to a limited degree, South Australia. Then we have the case of the Federal Government assisting the Tasmanian Government in the aluminium industry. I understand that in the first place the expenditure was estimated at £3,000,000, of which each Government was to pay £1,500,000.

Later we were told that the estimated cost had risen to £9,500,000 of which the Tasmanian Government will pay £1,500,000, and the Federal Government, from revenue, will find the balance of £8,000,000. I do not question the need for that expenditure from Federal revenue. I have no doubt that it can be fully justified, that it is being spent on a project of national importance, and that the undertaking should be carried out. Once again I think that the need for the expenditure of money to rejuvenate and develop the north of this State is just as great as the urgency of the undertaking I have mentioned.

Only yesterday I read where there was every probability of the Federal Government assisting the Queensland Government in the fishing industry off the Barrier Reef. No doubt that project is of national importance. Then there is the instance of the Commonwealth Government assisting the Joint Coal Board to the tune of £11,000,000 from Federal revenue. I do not know what the actual cost is. It was a huge amount at one time, but there has been a recoup. The Joint Coal Board was undoubtedly necessary and so was the expenditure when this sum was budgeted for. I believe that the development of the North-West is just as much a national responsibility as the development which has been undertaken in the places I mentioned.

Oil has been discovered at Exmouth Gulf. There will be a call on Government funds for a great amount of money to provide the necessary facilities in that part of the State. The development of the oil field is of extreme national importance, so this resolution sets out that a committee consisting of the Premier, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Country Party should form a delegation from this House to put the case before the Federal Government.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Do you not think that one of the local members would greatly assist that committee, someone who knows something about that part of the State?

Mr. ACKLAND: This is my idea of how the committee should be made up. That committee of three could co-opt, if it wanted any assistance, any person whether he be a member of this House, or head of a department. The committee would be quite capable of dealing with such matters when they arose. So I turn to the last paragraph of the resolution which sets out that we should approach the Federal Government for £3,000,000 yearly for a period of 10 years to carry out the developmental work which is necessary in the North. The resolution also makes provision that an application should be made for a sufficiency of money to meet requirements for this development.

I had to set out a figure. I have no more reason for suggesting it be £3,000,000, £4,000,000, £5,000,000 or any other figure, but the resolution does contain all the provisions that are necessary, and the committee, aided by its advisers, could make any alteration it considered fit to meet the case. So I turn to matters that I believe are of first importance, and transport is one of them. It has been brought home to me most conclusively that a shipping service is of as much importance, and possibly more, to the north-west of Australia, as the railway system is to the South-West Land Division and the other parts of the State.

The Premier: Much more important.

Mr. ACKLAND: I suggest it may be of more importance. The shipping service, as we saw it in operation, is serving a definite need. I have only travelled on two State ships, the last time being on the "Kabbarli". It seems to me that there is need for more ships of this type, and that the "Kabbarli" class is most suitable for this work.

The Minister for Education: Would you suggest that the State extend the shipping service?

Mr. ACKLAND: I have not suggested anything of the sort. In fact, I am speaking rather in favour of it. If the Minister had been listening he would have been aware that I was speaking in favour of the State Shipping Service which I consider is of more importance than the railways are to the southern parts of the State.

The Premier: The Minister was agreeing with you.

The Minister for Education: I saw the Leader of the Opposition blush when you said that you had travelled on the "socialist" shipping service of the State.

Mr. ACKLAND: From what one saw at Darwin, one would wonder if there were any justification for State ships calling

there, provided sufficient freight and work were offering to the State ships in Western Australia itself. The "Kabbarli" is a happy ship. It is a ship in which all members of the crew seem to take a personal pride. When the crew were handling the cargo, they did a much better job than that carried out when cargo was handled by union labour in Darwin.

Mr. Rhatigan: How about the good work the union did for you in the North-West?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am saying that the people who worked in the north-western ports did a far better job than that carried out by the unionists at Darwin. So I believe it is necessary to retain the State Shipping Service because it is of as much importance to the North-West as is the railway system to the lower part of the State. It appears that there is need for increased tonnage to be provided for the North.

From transport by ship, one must turn to transport by road. It seems to me that provision must be made for better roads—if possible, all-weather roads—in the northern parts of the State. It is a job far beyond the capacity of the State Government. It is a task which I believe should be assisted by the Federal Government in providing facilities for the North-West. I believe this to be of national importance. The facilities at nearly every port leave a tremendous lot to be desired. Jetties in most instances look as if they have been repaired from time to time. Some look as if they have outlived their usefulness.

Except in places like Port Hedland, which is capable of taking only low draught ships, the lighting in and out of harbours seemed most inadequate. At places like Broome the lighting was so poor that the navigation officer had to run here and there to get his bearings into the port. In my younger days, I used to drive a team of horses. I think that my sight sticks to mark out the land, were as good as some of the beacons erected to assist shipping in and out of the harbour. At one stage it was necessary to line the hotel up with the end of the jetty to get a bearing line to follow the channel into the port.

The Premier: That must have been difficult on occasions.

Mr. ACKLAND: That is what actually happened. I was told, and I believe it to be correct, that 800 miles of the coast line of Western Australia has no lights. It seems to me that the provision of transport in the form of shipping facilities, ships and all-weather roads to serve that huge country is something which the present State Government cannot adequately provide. I considered those were the main requirements for which provision should be made when requesting the Federal

Government to make available a sum of money, to be utilised over a number of years.

I am of the opinion that if sufficient money were made available over a lengthy period, this country would be able to encourage contract firms from overseas to undertake the work without in any way interfering with our already limited labour supply. If the job were big enough, such contractors could be found in parts of Europe or possibly in the United States of America. The Main Roads Department already has a full-time job on its hands, and if a million pounds a year were provided for roads in the North and there were some security of continuity of work, it could be done by contract more cheaply and with greater satisfaction to the State.

Hon. D. Brand: Does not that apply to all public works?

Mr. ACKLAND: Yes, but I am speaking of the North, and I think it would apply particularly to that part of the State.

The Premier: What do you think of the oil company's wanting the Main Roads Department to do its job?

Mr. ACKLAND: Because the departmental men are on the spot and it would possibly take months to get contractors to undertake works of such magnitude as I hope will be put in hand in the North. There is already an insufficiency of labour in this State to do the work that is urgently needed. The work in the North would be extra, and we should endeavour to get some overseas companies to come here, offering as an inducement work that would be extended over a number of years.

The Premier: I question it from the point of view of cost as between the Main Roads Department and private contractors.

Mr. ACKLAND: I am not in as good a position as is the Premier to know the difference between those costs, but I say with all respect to the Commissioner of Main Roads that some of the works being done in various parts of the State must have cost thousands of pounds more than there was any justification for. There is a job in my electorate that was started before the present Premier took office; that is one I have in mind.

Now I pass on from the need for transport, whether it be by sea or road, to say something about the pastoral industry. I have never lived on a station in the North, but I claim to know a little about sheep, and I have been reading what Mr. Nunn, the officer in charge of the agricultural work in the North, is attempting to do. Although this part of the State has slipped back considerably, although there are less than half the number of sheep in the North as compared with 20 years ago, I am of opinion that research can be undertaken to rectify the position. Twenty

years ago there were 6,000,000 sheep in the North, whereas today there are only 3,000,000 in our best pastoral country. This is due to a variety of causes, but when we consider that in my electorate we have the equivalent of nearly 50 per cent. of all the sheep in the North, it is something to be deplored, because from that part of the State comes our best wool. Therefore it seems that there is need for Mr. Nunn and his officers to do a great deal of research in those areas.

I do not intend to join with those people who abuse the squatters in the North. Possibly in some instances they have overstocked their runs and not made sufficient improvements, but had it not been for the pioneers who went up there with their sheep and cattle years ago, the North would have been in a very much worse position today.

Mr. Rhatigan: We complain, not of the pioneers but of the absentees.

Mr. ACKLAND: When we realise that there is a larger area of abandoned pastoral leases in the northern part of Western Australia—

Mr. Rhatigan: Where?

Mr. ACKLAND: I am giving the statistician's figures. When we realise that there is a larger area of abandoned pastoral leases in the North than there are agricultural holdings in the southern districts, it is something that obviously must be rectified. The member for Kimberley seems to be very antagonistic to my taking action in this matter.

Mr. Brady: He has not shown it.

Mr. ACKLAND: He showed it the other night. I wish the hon. member to realise that I am out to help him. If he would come into my electorate and help me to get some of the things that I need, he would be received with open arms. The references to experts were quite unwarranted. I am a Western Australian before being the member for Moore.

Mr. Rhatigan: What do you know about the North?

Mr. ACKLAND: The only portion of the North I saw was that which was visible from the ship; and during the period when the vessel was in port, we travelled inland as far as the cars could take us in the time available.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: What about the inspection made by candle-light?

Mr. ACKLAND: It is quite true that three of us went along and inspected the Carnarvon research station by the light of a pressure lamp and were so impressed with what we saw that on the return trip we paid a visit in daylight. There is no reason why members representing the North should feel jittery. The North has been languishing for years. It has lost much of its population and half of its

sheep, and it is time we set to work and helped the people of the North to obtain money from the Federal Government for its development—money to which we are just as much entitled as are the people of the Eastern States who are going to use the Snowy River scheme; the people interested in the production of more coal; in the establishment of aluminium works in Tasmania and in the fishing industry in Queensland.

So far a reasonable amount of money has not been made available to us by the Commonwealth. Men like the member for Kimberley, instead of criticising the motion, should stand behind me and ensure a unanimous decision to send an all-party delegation to Canberra to represent our views. I also desire the support of members of another place, thus representing all the people in the State in our request for the assistance we need.

I have already referred to the illuminating article in the May-June issue of the "Journal of Agriculture," and even those who live in the metropolitan area, if they are interested in the welfare of the State, should read it to learn what Mr. Nunn and his officers are trying to do in the North. Some experiments have been made to grow crops on small irrigated areas. Some of them are below the 26th parallel and others are along the Fitzroy River. Men like Mr. Kim Rose are doing a fine job in experimenting with pastures and Mr. Kim Durack is experimenting with other forms of tropical agriculture. They are doing a great job.

Although we did not get an opportunity to inspect the sites where the engineers have suggested that dams should be constructed—one on the Margaret River which I understand would contain four times as much water as is held in the Canning Dam, and two on the Fitzroy River which, while used for irrigation, could also control the flood-waters on those two rivers—such works would be of national importance. I have been told that to construct a dam on the Margaret River would cost from £200,000 to £250,000, but I have forgotten for the moment just what area could be brought under irrigation. However, it is an immense area, and if we were prepared to undertake tropical agriculture there, or make provision for fodder conservation, there would be a great deal more security for the North than there is at present. I should like to inform the member for Kimberley that I had an opportunity of going out and spending several hours on the research station at Wyndham where I met a body of very enthusiastic and energetic men. There we found co-operation between officers of the C.S.I.R.O. and the Department of Agriculture, and they are doing a great job.

I have been told that the cost of constructing a dam on the Ord River would be very much greater than for one on the

Fitzroy River; it would run into millions of pounds. We were also told that less than 200,000 acres had been surveyed as being suitable for irrigation, but on no account did the officials suggest that that represented the whole of the land available for irrigation. We were shown crops of sugarcane better than any that has been grown in Queensland. There is no limit to the quantity of sugar that Australia could produce. Under the international agreement of the sugar-producing countries, Australia in the last two years has produced in Queensland more than its quota. We were told that unless there was an annual production from 30,000 acres of sugar a year, the erection of a sugar mill would not be justified.

While we are party to an international agreement of this nature, and so long as there appears to be over-production of sugar, the Government should tread somewhat warily in that direction. At Humpty-Doo, in Darwin, at the Ord River Station, near Wyndham, and on the Fitzroy River further south there are encouraging experiments—more than experiments in one case—in the growing of rice. The country that holds the rice must command a great deal of respect, particularly from South-East Asia. Only today we heard that the communists are to have control of the rice bowl in South-East Asia. Those who can fill the stomachs of the people must command a great deal of respect.

At Darwin, they are planting rice in the "dry," letting it be irrigated in the "wet" and harvesting it in the "dry." In that area, rice can be grown under conditions as favourable as those that exist anywhere in the world. I am told that it is not necessary for the people who grow rice in the district, to go to the expense of irrigation. While there, we wandered through the paddy-fields, with our boots and sox off and our trousers rolled up, to see what was going on. I have made the statement that I had thought that some of the land around Winnipeg was the richest I had seen in my life—of course, without analysis one cannot tell—but after having seen the land around Darwin—a huge plain of approximately 2,000,000 acres—I changed my opinion. At times, I have criticised Government-owned activities.

The Premier: I have no recollection of it!

Mr. ACKLAND: But a visit to the Wyndham Meat Works made me realise that, of the six or seven meat works I have seen in other parts of Australia, not one compared favourably with the Wyndham Meat Works. However, there is need for some fodder conservation and fattening paddocks that can be used in dry years, so that the stock can be properly fed. Some sort of pasture should be provided because most of the cattle we saw seemed to be about store condition, while on the hooks there was a line of cattle which would

more than favourably compare with anything that could be grown in the south-western part of the State. If some provision could be made for feeding the stock during the dry years, there would be a big improvement in the condition of cattle going through, and it would appear that an irrigation scheme along the Ord River is more than justified.

I am somewhat surprised that my motion has been criticised by at least one member who comes from the North-West. The job of doing something for the North needs to be tackled immediately; otherwise, we may regret it. It is now 81 years since the Chinese asked the South Australian Government for permission to use 2,000,000 acres of what I was told was some of the best rice land in the world. Until the last two or three years, nothing had been done with that land except to use it for grazing a few cattle during the dry period of the year. We have a huge area in Western Australia, comprising 530,000 square miles, and yet in the northern section only 6,000 or 7,000 people are living. To our north, we have millions of underfed, undernourished and underclothed people who will not carry on for long under those conditions. Today there are fewer people and stock in the North than there were 20 years ago. We must tackle this job; we must not leave it for the people in any other State or the Commonwealth itself.

It is our responsibility, and I think members for the North will find that some of those who do not know very much about that area—and some of those who may be described as porthole experts—will be only too glad to help in what is a national responsibility. I do not know whether the sum of money required would be £30,000,000 or £60,000,000. The job is ours, and I know that we have not sufficient funds, from our own resources, to undertake such a task. If the Snowy River project—which is being proceeded with mostly for the benefit of New South Wales and Victoria—justifies an expenditure of £420,000,000; and if the aluminium industry in Tasmania justifies an expenditure of £8,000,000 by the Federal Government and £1,500,000 by the Government of Tasmania; and the fishing industry, the Joint Coal Board and all those other projects which receive assistance from the Commonwealth Government can justify their expenditure, I say that Western Australia, with its problem of the empty North and North-West, its sparse population and its tremendous resources—pastoral, tropical agriculture, and its known and unknown mineral wealth—is also entitled to her share.

Mr. Manning: Where will you get the people to populate that area?

Mr. ACKLAND: The first job is for this Government to approach the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance to do the necessary work. I would encourage people of European origin to

come here to carry out this work; but I would not for one minute suggest that we should bring people from Asia, or any other coloured people, to do it for us. If we do not do something quickly, those people will come here whether we like it or not, and we might find ourselves in much the same position as that in which the soldiers of the second World War found themselves when working on the Burma railway and similar projects.

In moving this motion, I do not intend to assume the responsibility of members from the North. I want to assist them to do a job which has now become urgent and cannot be undertaken with the finances available to the Government of Western Australia. I do not want members to approach this problem in a critical frame of mind. If anyone came to Moora to help me with projects in that district, I would be only too glad of their assistance, particularly if it was a matter of national importance. I want members to treat this motion in the same way. We have every right to expect, and the Commonwealth Government has every obligation, to find money for this work in much the same way as it has found money for the other projects I mentioned.

Mr. O'Brien: Hear, hear!

Mr. ACKLAND: I hope members will agree to this motion, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to alter it in such a way that it can be presented to another place for its approval. If it is agreed to in both Houses, the members of the committee will know that they have the support of all members of the Western Australian Parliament.

On motion by the Premier, debate adjourned.

MOTION—EDUCATION ACT.

As to Increasing Living-away-from-home Allowances.

HON. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [6.13]: I move—

That this House is of the opinion that the living-away-from-home allowances provided for in regulation 47B under the Education Act, 1928-1952, are inadequate and requests the Government to give early consideration to increasing such allowances to a satisfactory figure.

This motion concerns the living-away-from-home, or board, allowances that are now payable to teachers residing outside the metropolitan area and who are unable to find satisfactory board at a reasonable figure. I hope that it will receive considerable support from members of this House, and it has been moved with the object of having the Government reconsider its recent decision, because that has made a considerable change in the position. Unless that is done, I am satisfied that the

difficulties already facing a number of country centres, as regards the obtaining of sufficient and efficient teachers for children in those districts, will be increased.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Hon. A. F. WATTS: Before the tea suspension I was referring to the fact that if we wanted sufficient teachers in the country districts and elsewhere the existing state of affairs under Regulation 47B was not likely to lead to any betterment in that position. I would say now that in 1950 it was quite apparent that the difficulty of obtaining board and lodging in country districts was increasing, and the cost of that board and lodging was becoming higher. In past times it was usually practicable, at least in the majority of cases, for teachers to get private board and lodging. That frequently was obtained at farm houses, and sometimes at private houses in the country towns.

But partly because of the consolidation of schools in the large centres, partly because of the changed circumstances of many farmers, and partly because in most country towns ordinary boarding houses had virtually gone out of existence, teachers were becoming more and more compelled to live in hotels. On account of the increased cost of wages and commodities, the charge for board and lodging in hotels had risen very considerably and it was impossible to obtain accommodation at what could be regarded as a reasonable figure.

Therefore at that time, after consultation with the director and other officers of the department concerned, it was decided that, for a period of 12 months anyway, the department would pay all the board and lodging that the teacher was required to pay over £2 15s. a week provided that the department was satisfied—which would be done by inquiry through the district superintendent—that board and lodging was not available at that figure. That situation, when it came into being, was very well received not only by the country teachers themselves but also by the residents of the country towns and parents of the pupils concerned.

The price of board and lodging continued to rise. I remember on one occasion we found it was impossible to obtain it in a given centre under something in the vicinity of £10 a week. In consequence, the department was under obligation for a short time, until better arrangements could be made, to pay something in the vicinity of £7 a week to that teacher. Even when better arrangements were made, the charge was still £7 7s. a week, which involved the department in the payment of about £4 12s. a week. There has been little or no improvement in the cost of board and lodging up to the present time, and I venture to say now that it is impossible, except in very

rare cases, to obtain board and lodging at £5 a week. The majority of cases would be nearer £7 or £8, and that in the face of present-day conditions and costs cannot be regarded as excessive.

As a matter of fact, I am well aware of a number of places where the prices commissioner himself approved, during the period of price control, of figures as high or higher than that. So it came as a surprise to me to read regulation 47B when it was laid upon the Table of the House. In order to verify my memory of the position, I asked the Minister for Education a couple of questions, one of which was, "Was the original decision made by regulation?" and the answer was "No, it was done by ministerial direction."

The other question related to the particulars of the conditions apart from what was in the regulation so that I might verify my understanding of the conditions that would apply under regulation 47B. The hon. gentleman said—

From the 1st July, 1954, the regulation would apply. Under the previous scheme, the department paid board in excess of £2 15s. per week for teachers whose salaries were less than £800 per annum. This subsidy was payable for 12 months in any one locality.

When one deducted from £800 per annum the amount that was payable in taxation, and when one had also deducted the considerable amounts to which I have referred that would, in the absence of departmental assistance, be payable for board and lodging, it is quite obvious that the remuneration of many teachers, probably all of them, particularly in their early period as teachers, receiving less than £800 per year, would not be a great encouragement for them to go to or remain in a country centre.

As I have already tried to explain, that was the underlying reason why protection was given, I think, in 1950. But the new regulation provides for single teachers—and it is only to those that I wish to refer—excess board over £5 a week, up to a maximum of £1 a week subsidy for those teachers outside a radius of 30 miles from the Town Hall, with provision for the Minister to approve special cases within this limit but outside the metropolitan area. The subsidy is payable for a maximum period of two years with a maximum of one year in any one locality, and teachers with salaries of less than £900 per annum may qualify.

I suggest that the terms of that regulation are somewhat extraordinary. To begin with, the Minister has been prepared to extend some assistance, inadequate though it may be, to persons earning a greater sum than those who were originally assisted, to wit, those who earn up to a maximum of £900 a year against £800 a

year. With that I do not quarrel. At the same time the Minister has done two other things. Firstly, he has raised the figure below which no assistance whatever will be granted to £5 a week, and then instead of paying the difference between that figure and whatever the teacher might actually pay, has limited that to £1 a week. So that a teacher who has to pay £7 7s. a week will not pay only £5 a week but £6 7s. a week. I could have appreciated and perhaps passed over some increase from £2 15s. as the maximum figure the teacher might be expected to pay, had it not been for the fact that the subsidy is to be limited to £1 a week.

Accordingly as I have said, instead of the teacher receiving the difference between the stipulated figure and the actual amount payable, he or she will only receive a maximum of £1 a week. So, if the charge for board and lodging happens to cost more in one case than in another, the situation of the teacher paying the greater amount will be worse than that of his colleague paying the lower, although under the previous system both of them were put by the department in precisely the same position; because the situation was that the department paid for the stipulated time within the stipulated area all over the amount fixed by the department as a reasonable figure.

Although I am prepared to allow some variation from £2 15s., I feel that the amount of £5 which, without any subsidy at all, the teacher is supposed to pay by himself or herself is too high. We have sufficient difficulties already on our hands to maintain teaching staffs in the rural areas without saying to the teacher willy nilly, "You have to pay £5 a week board unless, of course, you can persuade someone to give it to you for less." This, obviously, would be a very rare occurrence on account of the difficulty in obtaining accommodation which I have already mentioned.

Naturally there will be an inclination to seek by every means in their power the opportunity to go to, and remain at, places that are in close proximity to their homes where they can enter into personal arrangements at much less expense. It seems to me, therefore, that the whole of this matter requires reconsideration. On second thoughts, I did not feel disposed to seek to disallow the regulation. There having been no regulation before, it was obvious to me that the repeal of the existing regulation could not of itself revive the preceding state of affairs; and if the regulation were disallowed, there would be a hiatus at the same time as there would be no ruling or direction in operation at all; and I consider that it would be much more desirable for the House to approach this matter on a purely discussion

basis, and ask the Minister to review the situation with the object of arriving at a more satisfactory figure.

We all know that there are already various unavoidable difficulties in regard to supplying to children in the rural districts the standard of education that we would like them to have, a standard that should compare completely with the standard and facilities therefor that are available in the greater centres of population such as the metropolitan area. Those difficulties are quite apparent and are in many cases unavoidable. They amount to considerable difficulties of transportation; to the inability to amass at one place at one time sufficient children to warrant the expenditure and staffing required to give higher types of education; and the difficulties associated with the absence of many opportunities for such things as swimming classes, cultural efforts, and so forth that are available in the big centres of population.

These advantages we have to do without because we know that, apart from exceptional circumstances, they cannot be immediately provided. From time to time steps are taken in some measure, here and there, as opportunity offers, to improve the opportunities and facilities available for these young people. But there is one thing we can try to do. There is one opportunity we can surely make a reasonable effort to afford, and that is the opportunity of having good teaching staffs in our schools.

I have already said and I completely believe—my belief being based not only on personal opportunities for examination of the position, but also on six years' experience in the Department of Education—that placing greater difficulties and increased costs and so forth on the country teacher is going to severely limit—unless under strict departmental discipline, which would not have a very satisfactory effect either—the type of teacher available to country schools. Therefore, anything we can do to minimise the objections to going to the country and staying there, we should certainly do. Everybody knows that in these days one looks very carefully at the expenditure one is called upon to make as compared with the amenities—or absence of them—amongst which one has to live. When we realise that people are living very largely with an absence of amenities that could be obtained in the metropolitan area and in centres of some size, and at the same time are being penalised by what it costs to live in such conditions, I submit there should be a reorientation of our ideas on this regulation.

When I asked the Minister what the cost had been to the department, I asked for the figures for 1950-51, first of all. That apparently was not a full year. My memory would not quite carry me as to when the ministerial direction was given,

although I thought it was in 1950. So I will take the figure for 1951-52, which I understand was the first full year in which this allowance was paid—that is, the payment of all over £2 15s. to teachers whose salaries were less than £800 per annum—and, according to the answer to my question, I find that for 1951-52 the expenditure was £7,219. In 1952-53 the amount had increased to £10,287, an increase of £3,000. But in 1953-54 there had been a decrease to £9,133, or a decrease of over £1,000. So it was not continuing to rise, which might have given some greater justification for the alteration which has been made.

Then I asked, as it was at the end of the 1953-54 financial year that the previous system came to an end and was superseded by regulation 47B, what was the estimated cost for 1954-55; and the answer was, £3,000. I would suggest from considerable experience that the actual expenditure is not likely to be less than the estimate. So we will take the estimate of £3,000 as being a reasonable figure; and that will be £6,000 less than for 1953-54. A saving of £6,000 to do a disservice such as I believe this regulation if continued in force will do to the children of the rural districts, for the reasons I have given, would, I believe, be most unwise—not only unwise, but something which neither the teachers concerned nor the children they teach deserve.

I make a very strong plea to the House to support this motion. As I have said, I have not moved—and I do not propose to move—to disallow the regulation. I have given reasons for that course. I am moving that this House is of the opinion that the living-away-from-home allowances provided for in regulation 47B under the Education Act, 1928-1952, are inadequate and requests the Government to give early consideration to increasing such allowances to a satisfactory figure. I believe that if the decision were to pay all that a teacher is compelled to pay over the maximum of £4 per week—or perhaps £3 15s. at the present time—it would be a reasonable measure of justice. As to the present system of taking no cognisance of the difficulty at all until the price reaches £5, and then limiting the maximum to £1 per week, I think that is not only somewhat unfair, but likely to be detrimental to the interests of our young people.

Without any partisanship in this matter—that is one reason why I did not move to disallow the regulation—I ask the support of this House to induce, if that is practicable, the Minister and the Government to review their decision in this case so as to do something of a more beneficial nature.

On motion by the Minister for Education, debate adjourned.

BILL—STAMP ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. SIR ROSS McLARTY (Murray) [7.55]: I support the Bill. As explained by the Premier, the Act seems to impose an unjust charge upon young legal practitioners. I do not know how it came about that this £10 duty was charged to those entering the legal profession in the first place, but I understand it has been the practice for very many years. The Premier pointed out that no other profession is asked to pay stamp duty, which in this instance, amounts to £10. I cannot see any reason why a young legal practitioner at the start of his career should be compelled to pay this sum, and I can only say that I am glad the Bill has been brought down with a view to abolishing that payment.

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—POLICE ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [7.59]: I think this Bill should have the support of the House. In my view the Minister made out a good case for penalties for vandalism to be increased. He has stated that the penalties have been made fairly high, but they have to be high if they are to be an effective deterrent. It is then left to the discretion of the magistrate to vary the penalty from a small amount of, say, 1s., to imprisonment, according to whether the case requires a severe penalty or whether it is a first offence, and so on.

Mr. Lapham: Who has to pay the penalty?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: The person who is guilty.

Mr. Lapham: Or the father.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No, the guilty person has to pay. I would have wished that the Minister, when he was dealing with this offence had enlarged the scope of the definition of "vandalism" because there is a type of vandalism that is becoming very ordinary and is causing serious trouble at our beaches, and that is the leaving and breaking of bottles on beaches. Sooner or later this form of vandalism will have to be dealt with.

Every year a number of adults and children suffer severe injuries as a result of being cut by broken bottles that are hidden in the water or sand on the beach. This

vandalism is usually done very innocently because a number of parties contribute to it. First of all, parents bring bottles to the beach for their kiddies or themselves, and then the bottles are left on the beach and someone else's child throws stones at them or breaks them on a rock. This is a very normal thing to happen. Then some other child comes along and gets badly cut.

The Minister for Police: The leaving of bottles is dealt with under the Licensing Act.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes, but only beer bottles and so on and not soft drink bottles. I think that type of vandalism will have to be dealt with. It has given the Rottnest Board of Control a good deal of worry because a lot of glass is gathering in the beaches around the island. The board has done everything in its power to minimise this trouble. It is constantly clearing all the glass out and taking bottles away from positions where they can cause damage.

This, however, has nothing to do with the Bill, but as the measure deals with vandalism I thought I would mention this aspect to the Minister so that if he deals with the question again he can give consideration to what I have said. The sections in the Act are very old as the Police Act was originally passed in 1892 and in all probability the sections were taken from Acts that were already in existence then. I notice that by Section 58 anyone who has caused damage can be ordered to effect repairs at a cost of up to an amount of £50. It is therefore assumed that if the damage is beyond £50, action would have to be taken in another way.

Like the penalties, I submit that amount is out of date. As far as I am aware it was in the section when it was passed originally; and, of course, since 1892 the value of money has seriously diminished. Whereas the penalty in those days was considered sufficiently high at £5, the Minister is now fixing it at £50. I would suggest that the Minister also give consideration to arranging for an amendment to be moved in this connection in another place.

I do not want to move an amendment until the Parliamentary Draftsman has had an opportunity of considering its impact, because the Criminal Code also limits to £50, the offences which may be dealt with summarily. I do not see any reason why the Police Act should not be amended even although for the time being the Criminal Code is not quite in order. Notice has been given of an intention to amend the Criminal Code, and probably the amendment I have suggested could be included.

Very often these days damage exceeds £50, and I think it would be quite fitting that the magistrates should have authority

to deal with cases involving that amount. In the amendment to Section 97 the penalty is fairly heavily increased. I am doubtful that that is a little high. The marginal note of this section is, "Penalty for destruction of acclimatised animals or birds," and it states—

Every person who shall wilfully injure or destroy or attempt to injure or destroy any native or acclimatised animals or birds which may be on any park or public road—

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Are not reptiles mentioned in that?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: No. It continues—

—or reserve, without the authority of the person having the care and management of such park, public road, or reserve, as the case may be, shall be liable, on conviction, to a penalty not exceeding forty shillings.

The Bill proposes to amend that penalty so that it is similar to the other penalties, namely, £25 or six months. This is the maximum penalty. Vandalism in this way, at the South Perth Zoo, could result in the destruction of a valuable animal, and the full penalty might be warranted.

On the other hand if a protected bird—say, a wild turkey—is shot on a public road, it is not such a serious matter, and the offence would not warrant such a high penalty. But, as the Minister has pointed out, the penalty is purely at the discretion of the magistrate, and in accordance with our way of having judicial matters administered we leave wide discretion to the magistrates and judges so that they can impose penalties that are fitting to the crimes. In these circumstances I do not intend to protest against the amount, or to attempt to amend the Minister's proposals. I support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

Mr. Moir in the Chair; the Minister for Police in charge of the Bill.

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Section 58 amended:

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I suggest the amount of £50 mentioned in Section 58 should be increased to £100. Perhaps the Minister will express some view on this point, give consideration to it, and possibly have an amendment moved in another place.

The MINISTER FOR POLICE: I would have no objection at all, even at this stage, to increasing the amount from £50 to £100. I think that would be in keeping with the increased penalty because I can visualise that a person may damage public property to the extent of £250 and then

be held responsible for restitution to the extent of only £50. This amount has probably been in the Act for many years.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: In view of the Minister's remarks, I move an amendment—

That after the word "by" in line 2, page 2, the following be inserted:—

(a) Substituting for the word "fifty" in line 4 the words "one hundred."

This will have the effect of altering the Act to provide that the maximum estimated amount of damage, as the result of vandalism, will be £100; and the person responsible may be ordered to pay that amount.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I think we should go a little slowly here. This is not a case of a wanton or wilful act. The proposed penalty is increased from £5 to £25 and also includes a term of imprisonment not exceeding six months.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This is not a penalty, you know.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: No, this is for recovery of the cost of damage.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This is for the re-payment of damage.

Hon. J. B. SLEEMAN: I do not think we should be too hard. It might not be wilful.

The Minister for Police: It was up to £30 fifty years ago, so it would not be too hard.

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

Clauses 3 to 7, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported with an amendment.

BILL—PUBLIC WORKS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. D. BRAND (Greenough) [8.20]: As explained by the Minister last night, the Bill has been introduced for the sole purpose of correcting an error which was overlooked in an amending Act of last year. That amendment was to bring into line the Act applying to land that was resumed by local governing bodies under the same conditions as land resumed for public works. The words used were that the land should revert in Her Majesty. Obviously, that was never intended. The principal objective was that the rights to mine coal and similar minerals should be reverted in Her Majesty and evidently, over the last few months, the error has been discovered. The Minister has brought the Bill before the House to correct it, and I therefore support the measure.

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—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.*Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. D. BRAND (Greenough) [8.24]: In introducing the Bill last night, the Minister explained that it was the aim of the Government to provide some security for workmen who were roofing a structure that was being sheathed with asbestos cement or other brittle material. The main provision of the Bill is covered by the last clause and is intended to be added to quite a number already provided in the parent Act.

The Act sets out that the Governor may, from time to time, make regulations consistent with those in the schedule to the Act and it then goes on to direct what shall be done with the erection of scaffolding to protect workmen and members of the public who are in the vicinity. I would point out to the Minister that asbestos roofing has been used for many years, and it appears to me that for quite a long time workmen have taken sufficient care to avoid accidents such as that which occurred last year. It is to be hoped that in prescribing the regulations which will be framed to give the necessary security to those working on such a roof, the Minister will bear in mind that asbestos sheeting is not sufficiently strong to bear the weight of any workman and it could be that if we are to give a 100 per cent. coverage and security, a good deal of decking would have to be provided under the work that is to be undertaken. Nevertheless, I am satisfied that those people who will investigate this matter and who will be responsible for prescribing the regulations, will bear that point in mind. I support the Bill.

MR. JAMIESON (Canning) [8.27]: Having had some practical experience with roofing of a brittle nature such as asbestos, I feel in duty bound to say a few words regarding this measure. The member for Greenough seems to think that there was only one case where asbestos roofing had caused a serious accident. That is not so, because members will recall that only a few years ago, within a mile of this House, a young lad chased a ball on to the roof of a factory and, as a result, met his death. Therefore, apart from providing preventive measures for the safety of workmen who may be in danger of falling through asbestos roofing, the Bill may prove to be of some value in preventing children from climbing on roofs and meeting with tragic accidents.

Many workmen often do not know that roofs constructed of brittle material are insecure. In many cases they attempt to walk on them and the material gives way. As a rule it often happens that when this occurs a man is able to grasp something to save himself, but there have been instances where a workman has fallen right through the ground. Therefore, no matter what expense we may go to, if we can save a life by such a measure as this, it will be money well spent. I would also point out that other States have seen fit to pass similar protective measures. Even the provision of wire mesh or something similar would be of value as a protective under scaffolding, and I commend the Bill to the House.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Section 27 amended:

HON. D. BRAND: Following the comment made by the member for Canning, I did not imagine that this provision was intended to cover accidents cited by him, or even to cover the case of a boy walking across a roof. Surely, the ordinary building regulations would cover such cases. To provide security and prevent accident, it might be better to use a stronger roofing material than asbestos. I understood from the remarks of the Minister that he had in mind the security of workmen associated with the sheeting of roofs with asbestos and similar materials, and the regulations to be framed with that object in view, and not to provide some inner structure to afford security in the event of a child or anyone else walking across a roof.

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: Where a brittle roofing material is used, there is a danger to any person walking on the roof during or after its construction. At times, it is necessary for electricians to work on a roof after the building has been completed. If the roofing material is so brittle that he falls through, he can be seriously injured, or lose his life. It is intended to provide that where such materials are used certain precautionary measures should be taken to prevent accidents.

HON. D. BRAND: In what form?

THE MINISTER FOR WORKS: In the form of light mesh under the roof so that if a person falls through he will be caught on the mesh. The expense involved would not be very great and the member for Greenough need not have any fear of a substantial increase in the cost of building. Furthermore, when the regulations are framed, they will have to be tabled, and there will be an opportunity to move for their disallowance, if they are considered unreasonable.

Clause put and passed.

Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

BILL—REPRINTING OF REGULATIONS.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. A. V. R. ABBOTT (Mt. Lawley) [8.35]: The object of this Bill is very commendable. The Minister was wise in introducing it. The intention of the legislation is that when regulations are out of print then they shall be reprinted with any amendments. The Bill not only provides that but sets out a series of steps to be taken by the Minister. I am not happy with the latter provisions.

The Minister for Justice: Those provisions give protection.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Personally, I am not very happy about them. There are provisions in another Act which cover the compiling of statutes, and the original Act was passed in 1905. It provided that when both Houses require a compilation, under a resolution, the Attorney General shall do so. In 1937, a much simpler Act was passed, known as the Amendments Incorporation Act, 1938, Section 3(1) provides—

- (a) The repeal or omission of any words; or
- (b) The substitution of any words in lieu of any words repealed or omitted; or
- (c) The insertion or addition of any words,

the Minister for Justice or the Attorney General may cause the Act to be reprinted by the Government Printer so that the reprint incorporates every such amendment.

Then it sets out in Section 4 a number of things which may be done, to which I need not refer.

The Minister for Justice: That Act relates to statutes, but the Bill relates to regulations.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes. Regarding statutes, all the Minister for Justice does is to cause the Act to be reprinted. Then certain things can be done. A subsequent Act was passed in 1953 which provided for certain precautions in the reprinting of Acts. These precautions had not been taken previously. Section 3(1) states—

Where the Minister is of opinion that it is necessary or desirable to reprint an Act—

the Minister may direct the Government Printer to supply him with a printer's proof of a reprint of the Act as so printed or as so reprinted.

(2) If the Minister is satisfied that the printer's proof is a true copy of the Act as so printed or reprinted he may authorise the Government Printer to reprint.

The Minister for Justice: That applies to this Bill, as far as the regulations are concerned.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so. The procedure I outlined is simpler. If an Act requires reprinting, amendments may, on the instruction of the Attorney General or the Minister for Justice, be inserted so that a complete compilation of the law relating to the matter in question, incorporating the amendments, is obtained, and further it has to be submitted to the Minister, to ensure that the form of reprinting actually reprints the Act. This actually means the Crown Law Department. The reason for that was that on occasions when the Government Printer reprinted an Act, certain lines referred to in amendments were so altered that one could not follow the contents without a great deal of trouble, or to appreciate what the section meant. It is necessary for the Act to be reprinted in the form of its original intention. If a layman were to alter the form, then a difficulty of interpretation might arise.

The Minister for Justice: That happened in relation to rules and regulations. This Bill will make the procedure more secure than the procedure covering statutes.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I entirely appreciate that. What I object to is the considerable detail which, in certain circumstances, causes difficulties if not followed.

The Minister for Justice: I think they should be followed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I agree. I think the Bill creates statutory formalities which may cause difficulties. In any case, they are necessary. If they are found to be unnecessary in relation to statutes, why should they be necessary in relation to rules and regulations?

The Minister for Justice: Because regulations are far more numerous and confusing.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: I consider that the steps to be taken should be left to the discretion of the Minister. Of course, the Minister would act on the advice of the Crown Law officers, because the Bill provides, in Clause 3(1)—

Where any regulations have been amended before or after the coming into operation of this Act if the Minister is of opinion that it is necessary or desirable to reprint the regulations, he may cause the regulations to be reprinted by the Government Printer.

I agree with that, but it also provides in Clause 4(1)—

Before the Government Printer reprints the regulations the Minister shall cause to be supplied to the printer a copy of the regulations to be reprinted certified by the Minister to be a correct copy of the regulations as amended to the date referred to in the certificate.

I agree with that also. Then, the provisions direct the Minister to take the detailed steps. I do not think those are necessary. It says—

(2) The head or one of the principal officers of the Government department or other public authority administering the regulations to be reprinted pursuant to this Act shall in the first instance prepare and send to the Minister a copy of the regulations amended to the date they are so sent and showing in the margin of the copy the date and page of the "Gazette" wherein was published the regulation or other means by which the amendments were made, in order that the copy may be examined by a practitioner of the Supreme Court employed in the Crown Law Department of the State.

It could occur that the best person to draw up the requirements would be the Crown Law officer and not the departmental head. Why provide this unnecessary detail? The Minister, as head of the Crown Law Department, would naturally ensure that regulations were satisfactorily compiled on expert advice. In one instance, one procedure may be followed more satisfactorily than in another. In one case, it may be desirable for the Crown Law Department to investigate, but on another occasion it may be desirable for the head of the department to investigate. What the Bill virtually decides is the person who shall first prepare the draft. I do not think that is necessary. I ask the Minister to simplify the Bill a little, not that I think the procedure is wrong but because I think it may not be suitable in every case. I do not agree with telling the Minister what he shall do. This is purely an administrative matter.

The Minister for Justice: You know that at times Ministers have not performed their administrative duties.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Like Premiers, they are not infallible.

The Minister for Justice: I cannot see anything wrong with the provision. We want to be sure that the regulations are correct.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: If I were to go into a court of law and argue that the Minister had not done this, what would be his position? I do not know what

would be the position if I could prove that the Minister had not complied with the Act. Clause 4(3) provides—

The Minister shall not give a certificate as mentioned in subsection (1) of this section unless he has received from a practitioner of the Supreme Court employed in the Crown Law Department . . .

He has actually to be employed by the Crown Law authorities. On occasions, the Minister might see fit to employ counsel to assist. That has been done before. When I was Minister, Professor Beasley did certain work for the Crown Law Department, and very ably, too. I do not say there will be many occasions when the Minister will have to engage outside counsel. This says that it must be done by practitioners of the Supreme Court.

The Minister for Justice: I think the rules and regulations should be done by a practitioner of the Supreme Court.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is so. But must he necessarily be employed by the Crown Law Department? The Minister might find it advisable to get assistance from outside. Furthermore, the Bill sets out that it has to be done this way. Finally, when everything is complied with and the Minister is informed to this effect, he puts on his rubber stamp. Clause 5(2) states—

If the Minister is satisfied that the printer's proof is a true copy of the regulations as so printed, he may authorise the Government Printer to reprint.

I think all that procedure should be eliminated. I assume that the draftsmen responsible for the Act were careful in their work, but they did not find it necessary to insert all these details.

The Minister for Justice: You are aware of the condition of our regulations?

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: Yes.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minister should allow the member for Mt. Lawley to proceed.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: This is not a matter of major importance. One should deal with principles and not administration as the Minister is doing in a very petty form. It would be quite sufficient to provide that when the regulations are reprinted, a draft shall be submitted to the Minister, and if he is satisfied, he may authorise the reprinting. This is all that is necessary, but the Minister proposes to go into a great deal of detail which I consider is inadvisable.

There is no question of policy; it is purely one of administration. If I were administering the department, I should like to be able to ensure, according to my way

of thinking, that the regulations were compiled in the proper manner, and, if necessary, to employ Queen's Counsel for advice if the regulations were sufficiently important and difficult to warrant the adoption of that course.

The Premier: The Bill would not prevent the Minister from obtaining outside advice.

Hon. A. V. R. ABBOTT: That is quite right, but it would be rather curious to obtain outside advice and then get someone in the department to do the work again and submit it to the Minister. However, I do not propose to delay the House any longer. I support the principles of the Bill, and when it reaches the Committee stage, I shall move an amendment with a view to giving effect to the suggestions I have made.

MR. MOIR (Boulder) [8.51]: When the Minister replies to the debate, I should like him to give an explanation of Clause 10, which reads—

Regulations reprinted pursuant to the provisions of this Act are not required to be laid before each House of Parliament as provided in Section thirty-six of the Interpretation Act, 1918-1948, and they may from time to time be revoked or varied by way of substitution, addition, or otherwise in accordance with the provisions of the respective Acts under which they were made.

I wish to be informed whether it would be possible for regulations to be amended in any way by the omission or addition of words without their being tabled, as regulations have to be tabled at present.

On motion by Hon. J. B. Sleeman, debate adjourned.

BILL—WAREHOUSEMEN'S LIENS ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

Hon. A. F. WATTS (Stirling) [8.53]: I have had a look at the Bill, and I can find no objection whatever to the proposals it contains. It seems to me, as the Minister has said, that it is perfectly reasonable that the period of twelve months should be reduced to six. 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.

House adjourned at 8.56 p.m.

Legislative Council

Thursday, 22nd July, 1954.

CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Question: The Chief Secretary, as to anniversary of birthday | 625 |
| Bills: Stamp Act Amendment, 1r. | 625 |
| Public Works Act Amendment, 1r. | 625 |
| Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment, 1r. | 625 |
| Warehousemen's Liens Act Amendment, 1r. | 625 |
| Rents and Tenancies Emergency Provisions Act Amendment, Com. | 625 |

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

QUESTION.

THE CHIEF SECRETARY.

As to Anniversary of Birthday.

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON (without notice) asked the Chief Secretary:

(1) Has his notice been drawn to an announcement in today's Press in regard to his celebrating his 60th birthday today?

(2) Is he aware that it gives every member of this House very much pleasure in congratulating him on that event?

The CHIEF SECRETARY replied:

(1) and (2) Unfortunately quite a few members have drawn my attention to the notice in today's Press; but I do very much appreciate the sentiment and good wishes behind the question asked by the hon. member.

BILLS—(4)—FIRST READING.

- 1, Stamp Act Amendment.
- 2, Public Works Act Amendment.
- 3, Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment.
- 4, Warehousemen's Liens Act Amendment.

Received from the Assembly.

BILL—RENTS AND TENANCIES EMERGENCY PROVISIONS ACT AMENDMENT.

In Committee.

Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Chief Secretary in charge of the Bill.

Clauses 1 and 2—agreed to.

Clause 3—Section 4 amended:

Hon. C. H. SIMPSON: I move an amendment—

That the word "Court" in line 4, page 2, be struck out.

This amendment has application to the question whether a fair rents