

Legislative Council

Wednesday, the 22nd October, 1958.

CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|--|------|
| QUESTION ON NOTICE : | |
| Railway Department file, tabling | 1646 |
| BILLS : | |
| Supply (No. 2), £18,000,000, assent | 1646 |
| Bush Fires Act Amendment, assent | 1646 |
| Acts Amendment (Superannuation and Pensions), assent | 1646 |
| Long Service Leave, recom. | 1646 |
| Land Tax Assessment Act Amendment, 2r., defeated | 1647 |
| Totalisator Duty Act Amendment, 2r. | 1656 |
| Electoral Act Amendment (No. 2), 2r. | 1656 |
| Natives (Status as Citizens), 2r., defeated | 1657 |
| ADJOURNMENT, SPECIAL | 1682 |

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

BILLS (3)—ASSENT.

Message from the Lieut.-Governor and Administrator received and read notifying assent to the following Bills:—

- 1, Supply (No. 2), £18,000,000.
- 2, Bush Fires Act Amendment.
- 3, Acts Amendment (Superannuation and Pensions).

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE.

RAILWAY DEPARTMENT FILE.

Tabling.

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

Will he lay on the Table of the House the following Railway Department file:—

File R313/58, Parts 4, 5, 6 and 7 with appendix thereto, for a period of ten days after these files have been released from another place?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND replied: Yes, for three sitting days of this House.

LONG SERVICE LEAVE BILL.

Recommittal.

On motion by the Hon. H. C. Strickland (Minister for Railways), Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 4.

In Committee.

The Hon. W. R. Hall in the Chair; the Hon. H. C. Strickland (Minister for Railways) in charge of the Bill.

Clause 4—Interpretations:

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I move an amendment—

Page 4, lines 3 and 4—Delete the words “and solely” and substitute the words “or mainly.”

The object of the amendment is to cover those collectors who work for insurance companies for part of the week or part of the month—or perhaps for a month—collecting, and then work back in the office. They have more or less dual-purpose jobs. There are not many of them but it is desired that they be covered by this legislation.

There is a Federal long service leave agreement now, but it does not cover all of these employees, and it is the desire of the association that they be included.

The Hon. H. K. WATSON: This amendment was originally suggested by the Life Officers' Association of Australia purely as a matter of drafting. Since yesterday I have been in touch with the chairman of the association and he has expressed the view that, in the light of further consideration, the amendment is really not necessary. The association feels that there should be no reference in the Bill to industrial insurance, inasmuch as those people are covered by a Federal award; although it has been suggested that there may be some not so covered and that therefore the clause could remain in. The fact remains that the organisation which instituted the suggestion, for what it was worth, that the phrasing should be “wholly or mainly” instead of “wholly and solely,” now concedes that that is not necessary. I therefore suggest that there is no purpose in pursuing the amendment.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: As the request is dated the 13th October, it is not very old, but if the hon. Mr. Watson can assure us that the Bill as it stands will protect these people, I am agreeable to his suggestion. However, if even half-a-dozen would not otherwise be covered, I think the amendment would cover them.

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I move an amendment—

Page 4, line 8—Delete the words “not less than one month” and substitute the words “less than two months.”

This amendment is moved at the request of the same organisation, and is taken from the Federal award.

Amendment put and passed.

The Hon. H. K. WATSON: I move an amendment—

Page 4—Delete all words from and including the word “or” in line 35 down to and including the word “employee” in line 38.

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

Bill again reported with further amendments.

LAND TAX ASSESSMENT ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 23rd September.

THE HON. J. M. THOMSON (South) [4.45]: On the last occasion on which a measure of this nature was before the House, it limited the life of the legislation to the 30th June, this year; but the present measure, if approved, would reimpose this tax with no time limit at all. Because the burden of taxation and other increasing costs now being borne by the people in rural areas is becoming insupportable, I oppose the Bill. Previous speakers in support of the measure have referred to the fact that the Government has given much to people in the country areas of the State, but in reply to that I say that nothing has been provided for those people which they are not paying for, and therefore that argument is not a valid one in support of the Bill.

The imposition of this tax on improved rural land has been lightly dismissed by some members, as involving a mere 3d. per acre, and if that was all it meant in the areas affected, perhaps it would constitute little cause for concern. What has been disregarded by those who support the measure—and by the Government—is that despite the fall in the prices of primary products—particularly wool—this additional tax is sought to be continued on rural lands. It should be borne in mind that land valuations are being maintained or increased in the country towns and districts as well as in the metropolitan area; and this added cost may well be the last straw that will break the camel's back.

Increased land values are a wonderful source of revenue to the Treasurer of any State and, before we agree to reimpose this tax without a time limit, I feel that we should give the position much deeper consideration. Reference has also been made to the honeymoon enjoyed by a section of the community during the period of high wool prices. It is well known that most people on honeymoons view the world through rose-coloured glasses, but nevertheless, before long all honeymooners are faced with the stark realities of the cost structure hitherto unknown to them and to which they must face up. It should therefore, be borne in mind that the cost of production rose considerably during the period of high prices for primary products, and continues at that high level while the prices have fallen. That is a factor that must be taken into consideration when assessing the position of the farming industry at the present time. Apparently the Government is surprised because it has been attacked for imposing a tax of only 3d. per acre on rural lands, and has retaliated by saying that

if the Bill is rejected an increase in rail freights can be expected. Whilst this Bill was before the Legislative Assembly, the Leader of the Country Party quoted the infinitesimal figure that would be required to equal this amount to be raised by land tax if rail freights were increased.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: That would be preferable to rail closures.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: Yes. The Leader of the Country Party said that an increase of less than 2 per cent. on the rail freights would have to be imposed to meet this amount that would be collected in land tax if the Bill was passed. Therefore, in view of that information, the threat of increased rail freights, if the Bill is not passed, could not be substantiated by the Minister or by the Government. The Minister for Railways, no doubt, will have something to say in regard to that later.

It is because of the charges that have already been increased during the last 12 months, on top of a general increase in costs which the people in the rural areas have to meet, that I strongly oppose this measure. The Minister will no doubt recall that recently I asked questions concerning transport charges in the Lakes district on wheat, fuel, building material, fencing, machinery and livestock. The answers that I received show that there had been an increase of 50 per cent. in the transport charges on those commodities as at the 30th June, 1958. That is an extremely steep rise in transport costs. If that trend is to continue and the people in those parts are to be burdened still further with a land tax of 3d. per acre on improved land, what is to be the ultimate outcome for them, many of whom are still endeavouring to develop their properties, despite the fact that they have already spent a considerable sum of money on improvements?

This tax will represent an exceedingly heavy burden on those people, especially when it comes on top of the increased transport charges that have been made. Whilst on the subject of rail freights, I was surprised to hear what the Premier had to say in regard to rail freights when making his usual Monday night broadcast. He was quoting the railway deficit for the last four years and he went on to say that the total deficit for each of the four years in question, included interest and other charges not shown in the cash deficit.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: He will be interested to know that you listened to him.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I will be glad to know that he is interested. I hope the hon. member will convey that message to him. All of us like to know that, when we make a broadcast, people have been listening to us. It will make

me happy if the Premier is pleased to know that I have listened to his broadcasts.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You'll get on!

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: I will continue to quote what the Premier had to say. He said that all these figures showed the tremendous amount of financial subsidy paid by the general taxpayer to the users of the railways, and he emphasised the justice of asking Parliament to continue this tax on improved farm land, which at present returns a net amount of approximately £200,000 to the Treasury. He said that the railway figures he had quoted showed that the farmers were subsidised many times £200,000 a year in connection with railway freights. That is what was stated by the Premier in making his broadcast on Monday evening.

Of course, it must be borne in mind that, among the general taxpayers referred to by the Premier, are those who reside in the rural areas. It would also be interesting to know what portion of the deficit figures represents the loss on the metropolitan and suburban railway system which no doubt was included in those figures to which the Premier referred and to which farmers, and those residing in the rural areas, contribute.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They use the lines, too.

The Hon. J. M. THOMSON: Yes, but it would be wise to bear in mind that when making a statement that farmers have been subsidised many times more than £200,000, which has helped to bring about the State deficit, it would also be fair to say the railways in the country districts are not incurring the losses that are being incurred by those in the metropolitan system. Therefore, the Premier's argument does not portray the true position concerning the people in the rural areas.

In referring back to the increase in the transport costs in the Lakes district—I would point out here that the increases have been made in other parts of the State, too—which I mentioned previously, one can fully comprehend what these increases must mean and what their ultimate effect will be to a man who is endeavouring to develop his property. Those settlers who are firmly established will not feel so strongly the impact of a tax of 3d. per acre on improved land which is so lightly referred to. It is the young man that we should concern ourselves with when considering the imposition of such a tax, and it is on his behalf that I utter a strong protest against this Bill. The comments written on the budgetary notes in Vol. 13, Series No. 3, of the Review of the Institute of Public Affairs in Victoria, dated July-September, 1958, are as follows:—

In these days, in democratic communities there seems no escape from a high level of government spending

and consequently a heavy general burden of taxation. But that is all the more reason why spending should be approached with some austerity and why the burden of taxation should be lightened—even though only a little—whenever it conceivably can be. It is the last brick on the taxpayer's back that is the "killer"; the extra load that saps his energy and produces mental frustration as well as physical depression. Budgets are something more than aggregates of debits and credits. They impinge on human beings, on their standard of everyday comfort, their motives and reactions. A comparatively small lightening of the tax load in the right places can sometimes have a tonic effect on general economic morale and can produce benefits in enterprise and productivity not disclosed by the cold arithmetic of the budget. In these times of heavy taxes, the disposition of governments should always strongly incline towards providing relief.

This could well apply in the present circumstances when the Government is considering the imposition of the land tax. I therefore oppose the measure and trust that the House will not agree to its passage.

THE HON. J. G. HISLOP (Metropolitan) [5.21]: A most serious position has arisen confronting this House when members feel that it might be their duty, in the interests of the people, to discard a tax which the Government has introduced for the governing of the State. I do not imagine for one moment that any hon. member here is going to vote against this measure without giving it very serious consideration. In deciding simply how the finances of this State must be adjusted hon. members of this House face a most serious position. Therefore if one opposes the tax one must have adequate reasons, and if possible some other alternative by which that amount of tax might be reimbursed to the Government. The loss of revenue from this land tax will be a serious penalty to the Government.

I say that for this reason: Apparently the adjustment by the Grants Commission to this State is based on the relative non-income taxes which are imposed, so that even if money were obtained by some other method it would not alter the position, because the loss of this non-income tax revenue would still be regarded as being an off-set against any relief which the Grants Commission might make. This seems to be very serious for a State such as Western Australia, and rather suggests that, if in the non-claimant States the Premiers decided to be very heavy in the levying of non-income taxes, the claimant States would automatically be forced to bring their taxation up to the same level.

I do not understand how far that can go, because certain factors must enter into this question to a great extent.

When we refer to the recent taxation imposed by the Premier of Victoria, particularly in respect to probate duty, it would be a very grave matter if this State were forced to raise its probate duties in a similar manner, in view of the difference in conditions and the different effects such an increase would have on the farming and pastoral communities here, as compared with people earning their living in a similar manner in a State like Victoria. If this State has to follow the example of the Victorian Cabinet, we might find within a year that we will be told by the Grants Commission that the probate duty is not sufficient. That is quite likely to happen.

In this State there are many farmers who are already severely handicapped by probate taxes, and I know one personally. Everyone of us doubtless has had a similar experience as I. Every non-income tax which might be levied in the non-claimant States gives to the Grants Commission a reason for saying to the claimant States that their taxes are low. If one refers to the report of the Grants Commission one will find a comparison of all these types of taxes tabulated in respect of all the States.

The motor tax in this State is less than that in the Eastern States. Twice in the last four years in this House we have been called on to increase the motor tax rates. If the Grants Commission were to emphasise that this State is paying a lower motor tax than the non-claimant States, we might have to increase it further. It might be very well to raise money in this way in the rich and smaller States, but it could be very unjust to do so in a State like Western Australia where there are vast distances to travel, and the distances between centres are infinitely greater than those in the smaller Eastern States.

One of the other matters over which we must be very careful is that any deficit budgeted for by the Premier of this State, has to be balanced by the use of loan funds, even temporarily. The use of loan funds, even temporarily, for the balancing of a deficit will mean that much less loan funds which the State can use for that particular period of time. In some cases it is about two years from the time of estimating the requirements of this State, before the funds are finally paid over, although a temporary adjustment is usually made at the next sitting of the Grants Commission, after the estimates have been received. So, we are always lacking, as it were, loan funds.

One other difficulty which confronts this State is this: If the Premiers of the various States at the Loan Council meeting cannot agree on the distribution of loan funds, then a formula is brought into

effect. As far as I can gather, this means that the proportion of loan moneys will be the average of the previous five years.

As our loan money during the war years was of the lowest character, because of the absence of any major defence work, our loan position still is in that low state. Therefore we are in considerable difficulty in regard to financing the State under these conditions. It has been said many times that if one says "This is not the time to introduce a tax like this," the reply is, "It never was." But at the same time, one must realise that it has become unprofitable to grow wool in our agricultural areas.

That is a serious situation, because during the depression days we began to realise that the way out of our difficulties lay in mixed farming in our rural areas. Many farmers, to my knowledge, began to see the red in the bank change colour when their farms altered to the mixed type. If we are getting again to the stage when it is unprofitable to grow wool in the agricultural areas and the pastoralists tell me that they are only breaking even—great difficulty will be found in the attempt to add further taxation burdens to people in the country.

One of the extraordinary features about the present situation in the State is that whilst the price of everything that the farmer sells—the price for our major exports—is falling, almost every business is having its most profitable period. Therefore, we must be warned that it takes some time before the drop in the income of the farming community, because of low prices for our exports, has an effect on the general economy of the State; and, in particular, on the metropolitan area. We may find that the effect will not be felt this year, but next year or the year after. People in the metropolitan area may then find themselves in the same state—tending towards impecuniosity—as is facing the farming community, in the main, at the moment.

I am not saying that the members of the farming community are without means; because the years have been good ones, but they will have to tide over this period of low prices; and these low prices must eventually have an effect on the community generally, and not exclusively as at the moment, outside the metropolitan area.

When it comes to the question of financing in these times, I am rather struck by the fact that although Australia's income is diminishing rapidly—I think to the extent of £150,000,000 this year—and although we are not certain whether there is worse to come, almost every charitable organisation, and institution of any sort, is expanding its work and calling for public support; and, in the main, calling for public support, not only from private

citizens, but from the Government. One hears almost every day of the week of some institution wanting £3,000, £5,000, £10,000 or £50,000 for the expansion of its work. These organisations must all come within the field of social services in connection with which, again, we run a debit in relation to the other States.

It may be that all these organisations must think of curtailing expansion; and we must form the opinion that a curtailment of activities in various directions might be necessary in the next year or two. Another factor which worries me considerably at the moment, is in connection with the 1957 report of the Grants Commission. I shall read paragraphs 24 and 25 to emphasise the point I wish to make—

24. Whether a State Government can be regarded as responsible for the costs of development depends on whether its role in encouraging such development is active or passive. In the 22nd Report the Commission observed that "the relatively rapid development in Western Australia, South Australia and Tasmania can be ascribed partly to active development policies, but population growth itself requires relatively greater provision of houses, schools, hospitals and public works generally."

I shall not read the rest of the paragraph but shall continue with the next one—

25. The Commonwealth Treasury, on the other hand, has emphasised the part played by the governments of the claimant States in actively promoting industrial and agricultural development; thereby raising "a most difficult and fundamental issue for the Commission, namely, the extent to which the claimant States should be enabled, via the working of the Commission, to proceed with development which may be more costly in a claimant than in a non-claimant State" and, more generally, "to subvert the workings of normal economic forces."

This would rather suggest that a claimant State, such as ours, can in the eyes of the Commonwealth Treasury be justified in expanding population, and in accepting the migrants which the Commonwealth determines shall come here, but if it endeavours to expand industrially, it may have to bear the burden itself. This is a point which can be argued at considerable length. There must be many people in the State who would hotly debate the justice of such an idea in the mind of the Treasury. Fortunately, the commission has never been given instructions by the Treasury on how to approach this problem, or how to tackle it.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The judgment of the Loan Council has never been questioned.

The Hon. J. G. HISLOP: That is so, but the time could come when these views could be given as an instruction to the Grants Commission. This just emphasises the position we are creating at the moment by searching for new industries to become established in the State, and by giving people, who are prepared to establish industries here, large grants—which we probably have not got!

This brings up the question that the Commonwealth Treasury may view these activities in the light of active industrialisation. Therefore we must look at that aspect with some concern, but realising, as the hon. Mr. Wise has pointed out, that no action has ever been taken about it in the past; nor have the decisions or attitude of the Grants Commission in the matter, been questioned.

It has an effect which the claimant States must have cleared up before long, otherwise we, as a claimant State, will continue to grow in population, but we will depend more and more on the industry and development of the Eastern States. Hon. members can see the difficulty that can arise.

When it comes to the question of how this can be replaced, one has to realise that it has to come from either non-income tax sources, or it must be such that it can reduce, by probably more than the loss, the defeat of this measure would cause in the Budget deficit for the year.

One factor which I think we should look at very carefully is that which appears at page 98 of the Commission's report where it points out that the total amount expended per head in Western Australia on social services—which covers public health, hospitals, etc., and miners' phthisis; and miners' phthisis is a very small sum—is £152 per head as against £112 per head in New South Wales and £124 per head in Victoria. The highest State is Queensland, whose figure is about £12 more than ours, with a total of £164 per head. Although I cannot quote accurately on the subject, I believe that a great deal of the hospital care in Queensland is not charged against the individual. I think we might look at that aspect, and then look at the hospital problem in our own State. In Western Australia the cost is £93 per head for hospitals as against £68 in Victoria and £67 in New South Wales.

I think it might be wise for the Government to try to persuade the general public to increase the amount of insurance which they take out under the Hospitals Benefit Fund. The extra sum which they would be called upon to pay to the fund would not in any way be distressing, but would bring in a considerable sum of money to the Royal Perth Hospital, and

probably to hospitals, generally, throughout the State. A weekly family contribution of 4s. brings in a total of 24s. per day for hospital benefits. But another 6d. per week for that family would bring in a further 12s. per day. If the family increased its weekly contribution from 4s. to 5s., the hospitals would receive £1 more per day per patient, and this would assist them in obtaining their contribution, because they would be receiving the money from the fund.

I understand that the biggest majority of people in this State insure themselves on the two lowest rungs of contribution. Whilst that brings in a reasonable sum—from information I have received I would estimate the amount this extra insurance would bring, to be roughly about £40,000 per annum—a great deal more could be obtained if we brought in a means test for patients in hospitals. This means test was totally abolished at the time of Mr. Chifley's Government, when the whole of the public hospital costs were borne by the State; but that was during a time of affluence. The amount charged by the hospital—35s. a day—is not actually covered by the lowest rate in the Hospitals Benefit Fund; but that is as low a figure as any Government can charge when one realises that the cost per patient in the Royal Perth Hospital today is something over £4 10s. per day.

Therefore an appeal, generally, to the public to increase their payments to the Hospitals Benefit Fund would enable them to meet hospital costs in full, and the introduction of a means test would bring in a considerably greater sum of money. I understand that discussions have taken place between the Government, the Health Department and the hospitals in regard to this means test, and I believe it is something we should look at in view of the fact that it is possible, for a very small extra sum, for the public to insure themselves more adequately to meet their hospital bills. One of the factors which contributes to the higher costs in this State, and which makes it more difficult for the Government, is the fact that the basic wage in this State is higher than that in the Eastern States.

I will not bore hon. members by reading the details, but it is curious to look back on the history of the particular wage fixation which caused the increase in this State. Clothing was then regarded as more expensive in this State, and the amount of nourishment in bread and milk was regarded as being totally inadequate. I think the reason for that has long since passed, and as our basic wage is higher than that in the Eastern States, I do not think it would be out of place to endeavour to meet the large deficiency, which I see is being slowly overtaken, in the metropolitan transport figures.

I think something more vigorous in that way should be attempted, and surely we should attempt, even though this State needs railways for its expansion, to see that as nearly as possible Government services pay for themselves. I believe that if we went into the story we would find that there were means by which we could save an amount equal to the tax obtained by this legislation. The reasons I have given are probably regarded by some as inadequate, and by others as more than adequate. But as one who lives in the city, where land tax, municipal rates and water supply rates have risen in the last few years in an almost hideous manner, it is a gesture to the country people to say that we do not believe this measure is in the interests of the State.

Socialism can be a costly arrangement, and I think the public in general may have to review the attitude of mind which so many have of calling on the Government always to contribute heavily for anything that is suggested for institutions within the State. If we did that we would not find ourselves in the same difficult position we are in now, because, whilst this tax is only small, some day, somehow, we will have to meet a legitimate attempt to lessen the deficit which impedes us in using our loan funds, and continues to make us a claimant State. I oppose the measure.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (Minister for Railways—North—in reply) [5.28]: Almost every hon. member has spoken on this Bill, and many different viewpoints have been submitted. I think the hon. Dr. Hislop's viewpoint was an interesting one, but I did not quite grasp his alternative to this taxation. I missed that point somewhere along the line. He rightly said that our overseas income had fallen immensely. We all know that the principal cause has been the fall in the price of wool; but some of that fall—not all of it by any means—has been taken up by another section of primary production. The beef producers have never enjoyed better or higher prices, and the outlook for beef producers has never appeared to be more secure or brighter.

It is a rather unfortunate corollary that when meat is in great demand overseas, it forces up prices on the local market, and this has a re-action by forcing up the basic wage in our own country. The price of beef alone in the past six months has forced up our basic wage.

I do not know what the statistician's figures are likely to be for the State, but they are usually comparable with those of the Commonwealth, and the Commonwealth figures indicate that there is likely to be another increase in the cost of living. So, while it is rather an unfortunate set of circumstances, it is a fact that

when some sections of the community are prosperous, other sections are not so prosperous; or their prosperity may affect such sections as manufacturers, because it helps to push the basic wage up; and basic wage increases affect no one more than the manufacturers — particularly those with big wages bills. They also affect Governments because of the large number employed in the various departments.

I do not profess to be able to foresee the answer to that problem, unless it might be regulated markets, and regulated living, which is impossible under our democratic system. This is not, however, by any means disastrous. It has proved, over the years, to be a most desirable method under which we should live. There is no doubt that open markets, free markets and organised marketing could be the answer. To my way of thinking, it is the best way of life; and I think that would also be the opinion of other hon. members of this House.

There has been some confusion in the debate on this measure. It has been suggested that we are imposing a tax. All we are doing is endeavouring to continue a tax that is already in existence. As the hon. Mr. Thomson said, the right to tax primary producing land, or improved rural land, expired on the last day of June this year. All the Government is doing is asking that that be continued; instead of having the tax expire, it should be continued. The amount of tax is some £300,000. That is the total collection. There is an offset amount of £100,000 which leaves a net collection of £200,000, as compared with the years prior to the reintroduction of tax on improved rural land. If we look at the pocket year book for Western Australia, it will be seen that there are certain exemptions. This tax only applies to a farm which has more than 1,000 acres of cultivable land cleared.

It does not apply to the young man who is just settling on land. There are exemptions, and they will be found on page 194 of our pocket year book. It will be seen from that publication that the persons about whom the hon. Mr. Thomson is so concerned, are those who are to be exempt. It reads—

An exemption from land tax, a privilege given to primary producers, has been suspended for two years, and all land now becomes taxable with the following exceptions:—

- (a) Country lands held under conditional purchase from the Crown are exempt from land tax for five years provided not more than 1,000 acres of cultivable, or 2,500 acres of cultivable and grazing land is held as defined by the Land Act and its amendments.

The pocket year book was printed two years ago. There are, of course, numerous other exceptions, such as church properties, and so on. Any property that is not held by an organisation for purposes of trading, or income, is also exempt. While interjecting, I mentioned the figure of 3.5d. per acre as the land tax. If we look quickly at the areas of land in this State which are improved it will be found that there was at the end of 1956 just on 21,500,000 acres of improved rural land.

So if we exempt half that area—and it would certainly not be as much as that—it would still leave over 10,000,000 acres. If we spread £300,000 over 10,000,000 acres, we get a figure of about 7d. per acre. So, if hon. members compare that with the land tax per acre charged on land in the city area they will see just how astounding it is. Land in the city area, in the near-city area, and suburban land, carries an extremely heavy tax by comparison. In the most extreme portion of the Perth City Council area, it ranges from over £100 per acre—that is on the extreme fringe of the Thomas-st. boundary. In the centre of the city, the tax would probably be thousands of pounds per acre. So, it is really astounding when we reduce the taxation of land in the farming areas, and compare it with the tax which applies around the metropolitan area. There are people living in the suburbs paying tax at the rate of £100 per acre; merely for the right to live somewhere.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: It's pretty crook, isn't it?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I'll say it is, particularly when somebody has 2,000 or 3,000 acres from which he is earning a good living, yet still objects to paying 7d. or 8d. per acre. The comparison is amazing, and those who can least afford to pay land tax are those who are paying it.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: It was less astounding when it was 1½d.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member cannot get away from those facts. They are there for his consideration. The principle of land tax is not a new one in Western Australia. It also applies in every State of Australia; and the rate in Western Australia is the lowest of all the Australian mainland States. So I do not see how hon. members can soundly, and with good reason—as the hon. Dr. Hislop said—vote against this measure on the ground that it could be, and is, a burden on the rural community. It must not be forgotten that the tax is on improved rural land, but it is based on the unimproved value. Improvements are not taxed. In my opinion, therefore, there cannot be found a sound reason to reject the proposition to continue this tax; it certainly cannot be rejected on economic or financial grounds; nor can it be classed as a burden.

It is interesting to note that in Victoria, which, within the last few days, has decided to become a claimant State—for obvious reasons—the Government has decided to impose various forms of taxation. The Victorian Government does not wish to become a claimant State because it is broke to the same extent as other claimant States at times find themselves, but because it believes that the Commonwealth-State financial relationships and agreements should be overhauled. That, at least, is the reason if we are to believe what is contained in the newspapers.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: There is a good bit of substance in that view.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: According to the Press, Victoria's move to become a claimant State is to have the question of Commonwealth-State financial relationships analysed thoroughly. That appears to be the reason expressed by the hon. Mr. Holt yesterday. Victoria found itself in a position where it had to raise quite a lot of money so, on the 17th September, 1958, the Liberal Party Government of Victoria imposed taxation which it estimates will return £2,050,000. It has decided to collect that £2,050,000 from certain types of taxation. These include stamp duty, licence fees, higher probate and gift duties.

It has been said—though I forget by whom; but it was said by certain hon. members speaking in opposition to this measure—that this tax is a sectional one. If ever there were sectional taxes, surely those I have just mentioned as being imposed on the 17th September, 1958, by the Victorian Government can be classed as sectional taxation! But, after all, all taxation is sectional, because there are those who never have to pay anything, because they do not earn anything; and there are those who pay according to their income, and so on. So that is not a valid reason to raise against the continuation of this measure. The hon. Dr. Hislop mentioned that there should be an alternative, but I am afraid I missed the alternative he proposed. Nevertheless there could be an alternative—and this is not a threat—for the Government must find money somewhere. It is very necessary for Governments to have money.

As I have just pointed out, the Victorian Government, which has the smallest area, and not quite the largest population, though most conveniently situated geographically, finds it must impose taxation, and did so only two months ago, in order to raise another £2,000,000. This State could, as an alternative, raise its charges without asking Parliament for permission. It could be forced to raise the charges somewhere. For instance, it could apply a levy on the season's wheat which has to be carted.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: It could exercise some economy.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It could quite easily impose a surcharge through the railways of 2d. per bushel, or something like that. I would suggest that 2d. per bushel, with a high crop, would return more than the existing tax. Then the wheatgrower would be paying for the lot. But the baby beef producer, about whom I just spoke, would pay nothing. He would be enjoying prosperity and could stand 6d., 7d. or 1s. per acre, or whatever the tax might cost him per year, but he would escape it and the burden would be thrown upon one section of producers.

Surely if there is to be any logical way for the Government to collect revenue, it should be spread as much over the community as possible and not over one section. That is not easy to do. If rail freights are increased, that is not equitable.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: The people would be worried in Kalgoorlie if you did that.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The people in Kalgoorlie pay land tax, because they live in a town, just as the people do in Northam, Bencubbin or wherever they may be. They all pay land tax. That applies to whoever owns a block of land. However, members of the farming community say they should pay nothing. Therefore, if rail freights are increased, a burden is added on the man who is already living in the country and paying land tax. We will be asking him to pay more for the commodities he receives; and these commodities are usually food, clothing and the necessities of life. Whether it would be a matter for an alternative—

The Hon. A. R. Jones: Borrow £4,000,000 from Pat Healy.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. Mr. Jones said, "Who likes to pay taxes anyway?" That is his attitude. My attitude is that I would rather be a contributor to the State than one who takes out. That answers the hon. member's query, "Who likes to pay taxes anyway?" as far as I am concerned.

Mr. President, there are always those who want the last shilling on earth; but I often wonder what sort of world this would be if one fellow had control of that shilling and decided to sleep in in the morning or go on the drink. Who will be paid and what will happen? That could be the ultimate solution according to some persons.

I do not know what the answer will be if this tax is not agreed to; but I do know that the farming community receives quite a lot of concessions, and I hardly think it would be fair to relieve them of the sum that this tax will bring to the Treasury.

In an estimated statement of costs of services provided to country areas and charged to the Consolidated Revenue

Fund, the figures are something astounding. For 1958-59, the railways estimated deficit is £5,000,000 of which the proportion for rural areas is estimated at £3,000,000. Out of a total cost of £6.7 million for education, the proportion for country areas is £3.3 million.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: Do you think they should do without it?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member is never satisfied. If we take money away he is not satisfied, and when we tell him we are spending millions he still complains. School buses in country districts will cost £.9 million; the total net cost of the Agricultural Department will be £.7 million; the estimated deficit for country water supplies, sewerage and drainage is £1.9 million; country hospital services, £1 million; Police Department total net cost £1.4 million of which the proportion allocated to the country will be £.5 million and subsidies on road transport and wheat bins will be £.1 million. The total proportion of the Consolidated Revenue Fund estimated to be spent in rural areas is estimated to be £11.4 million.

In addition, the cost of the services under the same headings in the North-West Division total £395,000. These figures cannot be claimed to be accurate but are an estimated analysis.

The Hon. F. J. S. Wise: You are not objecting to their getting them?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No, I do not object to any part of it. The Government thinks it is quite right. In common with other hon. members I am always asking for more expenditure in my province, but we have to be fair and look at these things in their true light.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: Look at what they are putting into the economy.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The land tax involved under this Bill amounts to a small sum in the overall economy of the State. It is a small sum in the overall cost to those who would be paying it. If it is burdensome, I am afraid the rural economy must be in a very weak state. However, as I have explained, it is not in a weak state. The price of wool has certainly dropped; and dropped below the cost of production. However, it is pleasing to see that in the last two sales the downward turn is showing signs of being arrested. Perhaps it is showing a small recovery, but more is needed to put the woolgrowing industry on a sound basis. The trend on the beef side must have the effect of increasing the price of lamb and mutton, because beef is in short supply throughout the world.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: You wouldn't think so!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: It is a positive fact. Europe, Britain and the American continent are all looking for

long-term orders for beef—not mutton and lamb—and a survey of Argentina shows the cattle numbers there have deteriorated by several millions over the past ten years. They have been selling far too heavily and have reduced their herds to a state from which it will take years to recover. Therefore, when one looks at the huge amount of money which goes into the rural areas from Consolidated Revenue—

The Hon. L. C. Diver: And taken out by taxation.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: There is an amount of £11.4 million going to rural areas from the Consolidated Revenue Fund, and this tax proposes to take out £300,000. For those who pay it to the State, it is a charge against the amount of tax which they will pay in ordinary income tax services to the Commonwealth.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Where does the Minister think we would be without the rural areas?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: This is a tax on improved rural land. That is the basis of the Bill which seeks to continue this tax on improved rural land.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That does not answer my question.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I cannot depart from the contents of the Bill, Mr. President. The hon. member will have to introduce a new Bill for us to discuss this point.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: Where does beef come into it?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: We will do it on the Constitution Bill.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I know it is hard to convince those who cannot be convinced; who are, perhaps, unable to be convinced, and who, perhaps, would not be convinced at any price.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: They are unconvinced.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I have the job in front of me and I will do my best.

The Hon. H. L. Roche: You are not doing badly.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I can see I will have the hon. Mr. Diver coming over my way, because his remarks in relation to this Bill were most confusing. When I mentioned the loss on the country areas water supply, he confused it with the loan funds and the cost of the comprehensive water supply scheme, and mentioned the amount of £1,750,000.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: You mentioned that.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: No, the hon. Mr. Diver got confused with loan funds and the cost of the water supply scheme. I mentioned the loss on the scheme, and the hon. member mentioned

the cost of the scheme. If the water pipe runs close to, near or through his property, imagine the increased value of that property! Yet he would not spend 3d. per acre in contribution while the value of his property increased from perhaps £2 10s. to £5 per acre.

In the irrigation areas where loan funds and other funds have been spent on a lot of sandy country that would not grow a turnip prior to irrigation, the land has gone up from shillings per acre to many pounds per acre. Yet there is a complaint that property owners might have to contribute 6d. per acre per year to increase the value of their properties by hundreds of pounds per acre—

Several hon. members interjected.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: —in the irrigation areas and £10 or £12 per acre in the clover country; and it grows while they sleep.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: They never get a chance to sleep.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The increased value comes along while they are sleeping. I know I am amusing the hon. Mr. Griffith because, perhaps, I am able to say a few things which he was not able to. Nevertheless they are facts.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: Do not tempt him.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I have to explain the facts in connection with this tax.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You are able to make snide shots, I know that.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I do not wish to refer any more to figures; they have all been well and truly covered, and the incidence of tax has been completely and ably covered by the hon. Mr. Wise in his contribution to this Bill, and also by other speakers who spoke in support of it. However, I suggest that those in opposition to the continuance of this tax have put forward nothing whatever to take its place; their objection is entirely negative towards the tax. The only value I can see in their thoughts regarding this tax is that the time is approaching when the people who pay the tax will have some say as to who is likely to be here to tax them in future, or release them from taxation. There has certainly been no valid argument submitted here as to why this particular tax in this State should not continue to operate.

An hon. member: There would be nothing political in this would there?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: This is a non-political House, I have been led to understand. I did not say, "believe." I said "led to understand." Nevertheless, that not being connected with the Bill, I will say no more about it.

Seriously, though, the abolition of this tax means quite a lot to the Treasurer. It means very little to the people who pay. When it is spread over the number who would pay it, I imagine it would be very small, although I do not know the figure. It must be spread over some other section of the community. It is certain that the Government would not meet with any favourable response in this House if another Bill was brought down to increase some other tax as an alternative to this one. The Government must, of course, be forced into a position of raising some charge somewhere. It will, I hope endeavour to spread that charge over the whole community. It is difficult to do, as I have explained; but it is a fact that States need money, as do Governments, to carry on.

I could say in passing—not in passing; I can say as a fact—that the administration of this Government, during the last three years, and the previous three years, so far as the finances of the State are concerned, has been one of achievement. It started off with an empty Treasury and millions of overseas debts; but it has reached the stage today where it has wiped off the overseas debts and has a sound and healthy Treasury. It has not mortgaged the future. It has, by effecting, wherever it has been possible, the economies which the hon. Mr. MacKinnon spoke about, and by being prudent and judicious in its attitude towards taxation and other service charges, been able to keep the finances of this State, or, I should say, bring the finances of this State, to a very healthy condition.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: By increasing costs.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: By continuing this taxation. Do not forget that for many years, and particularly during the years when primary producers enjoyed a remarkably good time, they were exempt from this taxation completely. It would have meant nothing because, as the old saying goes, it went to Chifley or it went to Fadden—it went to the Federal Treasury. If it continues here, no matter what amount any taxpayer pays under this tax, it would continue to be a concession so far as the Federal income tax is concerned.

Point of Order.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: I am seeking information, if I am in order. The Minister has made such an impression upon me with his speech, that I would like further figures if he would give them.

The President: I think the hon. member had better wait for the third reading stage.

The Hon. A. R. Jones: It might not come to the third reading. My vote might be a vital one.

Debate Resumed.

Question put and declared passed.

Point of Order.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: This is the second reading, is it not?

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I called for a division.

The Hon. H. K. Watson: So did I.

The President: I did not hear anyone call for a division.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: On a Point of Order, Sir, the Bill has been read a second time.

The President: It has not been read a second time yet.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Mr. President, I did not hear anyone call for a division.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: Does not the Minister think that on a Bill of this nature, it would be natural to call for a division? I personally called "divide," perhaps not in a loud voice. The hon. Mr. Watson, sitting next to me, also called for a division.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: I called for a division from this side.

The President: Order! As there has been so much confusion, I will put the question again.

Debate resumed.

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

Ayes—12

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Hon. G. Bennetts | Hon. G. E. Jeffery |
| Hon. E. M. Davies | Hon. F. R. H. Lavery |
| Hon. J. J. Garrigan | Hon. H. C. Strickland |
| Hon. W. R. Hall | Hon. W. F. Willesee |
| Hon. E. M. Heenan | Hon. F. J. S. Wise |
| Hon. E. F. Hutchison | Hon. J. D. Teahan |

(Teller.)

Noes—15

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Hon. C. R. Abbey | Hon. R. C. Mattiske |
| Hon. J. Cunningham | Hon. H. L. Roche |
| Hon. L. C. Diver | Hon. C. H. Simpson |
| Hon. A. F. Griffith | Hon. J. M. Thomson |
| Hon. J. G. Hislop | Hon. H. K. Watson |
| Hon. A. R. Jones | Hon. F. D. Willmott |
| Hon. A. L. Loton | Hon. J. Murray |
| Hon. G. C. MacKinnon | |

(Teller.)

*Pair.**Aye.*

Hon. G. Fraser

No.

Hon. L. A. Logan

Majority against—3.

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

TOTALISATOR DUTY ACT AMENDMENT BILL.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 16th October.

THE HON. J. MURRAY (South-West) [6.10]: I do not intend to delay the House very much—

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: Why speak then?

The Hon. J. MURRAY:—in speaking to this measure. It strikes me that this small Bill is in keeping with the very small gesture of the Government towards the race clubs, but the racing clubs in the metropolitan area, both trotting and galloping, will, of course, be appreciative of the gesture and will, like myself, hope that it indicates a change of mind on the part of the Government and that this is only indicative of the Government's intention to give the clubs more than a little assistance towards the stakes that are increasing over the years. I would have liked to be able also, to thank the Government on behalf of the clubs for having included doubles money, obtained from doubles investments, but at this stage, the Government has not come to that decision. It is hoped—and I understand there is good reason to be hopeful—that this decision will be arrived at very soon. I know other speakers may want to speak to this Bill, but I also know that the Bill will be adjourned after I have resumed my seat so as to allow the Government to find out just where it stands on the question of doubles betting and the like. I have much pleasure in supporting the second reading of this Bill.

On motion by the Hon. L. C. Diver, debate adjourned.

ELECTORAL ACT AMENDMENT BILL (No. 2).

Second Reading.

THE HON. F. J. S. WISE (North) [6.13] in moving the second reading said: This Bill is once more introduced, to conform with the policy of the Labour Government, and it has the Government's wholehearted support and accord. The Government, through the Bill, desires to give the community the right to vote at Legislative Council elections on terms identical with those existing in respect to Legislative Assembly elections.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: That is only fair, is it not?

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am sure the majority of members will ultimately consider it to be wholly fair, and, in this particular case, the Government is merely endeavouring to give effect to its policy in having this wholly fair matter dealt with in a wholly fair manner. If it is discussed, debated, and decided in that way, I am sure the Government itself will have no objection to the support that it must receive for the Bill.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: People will appreciate it.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Government has attempted on several occasions to give effect to the principles which this Bill stipulates and therefore it is, I feel, although nothing new to this Council, something which should be fully explained, which is what I intend to do.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Bill, although very simple in its principles and being identical with Bills which have been presented in this Chamber on many occasions, requires quite a lot of explanation, because, if it were properly understood, I am sure its fate would certainly be decided in the affirmative; and, therefore, I shall endeavour very closely to explain it and to clarify any issue which hon. members opposite may have any doubt upon. As hon. members know, the qualifications of electors for the Legislative Council at present are contained in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act of 1899-1955. This Bill, by its amendment to the Electoral Act, seeks out the provisions which apply to the Legislative Council and the strictures placed upon its voters in connection with the Council, and liberalises the voting for this Chamber, by making it not only comparable to, but identical with, the voting circumstances and conditions associated with the Legislative Assembly.

The proposal to introduce adult suffrage makes it necessary for the measure to be introduced and passed and, at the same time, to amend the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, which is to be dealt with later. Hon. members will be aware that the qualification for electors for the Legislative Assembly was at one time in the Constitution Acts Amendment Act, and an amendment of that Act made it possible for the franchise requirements to be stated in the electoral law, rather than in an amendment to the Constitution Act. This Bill simply has the same effect and will give the same result, if the provision is included in the electoral law, with the consequential Bill to which I have referred; and if the Bill becomes law it will not be necessary to have two rolls, one for the Legislative Council and one for the Legislative Assembly.

As hon. members well know, there is a paragraph which envisages compulsory enrolment, and in the same manner as applies to Legislative Assembly elections. I think perhaps, for the reasons I stated earlier, it will be well to follow, through this Bill, the amendments proposed to the Electoral Act, and their effect. To make the provisions identical with those for the Legislative Assembly, Section 17 of the Electoral Act is to be amended and in several particulars the words to be added affect only the Legislative Council and not the Legislative Assembly. A later provision is one which deals with the revision of the section of the Electoral Act which provides that the Assembly rolls at present be sent to the Commonwealth to assist in the operation of Commonwealth elections and electoral rolls. That provision is wider and takes in the Legislative Council, and so it is with section after section of the Electoral Act.

The provisions contained in the amendments are simply and merely provided to include the provinces as well as the

districts and to include the Council as well as the Assembly. The amendment suggested to Section 40 of the principal Act is a notable one which specifically includes both Houses, instead of the Assembly only. A further clause will give the Chief Electoral Officer power of alteration of enrolments. That is to say that where a person is enrolled at present, in the case of a Province roll for more than one province, although an elector may be on the roll in the place where he resides for more than one district, Section 52 of the parent Act will be amended to make the requisite provision in that case, and there is an instance of two clauses which deal with the already repealed Section 58 of the Electoral Act.

Those are simple amendments, and take out any reference from the parent Act to Section 58, which is now non-existent. So this Bill, which is simple to follow and easy to understand has, in those points which I have already explained, far-reaching effects. I feel that, with that explanation, which, in my study of past debates on this legislation in Hansard, may not have been adequately dealt with, hon. members will appreciate how the changeover will be facilitated, if adult franchise is given effect to; and all this Bill does is to give to residents of Western Australia the right to vote for the Legislative Council in a manner identical with voting for the Legislative Assembly. The effects will be far-reaching, as the hon. Mr. Diver observed, but I hope the Bill will be better understood—its purposes not misunderstood—and that it will receive the adequate support necessary for its passing on this occasion. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by the Hon. A. F. Griffith, debate adjourned.

NATIVES (STATUS AS CITIZENS) BILL.

Second Reading—Defeated.

Debate resumed from the 15th October.

THE HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [740]: In rising to oppose this Bill, I do not think it is overstating the case to describe the measure as as good a bit of political exhibitionism as we have had or are likely to have in this House. It does nothing for the people it is supposed to be designed to help—that is the native and half-caste population of this State—except to offer them, if it is an offer, the same old politics and plonk as I referred to in this Chamber some years ago.

There seems to be nothing more in this Bill than just the right to vote and the right to drink. This measure is even worse than some of its predecessors and it does

not seem capable of any amendment. The only clause that could be amended is Clause 9, and if that were amended to any substantial degree it would mean that, beyond the Title, there would be little in the Bill at all. To my mind it is obvious that this Bill represents the limit of the constructive thinking of the present administration of native affairs in Western Australia. The Bill gives the natives nothing which one could claim would tend to improve their conditions—only the right to put a cross on a ballot paper, as directed, because many of them would have to be directed, and the right of free access to liquor. It is not designed to help them.

As regards most of these people, and I refer more specifically to the half-caste population, the Bill is likely to promote a feeling of disillusionment or resentment, when they realise that this much vaunted measure, about which they have heard so much and which they were told would mean such a great deal to them, has not opened the gates of paradise on earth for them and has done nothing to make their lives any easier or better than before. I wish to point out to hon. members that the Bill will do nothing to stop the native children drifting back to the filth and squalor of the camps once they leave school, and it will not teach the natives hygiene or sanitation. It will not instruct them in how to maintain their homes at a reasonable standard, according to the level of the community into which one day we hope to integrate them; neither will it help them in any way in improving their standards of living or their possibilities and opportunity for earning or improving their living.

When I say that the Bill is simply political exhibitionism, I do not think I exaggerate. It is just as well for hon. members to recall, if they take the trouble to study the measure, that the committee appointed by the Government a few months ago brought in 63 recommendations, which it suggested should be given simultaneous application in respect of native affairs in this State, with a view to improving the conditions of the natives. Of those 63 recommendations, this is the only one which the Government considers it is worth while to incorporate in a piece of legislation. For the information of those hon. members who may not have noticed this section of the report, the committee, on page 8, had this to say, among other things—

Too often the life of the average native, in the southern part of the State, at least, is characterised by dirt, inferior housing, gambling, instability and excessive drinking with all its complications. The children are unduly exposed to sickness, attend school irregularly, and leave at the earliest opportunity. Largely because of these factors, there is no reason to believe that the rising generation will differ

materially from the present one, unless urgent steps are taken to change these conditions.

By no stretch of imagination can it be claimed that this Bill, if it is passed, will change those conditions. On the contrary, I rather think that it would only make some of these weaknesses more pronounced. To me it seems almost incredible that the Government accepted the advice which apparently was tendered to it to introduce a Bill such as this which obviously has so many limitations.

The right to vote is a privilege that is granted to every white citizen, but what a wonderful privilege it would be regarded as by the native population in the form it is to be granted to them under the provisions of this Bill. When the Minister in another place introduced this measure he quoted the following extract which appears at page 10 of the committee's report:—

The incongruity of extending the franchise to an aboriginal living on the Canning Stock Route or in fact to a tribal native anywhere, has often been pointed out.

However, such a right would surely do him no harm. He would know nothing of his new privilege, and though he would be legally required to enrol, it is improbable that he would have anything to fear for some time to come for failure to do so.

Although natives in settled areas would be required to enrol, it is unlikely they would all be expected to do this immediately upon their becoming eligible. It seems that a good deal of commonsense is employed in the application of the Electoral Acts, and that a reasonably gradual process of enrolment would be permitted.

If we pass this Bill we will grant to the native population citizenship rights; and it seems almost a facetious approach—if not downright foolish—to say at the outset to these proposed new-found citizens, "You can treat the law as a joke and laugh at it because it is not going to be enforced." If they treat one law with disrespect, how can they be expected to recognise and comply with those laws with which we expect them to comply?

I take it that that is the major proposal contained in this Bill. That is the wonderful boost we will give to these people to assist them to become citizens, namely, by granting them the right to treat the law as a joke, plus the privilege of being able to booze in hotels.

The Hon. F. R. H. Lavery: They have the right to booze anywhere they like now.

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: There is another feature about this proposal which hon. members should carefully consider, and that is the provision relating to the

protected native. For the life of me I cannot see why, under this Bill, there is any way for him to be recognised. I assume that in the Warburton Ranges and in the Kimberley districts there must be many natives still not known by a name, a number or a mark, how are we to identify them? Are we to brand them upon the forehead or are we to hear more about the dog collars that have often been referred to? Are we to grant to the department, authority to use a branding iron so that in the future we will have no need to refer to dog collars, or are we to pass a Bill which will be farcical in its operation?

The hon. members of this House could be quite justified in thinking that this Bill was introduced without proper consideration of the serious repercussions that would result if it were passed. I believe—and the majority of the people will agree with me—that good citizenship is not a means to an end. It is the ultimate goal that everyone should aim at. We should do our best to encourage, not only white people and the new Australians that enter our country, but also the native population, to achieve good citizenship and not suggest to them, "Here are your citizenship rights and now that you possess them nothing matters." The average individual in any community feels a certain amount of pride and satisfaction when, at the end of his active life, he knows he is regarded as a good citizen by his fellowmen. However, some people we know, no matter what their chances in life may be, could never become good citizens.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: And they are not all natives. either.

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: That is obvious. I do not know how many other hon. members did so, but whilst this committee was sitting I took the opportunity to present to it some of my views. I still hold those views and I would now like to quote to the House a few extracts of the evidence I tendered to the committee. They are as follows:—

To my mind the best prospects of improvement lie in education and removal, as far as possible, of the young people from the environment and way of life of their people.

For a start, I think every junior high school in the areas concerned should have a number of scholarships set aside for half-caste children to attend high school—preferably in the metropolitan area or larger towns; that their high school education be designed to best equip them for such avocation or trade as they would appear best suited for. As soon as their high school education is completed they be immediately placed in apprenticeship or the avocation chosen for them.

I believe the Alvan House and the MacDonald House idea should, in addition, be developed to a far greater extent, and as soon as the children leave there they should be immediately placed in employment in the metropolitan area or larger country towns.

That seems to be an absolute prerequisite in regard to any proposal to improve the standards of the half-caste population over the years. I do not know why it should be—I have heard no sound reason or seen any explanation in the latest report of the Commissioner of Native Welfare—that there should be only nine girls attending Alvan House and only five boys attending MacDonald House. Whether they are discouraged in any way from attending those establishments or whether there are underlying circumstances which discourage them, I am, of course, not in a position to say.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: What accommodation is provided at those places?

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: That is a matter that could well be investigated by the Minister who, at the moment is charged with the administration of the Department of Native Welfare. The State has established both of those houses to assist in the integration of the native population with the white community, and, as it seems to me to be extremely urgent to achieve that objective, it is disappointing that the figures I have quoted of the attendances at Alvan House and MacDonald House are the maximum we can expect. I will continue to quote some of the evidence that I tendered to the committee. It is as follows:—

It is all going to be a very slow business. Just a stroke of the pen giving the native citizen rights is, I think, not going to achieve anything, and it is more likely to throw us back years.

I believe they must first be educated up to appreciate that citizen rights' essential purpose is to enable them to take their place as one of the community. It comes as the result of raising their standard and is not the means for doing so. In fact, we may find that we are faced with a wave of resentment when these people realise that citizen rights have not given them any easier or better life than they have already.

I still subscribe to those views and I still think that is the proper approach to this problem. The approach that must be made to the younger native population is going to be slow because we must provide them with education—not only academic education, but education that will teach them the correct mode of living and the way to earn a livelihood and to interest themselves in social affairs. This is of

vital importance because we have not much hope of making any headway with the adult native population in regard to improving their standard of life.

I see no reason why we should not hope to achieve some success with the younger native generation. The committee, which made its report after a fairly comprehensive inquiry, in dealing with the question of education said this—

In any scheme for the ultimate integration of the native with the general social structure, education in its widest sense must play a major role. In his present state he is treated almost with contempt as an inferior; if he is to be acceptable to white society—and without this there can be no future for him—his mode of living and his whole outlook on life must undergo a complete transformation. He must leave the filth and squalor of the camp, and adopt standards of hygiene and personal cleanliness comparable with our own. He must abandon what to us appear to be habits of slothfulness, indolence and dishonesty and become industrious, reliable and trustworthy. In short, while retaining the more desirable elements of his own culture, he must live as we live and generally conform to the requirements of white civilization.

I think we can all agree with that point of view. It is merely a question of deciding what methods are to be adopted to achieve it. However, I do not think for a moment that a Bill such as this will achieve anything.

It is a little disappointing to learn from the report of this committee that it has recommended that only 10 bursaries be granted to half-caste students throughout Western Australia. There are over 3,000 of those children attending school at present. If we provide only ten bursaries for the best of them, we will make very slow progress. That number of bursaries should be multiplied many times.

There is a recommendation by that same committee for a process of adult education to be instituted with a view to getting together the parents throughout the various centres to discuss the future of their children, their home life, the way to look after their homes, and how generally to support themselves so that they can fit in with the community. To my mind that is one of the most valuable suggestions made by the committee.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: I have suggested a Rhodes scholarship.

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Valuable as it is, unless there is a marked change in the attitude of the Department of Native Welfare, it would be much better if such adult education were placed under the

jurisdiction of some other department for the furtherance of the project which the committee obviously had in mind. I doubt whether on its record up to date the Department of Native Welfare is the most suitable one to accept this responsibility.

We are all prepared to recognise that there are marked differences of opinion as to how the native problem should be approached—differences which can be defined as the views held by people who have to live with this problem and who have a firsthand knowledge of it, and those who have little or no firsthand knowledge but who regard this type of legislation as a simple solution to what is a very complex problem. I think we can all concede there is room for honest differences of opinion between those two groups, but I would not place in either category persons like the present Minister for the Northern Territory, Mr. Hasluck, who, to my mind could well abandon his "holier than thou" attitude on this subject and lend all the influence he possesses to the representations being made by the State Government to the Commonwealth for assistance in dealing with this problem. I make that statement as a result of reading a comment made by him in "The West Australian" of the 5th September. Among other things he said—

The current West Australian proposals are a most encouraging sign that the leads which the Commonwealth has been giving in the Northern Territory have not gone unregarded.

He said further—

The position in the Northern Territory was what the West Australian proposals now sought to achieve.

From what we have read in the newspapers recently about the position in the Northern Territory, I hope this State will not adopt the policy which has been followed by Mr. Hasluck in the Northern Territory in bringing about the conditions into which such a man as Albert Namatjira has been forced. We hear a lot of talk about what is being done in the Northern Territory. To the extent I have been able to inform myself I question very much whether the Commonwealth Government's policy, which is under the direction of Mr. Hasluck, has achieved anything greater in the Northern Territory than has been achieved in Western Australia, or as much.

It was only a few years ago that the same Albert Namatjira, whom I do not know, but from what I understand of him is undoubtedly an outstanding member of his race, was not allowed to build a house where he wanted it in Alice Springs. Even in Western Australia, with all our so-called discrimination, a man of that type would not have met with such difficulty.

I was very interested to receive from a member of Parliament the other day a copy of the Northern Territory "News" in which this problem is dealt with. If the House will be tolerant I would like to read a little from it because it is illuminating. Among other things, the editorial states—

It is important now, not only for Namatjira, that there be some acceptance of the lessons glaring out from the shambles of the artist's "rise and fall" and that there be a little public understanding of the massive problem besetting the authorities in this "full rights" program.

It must be clear that it was a mistake to give Namatjira his citizenship passport, despite the fact that he had proved he could "walk with kings," even more than most whites, and had dignity and ability.

Surely an essential measure of whether a native should get "full rights" must be his proven ability to bring up his family to the acceptable "white standards." This was not the case with Namatjira . . . and this very fact probably contributed more to his downfall than anything . . .

Underlying all the fuss and uproar the one salient point is all too clear—grog is the one hurdle Welfare seems incapable of jumping. A courageous experiment in educating natives to handle drink in moderation may yet be the only answer.

Because, like it or not, liquor is now an accepted part of white society's social and even business life and assimilation without it may be impossible.

Just lately another gentleman thought fit to rush to the newspapers in connection with the legislation before us. He is Mr. A. Crookes-Hull, who I understand is the Rev. Crookes-Hull. He seems to be able to compromise with his beliefs when talking on a political plane in respect of such things as liquor. He stated—

While absolutely loyal to the Methodist unswerving hostility to liquor, I am forced to the conclusion that plugging the liquor issue is merely a red herring to deny to natives something which is really theirs by birth.

I plead that the Legislative Council will consider the Bill without party prejudice and remember that reform cannot be without cost to the community. There is a price to be paid by the whites. Ultimately this must be paid, and why not now.

I would suggest that this gentleman had he really wished to make his appeal from a non-political angle, might have done so when the Bill was before the Legislative Assembly. Had it been approached from a non-political angle in that House we

might not have had the job of dealing with the Bill here. To me there seems to be some humbug about the approach of the reverend gentleman on this matter.

I understand that the mission in which he is interested at Mogumber is one of the biggest beneficiaries in the hand-outs provided by the Department of Native Welfare. We may be reaching the stage where we should obtain fairly definite information as to the value the community is getting from these hand-outs. The mission is costing the department over £11,000 a year. Whilst we are able to obtain the numbers of children who are there, or who have been there, it is a bit difficult to discover how many children left there at 16 years of age and are now taking their place as citizens; how many are living in the camps with their parents in reasonable proximity; and whether the State has received any great benefit from the expenditure of that amount of money. After all is said and done, to care for these children at that mission until they are 16 years of age and to allow them to drift back to the way of life of their parents is not, to my mind, advancing the policy of integration one iota. Possibly we are worse off and we might have been better off had we not spent that money.

There are other people who apparently are somewhat fearful of the results of granting citizenship rights at this stage. As well as hon. members of all political parties in this House, there are many other people throughout the length and breadth of the South-West Land Division who are fearful of the results. In "The West Australian" of the 4th October one, R. Gillespie, apparently a person of that race, stated:—

People can receive a due too late. Of what use is citizenship to natives who have learnt for the greater part of their lives to do without it? . . . A feast; then a famine. It is the babies and the school children to whom this country must honour the debt. . . .

The young ones have a right to be recognised and they now have educational opportunities and face a people who are learning to treat the natives as human beings. The old people, except those who want free access to more liquor, want peace and less publicity.

There is also a comment in the "Daily News" made by Mr. Arthur Calwell, whom some hon. members here may have met, that it was a bad thing that Australian aborigines should be allowed to drink; drink lowered their morale and powers of physical resistance, but also led to degradation of family and tribe.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is the same with white people.

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The hon. member should tell him that.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: I do not care what he said. I am telling you.

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The Rev. H. R. Fitch of the Church of Christ, Merredin, has also had something to say. He stated:—

Having citizenship rights did no more to make natives respected people than having a rifle necessarily made a man a good shot.

Mr. Fitch said that the granting of citizenship rights to natives had taught few of them the value of money, the wisdom of using it to buy food and clothing or the way to live in modern homes.

"What value is there in being a fully-accredited citizen if education, culture and self-respect are lacking?" Mr. Fitch asked.

"We have not discharged our responsibility when we give them full status and have failed in our duty while we leave them in squalor to raise their children amid the dirt of the compounds."

Mr. Fitch said that we could not by any means feel that our work was done when we gave natives the right to vote and to drink in public bars.

Those are only some opinions, but they show that the views some of us hon. members hold, despite the fact that we are unfortunate enough to be classed as Opposition members, are shared by some members of the public. Without exaggeration, I say there is more dread of this legislation—certainly in the areas I represent—than I have experienced with any other Bill that has come before the House since I have been a member. Wherever we move in those areas, we are approached by people who are fearful that the Bill will become law, and fearful of the results.

I think they have some justification for their fears. Some people who profess to be whole-heartedly in favour of granting full citizenship rights to the natives and half-castes have very little knowledge of the subject. The expenditure of about £500,000 a year, by the Department of Native Welfare, will have to be considerably increased before we will make much success of the integration of these people with the white race. I question very much whether the public is getting reasonable value for their money by the expenditure of the £500,000 that we are now spending. In 1953, we were spending £180,000 a year and now it is £500,000. Frankly, I see no improvement over the period; and I question whether there has been any improvement.

Whilst much more money, to my mind, is required, I think it will have to be spent in a more constructive effort than the department has yet been able to make. In the 10 years that Mr. Middleton has been the Commissioner of Native Welfare,

he seems to me to have spent too much of his time and energy in fostering or stimulating discontent, misunderstanding and antipathy between the half-caste population and the white people in the districts in which they live. There has not been enough done in the way of making a constructive approach to the problem. Mr. Middleton seems concerned with trying to bring into contempt, the laws which this Parliament has passed—rightly or wrongly—and the law under which his department is supposed to be functioning and which he is charged with administering as the chief executive officer under the Minister.

Some years ago, I directed the attention of Parliament to an article which appeared in the periodical "People." At that time, I raised the same point as I am bringing forward now. Whilst this article was not specifically attributed to Mr. Middleton, the information was obviously furnished from a source very close to him. What was written in "People" did nothing, to my mind, but pour contempt on the legislation and the activities of the Parliament of this State. So lately as the 13th July of this year, Mr. Middleton—this time he signed the article, or took full responsibility for it—contributed an article to the "Sunday Times" in which he said—

Without doubt, the most basic and urgent need of natives at this moment is restoration to them of their rights and privileges as citizens of our country.

It continues—

But how can you explain to an intelligent human being it is in order for a white man to spend as much time in an hotel as he pleases and drink as much liquor as his capacity and pocket will permit (basically because his skin is white) but it is not in order for the native to do so, legally because of his aboriginal heritage, and, in practice, because of the colour of his skin, which so readily identifies him?

I say that is a lie; that there is no truth in the statement that differentiation is reached because of colour. The differentiation is felt, because of the living conditions and the unhygienic conditions under which these people, unfortunately, still live. I would take no exception to an hon. member of Parliament making that statement, or even a member of the public, but I say it is entirely out of order for the officer charged with the administration of the department to make those remarks; and it is time Mr. Middleton was told that his job is to administer his department and that the political activities of the department are the prerogative of his Minister.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: He was telling the truth, and you know it.

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: The article continues—

Naturally such blatant discrimination infuriates and embitters many natives. It is something which contributes more towards the characteristic anti-white and anti-social attitudes of part-aborigines in the south than any other single factor of our treatment of them.

They hate us for it, and most individual natives are prepared to go to gaol again and again rather than submit to such unfair discrimination.

Apart from a fair bit of this being a figment of the imagination of the gentleman concerned, it is not his prerogative to contribute such articles to the Press, even were the information true, which, I submit, it is not. What he says there may happen in isolated cases. He talks of the hatred of the half-caste for the white people, but if it is there, it is to be found only in limited or isolated cases. Such ill-feeling as may exist today, has only been generated in recent years; since this gentleman took charge of the Department of Native Welfare in Western Australia. We never heard of such a thing 10 years ago. He goes on in this article to speak of a young half-caste girl who was applying for citizenship rights. This lass apparently went to his department and saw one of his officers. Mr. Middleton, in the article, says—

Then she was told the application would have to be supported by a statutory declaration to the effect she wished to become a citizen of the State (an obvious anomaly because she was already a citizen of the State by virtue of the fact that she was born in Australia).

She would have to declare that for two years prior to the date of the application she had dissolved tribal and native association except with respect to lineal descendants of native relations in the first degree.

The article continues in much the same way, and then we come to this piece—

He wrote the next one down on a piece of paper which he later handed to her.

The "he" referred to there was the officer of the department. The report later goes on—

But the worst was surely to follow when, after leaving the office, she read the piece of paper handed to her. It informed her she would be required to submit herself for medical examination in order to satisfy the board she was not "suffering from active leprosy, syphilis, granuloma or yaws."

If that is the position—and Mr. Middleton has been in charge of the department for 10 years—the reflection is on Mr.

Middleton if no approach has been made to Parliament for this sort of thing to be dispensed with. This is in exactly the same category as his attitude over the half-caste returned soldier, when capital was made of the fact that men who had served with the armed forces were not entitled to citizenship. Nothing was done about it. It was left to me, as a private member, to move an amendment in Parliament to have a man, with an honourable discharge, given full citizenship rights. Instead of all the propaganda and mock sympathy, I submit it was the business of the department to ask Parliament to pass this sort of legislation, and not leave it to an individual private member to move amendments to that end. If that is the position with the department, then it is falling down on its job. It is not interested in helping these people but is interested only in making propaganda and passing the responsibility on to any other person or department if they will take it.

It will not surprise hon. members if I say I am convinced that we will not achieve worth-while progress in our efforts to integrate, particularly the half-caste population into the white population while Mr. Middleton remains chief executive officer of the department. I think we have reached that stage. He is much more concerned, I think, in acting as a sort of agent provocateur between the white people and the coloured people, than he is in furthering the interests of the State; and the interests of the State are those of both the white and coloured populations. This is a growing problem and we have to decide what we are going to do if we are to get anywhere. I think that steadily the problem is getting worse. If in the period I have mentioned previously—10 years—we have made so little progress—if we have made any at all—under Mr. Middleton's administration, then it is time a change was tried.

Another case comes to mind, although I am not well-informed on it. The Minister might be better informed than I am. Hon. members will recall that when the Queen Mother was in Australia, a half-caste girl was taken from Hall's Creek to Canberra or Melbourne and presented to her. Considerable publicity was given to the episode, and I think everyone felt pleased to know that a child of our native race had managed to reach the standard of being able to comport herself so well in front of the people that she must have met, as well as in front of the Queen Mother. But it was left to one of our papers, a few weeks later, to illustrate the conditions to which this girl returned—the conditions, I presume, under which she was living—at Hall's Creek. Yet the department, which, I imagine, had been responsible for this girl going to Melbourne, had allowed her to go back to those conditions; or it may have sent her back to them.

So, I ask: Is this department concerned about propaganda, or just with the idea of making capital out of any feature of the life of these people in this country? The department does not seem very concerned with improving the standards of living of the natives, although I think now that this young girl has been removed from Hall's Creek and is attending school at Derby. The Minister may know the position; I do not. That is the information I have, and I am led to believe it is correct.

There is talk about the cost having to be borne by the white people. That is true enough, but there is not only the monetary cost; there is the cost of the unrest, disorder and drunkenness that will follow. That will be passed on to the country people, and the country people only, if legislation such as this is passed. For that reason, if for no other, I could not support the Bill as it is at present drafted.

Obviously it will be only the people in the country areas, and particularly those in the smaller centres where there is a considerable half-caste population, who will have to face up to the results if this legislation is passed. The committee suggested that increased drunkenness and disorder would probably result. I think the word "probably" was used. I use the word "certainly."

The Hon. G. Bennetts: We could bring some down into the Nedlands area!

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I would like to do that!

The Hon. G. Bennetts: We could bring them down and educate them.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Why not North Perth?

The Hon. H. L. ROCHE: It is some years since I first urged that something be done about this problem. It must be the best part of eight or nine years ago when I mentioned it during the Address-in-reply debate; but for all practical purposes nothing has been done to improve the position. In fact some of the things that may have been done may have made the problem worse. I want to assure the Minister, the Government and everyone else, that most hon. members, certainly those in my own Party, and I think those in the Liberal Party, who have a knowledge of the position in the country districts, want to help. I trust the Minister will take my remarks as constructive criticism; he may feel that some of it is destructive, but this problem is so vital, and is becoming so great that within the next 15 to 20 years, if something is not done, it will get out of hand.

I trust the Minister will accept those remarks in the spirit in which they are meant. I regret to say that if the Bill is passed in its present form—and it is impossible to amend it—it will not be in the best interests of the State.

THE HON. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM (South-East) [8.32]: This Bill, or the subject with which it deals, is considered by most hon. members in this House, and in another place, to be vital and important. But I am both disappointed and amazed that two hon. members in this House, who might have given us expert information, have not done so. I can only assume that their reticence is indicative of a conflict between their personal beliefs and their party obligations.

Much of what has been said by hon. members here and in another place, regarding our native peoples, has been ill-informed and ill-advised and, in some cases, cruel. In another place an extravagant statement such as this was made—

The natives today have enjoyed so little improvement that they were better off 100 years ago than they are today.

Obviously the hon. member who made that statement has not made the faintest study of the problem. Had he done so he would have known that 100 years ago was right in the middle of that black part of our history that is today known as the extermination period. Queensland was then still a part of New South Wales, and it is on record that pastoralists in Queensland were driven bankrupt from their properties because they dared to express sympathy for the natives, and refused to take part in the sorties which were then normal and common activities. Those sorties were made against the various tribes and parties of natives with the sole intention of exterminating them—men, women and children.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: We have not a very good record in regard to these people, have we?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It is on record that in those days water holes were deliberately poisoned with strychnine with the idea of exterminating the natives. Legislation was passed giving native policemen the right legally to steal the womenfolk of opposition tribes. That happened 100 years ago. But in the year 1859, which is almost 100 years ago, Queensland became a separate State and we entered the second part of our history in regard to the natives—the part which is referred to today as the segregation period. A much more enlightened attitude began to be adopted towards the natives. The third phase is the present one, when we talk not of extermination or segregation, but of integration.

I submit that that is a great step forward in the actions of the Government and the people towards the native population. We have heard, many times, various speakers on both sides and in both Houses say that we defeated the original owners of the land, and that we usurped their

right and land. That is completely ill-founded. There is nothing to indicate that the people we know today as the Australian aborigines owned the land or originated here. There is no precise knowledge as to the origin of our aborigines. Many experts have expressed the opinion that the aboriginal, as we know him today, does not belong to any one of the three main racial species in the world.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What has that to do with the Bill?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: They have so many different characteristics that they are entitled to be called, as they are called today, true Australoids. It appears that in the very beginning they came from somewhere in the islands to the north. It is known that they were here at about the end of the last ice age, which is 7,000 years ago. But it has been assessed that it is 12,000 years since the natives first came to Australia from across the sea. The belief that they came by a land bridge is unfounded. They came across the sea, to Cape York Peninsula, probably in dug-out canoes which they learned to build when they lived in the islands to the north.

When they landed here they brought with them their own dogs, or the dingoes as we call them today. Biologists and anthropologists say that the dingo is of exactly the same species as the wild dog in Europe during the stone age. When the dingo was introduced to Australia it was the first completely foreign animal to the Australian species of marsupial mammals. So completely different are they that they prove beyond any doubt that most of the native animals of Australia came across a land bridge. That means that they came here many thousands of years ahead of the natives.

The Australian land mass, as we know it today, has three very strange peculiarities and they have contributed to the very slow development of the native population. The first of these three peculiarities is that there are no cereal grasses natural to Australia—there never have been.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: What has that to do with the Bill?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: If the hon. member will contain herself she will probably learn a great deal. She has contributed nothing to the debate so far and, if she listens, she might learn something.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: I doubt it.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I doubt it, too. There are no cereal grasses natural to Australia, nor were there any natural milk-contributing animals—

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That is wrong.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM:—that the natives could use to develop their farming methods. Strangely enough, one of the things contributing to their backwardness is the fact that in Australia there are no natural coconut tree growths. The reason I mention these matters is that they are the three factors which have influenced the development of the other parts of the world.

The coconut tree supplies the natives of the islands in the north, and in the various lands where it grows, with food, utensils, home-making materials and boat-building materials. None of these things was available in Australia; in fact, nothing like the coconut was available to the native populations when they first landed here. The fact that there were no animals that they could use as beasts of burden, or as food producers—food in the form of milk—made it difficult for them to use any animals for the betterment of their living conditions. The fact that there were no natural grasses which would have contributed grain or cereals in the form of food gave them no opportunity of establishing permanent settlements or agricultural activities.

The result was that over the thousands of years they lived here they became natural food gatherers and not food farmers. That meant that they had to live according to the natural conditions and the seasons of the country in which they had established their new home. That is the reason why today we find the native still going on his walkabout. It is the seasonal desire to walk or travel. They had to travel from place to place to gather their food; and that is the reason why they never established permanent settlements. They had no personal ownership of property, and material things were of little value to them. Such goods were a burden that had to be carried over great distances. So they left them behind, and there is no indication of their ever having been interested in accumulating personal property or belongings.

When we look at the people of whom our natives today are descendants, in that light we probably have a more sympathetic approach to the problem. They are so completely different; they are virtually still untouched and are not in any way advanced; in fact, they have advanced very little as compared with the stone-age people from whom they have sprung. The tribes that they left 12,000 years ago had all the advantages that these people did not have, and, as a result, the people here have not advanced.

We are all descended from the same stock, and we find 12,000 years later, that the white people came to this country usurping and replacing those who, in all probability—according to scientists—were descended from the same ancestors. It

seems to me to be a long story to trace back; but apparently that is the factual origin of the Australian natives.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: It is a very painful process.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: In about 1740 or 1750, when settlement first took place in Australia there was no known method of estimating the number of the native population in Australia. The whole extent of the continent was not known. In the year 1788 an estimate was taken—something in the nature of a census—and the native population then was estimated to be about 300,000. Today it is something like 74,000 of which those in Western Australia constitute 21,300. So we have between one-third and one-quarter of the native population of the continent.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: How were they distributed originally?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Again, that was not known, although most of the States, because of their varying sizes, had differing populations. But it appears that, because of their own natural division of the land, the hunting areas and the areas in which food could be obtained were based on a very intelligent distribution. It tended not to conserve growth, but at the same time it tended not to waste any, but to take advantage of what was available. The result was that the actual population was spread fairly evenly over the areas of reasonable growth and water.

So, difficult as we may find it to understand, that estimate was taken long ago. It was noticed in the areas populated by whites that the natives had an evenly distributed density of population in any of the known verdant areas of the continent, and from this it was reasonably assessed to be something in excess of 250,000. I think we could say without any shadow of doubt that the controversy with which we are concerned today is not whether this advance in the status of the native population will occur, but rather the manner of its occurring, and the speed of its achievement.

We know that all change breeds some violence. With slow change there is little violence stirred up; it is not noticeable. But no sudden change can be dissociated from violence. It does not matter what sphere of activity or circumstance we refer to, change must be accompanied by violence. Sudden social changes result in revolution. The same, however, can be obtained by evolution. That position occurs here. Here we have the native man, or breed—call him what we will.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Human being.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, and a very passive and, in actual fact, law-abiding human being. We are trying

to transfer these people by one fell swoop from stone age people to atomic age people.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: That is rot.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It is unreasonable and cruel. But it could be brought about over a longer and more gentle phase; and this has been proven. Inside of 200 years we have come as far as we have.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The hon. Mr. Roche says nowhere.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The hon. Mr. Roche expressed his opinion and said we had not got anywhere, but that we could get somewhere. I agree with the hon. member. Mention was made of Albert Namatjira—a man who is world famous—who, in a few short years, has achieved great fame. All civilisation is generally associated with culture. We hear of new civilisations being uncovered which had reached a certain standard of culture. This is generally measured by the arts that the people knew and practised. Here we have a man who has achieved world-wide fame in one of the highest forms of art that we as twentieth century people acknowledge. Yet, in all good faith, we took that man away, gave him citizenship rights, and introduced him to our own civilisation and our own ways.

The Hon. R. F. Hutchison: That was because he was earning so much.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The hon. member has a pecuniary mind. The net result of that man's introduction to civilisation, and its ways, and his removal from his natural environment, has been a complete failure. It is a disgrace to us. It indicates to me, however, that that man must have, of necessity, some very fine moral fibre. He must have finer qualities than the people of his tribe. Yet, instead of being able to raise himself above their way of life, and be an example to the rest of his tribe and his family, that man, with all the opportunities it is possible for anyone to have, literally fell into degradation. From the source of information I have, it would seem that his very art has suffered. He cannot paint as he did previously; he cannot recapture his old skill. If that is not a tragedy, I do not know what is. It is a shocking indictment that a man like Namatjira can, in so short a time, be reduced to the state he has been brought to; when he could have been the very epitome of what our friends, who are sponsoring this Bill, would like these people to be. He could have been the light which could have guided these people out of their darkness, but he was not able to do it. There is no one more sorry than I am that that is the case.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You would term him a black sheep.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: No; I am sorry for him. I would like the Minister to know that I am not one of those who feel that these people are hopeless, and not worth fighting for, or working for. I do considerable work amongst them, and with the people who work for them. I will continue to do so, but I will do it in my own way, by evolution. I will not do it violently by revolution; because, in the end, I believe revolution will reap its own reward, which will be violence. Again, many of the thoughts expressed have been those in opposition to help and sympathy for these people, because of a racial barrier. That is not so. I am quite sure that people as a whole would feel in no way antagonistic to the native generally because he is an Australian; they do so because of the social barrier. I speak primarily for my own district, because that is the area I know best. One can walk around this country and prove what I have said is right.

In my district there are four missions. In those missions I have seen things that have amazed me. I am sympathetic towards the people, but I could not in ordinary circumstances say that I love them. But I have seen people that do. I could take hon. members to one mission where the kiddies come running along as soon as a particular man appears. They hang on to his legs, laughing, and quite obviously indicating that they love him. I have also seen the womenfolk pick up the children and cuddle and kiss them. They would not do that unless they loved them. I admit I could not do it. These people have no feeling of holding back at all. They are the people with the answer to our problem. Let us help them to do the job that can be done among these native people.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: What does Mr. Schenk think of this proposition?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Of the three missionaries whom I have asked for a direct answer, not one wants the indiscriminate granting of citizenship. They are fearful of the result.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: The Bill does not do that.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The Bill does give indiscriminate rights, and then, I believe, intends to take them back. That is a great mistake.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: You should read it.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: There have been from time to time polls taken on an interview basis and the results are rather enlightening. A poll taken of interested persons gave an astounding result. It referred to acceptance of our own natives into white society.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: Taken by white people.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Yes. We find that 10 per cent. of the people asked said they would not object to marrying, or inter-marrying with aboriginals; 83 per cent. of the white people asked said they would not object to having natives as close friends; 92 per cent. of the white people asked said they would not object to having them as neighbours; 94 per cent. of the white people said they would not object to working with them; 98 per cent. of the whites would not object to the natives being permanent citizens of Australia, and 100 per cent. would not object to their being allowed temporary citizenship. I do not know how that would apply.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who was the authority?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The information is taken from a Queensland census published by the Western Suburbs Branch of the Unions Association of Brisbane. The interesting point of this questionnaire is that 42 per cent. of the group had never met an aboriginal. That is rather enlightening. Apart from the question of marriage, those favouring aborigines are almost as high as those favouring people from England and the United States. That again is most enlightening. Greatly different opinions were expressed by these people who had lived and worked among the natives in the out-back areas. One aspect of intermarriage seems to be that the distinguishing characteristics of aborigines blend quite well with those of Europeans after a few generations. This is quite easily understandable if we accept the fact that the aboriginal is basically of Caucasian stock.

Another point on which I would like to touch is the statement by many hon. members that we are doing nothing. By the way, they are not speaking of themselves personally or of the Government, but rather of us as the white people of Australia. For their information again, the State is divided into five districts for the purpose of administering aborigines. These districts are staffed by district officers, assistant district officers, patrol officers and other officers. The aboriginal reserves total 27,000,000 acres. There are 29 Christian missions in Western Australia which work amongst the aborigines. Among the denominations we find the following figures:—

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------|---|
| Anglican | ..... | 1 |
| Roman Catholic | ..... | 9 |
| Presbyterian | ..... | 1 |
| Methodist | ..... | 1 |
| Churches of Christ | ..... | 2 |
| Baptist Union | ..... | 1 |
| Seventh Day Adventists | ..... | 2 |
| Apostolic Church of Australia | ..... | 1 |
| Gospel Brotherhood | ..... | 1 |
| United Aborigines Mission | ..... | 7 |
| Other inter-denominational missions | ..... | 3 |

When people are prepared, voluntarily, to give up their more advantageous forms of livelihood in order to care for our native people, as these missionaries are doing, it is most commendable. One has only to visit these missions to see what they have given up in order to help these natives. It is completely wrong and unfair, therefore, for anyone to say that nothing is being done. I am not referring to what the Government is doing. These are individual people who have a choice of their activities and that is how they give their time.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: They receive Government assistance, though.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: Yes, Government assistance is given, and I will deal with that later on the matter of schooling. We talk of our native problem. We have not a native problem yet. We have difficulties, but not a problem. However, I feel that the day the native is automatically a citizen, we are going to have problems. I am not just quoting my own opinion. Let me read one or two small items from different organisations. I have here a copy of a telegram from the chairman of the Cue Road Board in connection with this Bill. It reads as follows:—

My board deeply concerned over liquor clause if native citizenship Bill is passed. Our letter of protest to Minister Brady on September 19th ignored to date and I would appreciate any assistance you and your party can give.

Road boards are interested and with good cause.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: The Minister is not interested in replying to some communications.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: These people in the remote outback areas where there is no intensive patrol by law forces have reason to be disturbed. I can take hon. members to Coolgardie where a number of natives have citizenship rights. The licensee of a hotel there is still trying, after many months, to get out of the place because of the trouble he is having with the natives who, after a few drinks, become very rude and troublesome. Even the whites depart and leave the natives in control. The natives then start swearing and speaking to the ordinary women of the township. That is going on; and there are only a few natives. What is it going to be like when all the natives from that reserve obtain the same privilege?

The next item I wish to quote is a motion that was passed unanimously at a conference held at Meekatharra last week. This conference embraced a very wide gathering of pastoralists, and I want it to be known that the Pastoralists' Association did not pass this motion; it is just

a motion passed by the delegates attending the conference and this is the wording of it—

That while this conference voices no objection to granting of citizenship rights to natives on ethical grounds, it demands that for the moral protection of the natives themselves and for the physical protection of both natives and whites, especially those living far from cities and police, that no native except those with special qualifications should be allowed to drink or purchase liquor in a public house.

There is a footnote to this motion saying that it was unanimously supported in very feeling terms by the women delegates present.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: Where was the conference held?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: At Meekatharra.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Who was it signed by?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: It was a gathering of pastoralists in the Meekatharra district. I have no signature.

The Hon. E. M. Heenan: How many were present at the conference?

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It could have come from any individual.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I made it clear that it was not from the executive of the association. I do not want to mislead the House with something I have dreamed up. It is a motion passed at a conference held at Meekatharra embracing a wide gathering of pastoralists.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: It cannot be checked with any authority.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I will check it if the Minister has any doubts about it.

The Hon. F. D. Willmott: It is the pastoralists' association of Meekatharra.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I am only trying to impress upon hon. members of this House how different is the feeling of hon. members who live amongst, near or are in some way associated with the natives in country areas from that of those living in the city. I have heard hon. members say that well-dressed and well-behaved natives are being denied citizenship rights. I cannot see why a well-behaved native in the city cannot obtain citizenship rights. I cannot see why they are barred from citizenship. However, I submit that these people are vastly different from those about whom we are concerned.

It has been said that this Bill will give the natives two main rights: plonk and politics. And these two rights have been described graphically: plonk—beer and liquor—and politics—the privilege of voting. The right to liquor appears to be

that which is causing the greatest concern. I suggest that politics is far from being a right or privilege. It appears to me to be a compulsory responsibility that is being forced on these people. It is a right which a great number of white citizens do not seek—they are not happy about the compulsory right to vote. This Bill is thrusting upon the natives the responsibility of voting although they may not want it at all. It has been asked for in this House, and I hope it will be answered, how are we going to enroll Bill Fryling Pan or Bill No Foot?

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Billy Goat.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I am not being facetious. As most hon. members are aware, a great number of our native population go under names which in no circumstances could be included on a state roll for elections; and if they are not enrolled, how can they conform to the law? If they can be enrolled, are they going to be fined for not voting? That is only one of the little things that will come up when this right is finally established, as ultimately it will be, I hope over a long period of time.

The Hon. H. C. Strickland: Not while you are here.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I have already said that we have no problem yet. However, in America they do have a problem, but it is not because their natives have not citizenship rights; they do have. That is where their problem lies. The equality of these people with the whites in America is what causes all the trouble. In South Africa there was no native trouble until two or three newspapers saw the opportunity for good material and started to publicise the rights of which the natives at that time were allegedly being deprived. The problem has grown to such an extent that the natives have their own newspapers and they certainly publish their lack of rights now. That is what has contributed a great deal to South Africa's problem.

Our natives, even without citizenship rights, can travel in buses and attend public theatres, etc. There is a little shop in this city which is my favourite place for a soft drink, because a drink with fresh crushed fruit can be obtained, and I have seen three or four natives drinking in that shop. However, there is no riot. There is no upheaval about niggers being allowed to drink with whites. I wonder how many of these people have citizenship rights? They are well-behaved. A missionary said to me that the natives are not concerned because they have no citizenship rights; they are in the church and are quite happy; they are all the same family in Christ.

We have not a problem yet, but it is coming, with the bad publicity we are getting from time to time of ill-informed

arguments and ill-informed individual advice. At the Norseman Mission, a bus load of native children comes in every day to the primary school. I think there are 5 children this year sitting for the Junior, and last year two passed the Junior and one the Leaving examinations.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What could they do after that?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: That is where the trouble starts; but at the present moment let me develop my debate on schooling and their acceptance at schools. A bus load of native children comes in from the Kurrawang Mission near Kalgoorlie, and I think at least four of the Goldfields schools have children from that mission attending classes from primary to high school. There is no discrimination. If anything, in two cases it is the native children who are wielding the big stick in the playground. At Coolgardie one of the native girls is class monitor and at the Eastern Goldfields High School one is a prefect. There is no discrimination; and so far as I know these children have no citizenship rights.

The unhappy position arises when these children leave school and also the mission, unless the missionaries are able to place them—as they try to do—in a Christian home with work to do.

Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: What happens when they turn 21?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: The same as what happens when they are 16 or 17. Rather than thrust rights on to these people, which they do not specifically want, the Government should spend money on the missions that are proving themselves of some value and should work to establish a technical school to encourage and develop native handcraft. There is a sale for it. There is no doubt about that as I have proved myself in the shops. I have sold material from the missions and sold it easily as souvenirs.

This could be done at Kalgoorlie because one of the best and biggest missions is established just out of Kalgoorlie. A place should be established close to the technical school at Kalgoorlie specifically to encourage native children; the girls in weaving—I do not think weaving is primarily a native art but they could easily learn because their skill is with their hands and not their minds—and the boys could be taught mechanics, because they have a bent for that. The boys could also do carving as this comes within their ability and training.

In the shops today one sees aboriginal designs in art and also on contemporary furnishings. This could be a lucrative form of income for the native population and the Government could contribute greatly towards such a scheme. I believe this could form a trade and calling for natives. Unfortunately, in this country

there is no field of endeavour that is open to them such as in America where they are stewards, particularly on trains, which is looked upon as being a field in which coloured people can seek employment. Here it is a white man's job, although the native could compete.

Coming back from Esperance last week I picked up two native lads, aged about 18 or 19. They were working on the railways and I asked them their income. They told me it was £29 a fortnight and that they were perfectly happy and did not feel downtrodden. I asked them what they thought of their boss and they said he was a good fellow. As I stated, these native boys were quite happy.

I do not see why they should not continue in that job. Apparently they are standing up, at present anyway, to the demands their foreman is making of them. This is the beginning. They are only two out of thousands. The population attending schools today, according to the figures I have, is 2,500 in 21 special schools.

Another point that has been mentioned is with regard to social service benefits that natives are precluded from enjoying. The States have various standards and different agreements. So far as payment to natives in this State is concerned, where a native is on a reserve or at a mission, he does not enjoy social services because he is receiving benefits from another source. The actual wording is—"a person who is being cared for in one capacity, should not also be cared for in another capacity."

Primarily that is the official reason for not conferring full social service benefits on natives being cared for under native welfare Acts in the various States.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: The white people would have to be given extra benefits if they were given to the natives.

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: I believe that a great deal of criticism of whites on their treatment of natives is undeserved, because it can be proven that over the years there has been a very definite improvement, not only in the treatment of natives but in the attitude towards them. Twenty years ago, other than missionaries, there were no people interested in taking natives into their homes. Today people in this State welcome them into their homes and prove them to be good citizens. That in itself is a change of mind, attitude and approach to the natives. I suggest there will be fewer and fewer prepared to do that if, as has been mentioned, this giving of rights and the removal of the protection that the present form of the Act gives, are affected.

I believe that the direct Government expenditure on aboriginal welfare in Australia today is something like £3,200,000 annually and the indirect expenditure adds greatly to that figure. It must be remembered that this figure is distributed

between the present population of 74,000 people all of whom are not in direct contact even with the missions.

I would like to quote some other figures to show just what is being done for natives. There are 459 Government officers directly employed full-time on aboriginal welfare and there are many more indirectly employed. There are well over 600 missionaries at work, also full time, together with others who are on a part time basis. This works out that for approximately every 70 aborigines or part-aborigines there is one white Australian working full time for their benefit. I submit that there are not too many countries in the world today contributing an effort such as that.

Another point I want to make is that I went down to the newspaper room this afternoon to see if I could find casually—as I believed I would—a record from another organisation with which I am closely associated—the Flying Doctor Service. It may be of interest to this House to know that between half and three-quarters of all the cases of Flying Doctor Service assistance given has been rendered to natives of this Commonwealth.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: No discrimination?

The Hon. J. M. A. CUNNINGHAM: No discrimination whatever. All fares for native patients are paid for but the service is available. In other States the specific passengers are not paid for. The amount is given to the service itself to do whatever it likes with the money. Here, in the Eastern Goldfields section, with which I am closely associated, actual repayment is received for flights; although the State Government here contributes much more than that to the Western Australian section, which is very misleading. The Government gives five times that amount to the Eastern States service which looks after the Northern portion of the Commonwealth. We do not know the reason for the discrimination but we will look into that matter later.

To go back to the article which I went down to the filing room to find, it reads as follows:—

A doctor and blood transfusion equipment will be flown to the Warburton Ranges native mission today by a Flying Doctor aircraft.

The mercy flight will be made in response to a call for medical treatment for a native woman, Mrs. Doreen McArthur, at the mission. The woman is suffering from a head wound.

The nine-year-old son of a missionary at the Cundeelee native mission—

Some 800 miles away—

—was flown to Kalgoorlie by Flying Doctor plane yesterday afternoon suffering from a knee infection.

The boy, Ian Pedler, was admitted to Kalgoorlie district hospital and was last night reported to be in a satisfactory condition.

Reports such as that can be found daily in every State in Australia. So, irrespective of who pays for it—and I admit and am delighted that the Government does subsidise the services thus making it possible for them to be continued—between 50 per cent. and 75 per cent. of such services is rendered to the native population, in whom we do not show any interest apparently, according to many hon. members.

It is evident that in this country, the Government and the people are sympathetic towards the native population. Even if this Bill does not pass in this House, it cannot be taken as an indication of a lack of interest in or sympathy for our native population.

I would ask the Minister this: How many of these Bills are submitted to the people who are most closely associated with the natives? How often does the Government seek the opinion of the leading missionaries in this State? It subsidises them and makes money available, but how often is their opinion asked? I have asked them and I have yet to find one missionary who wants to see a measure such as this passed.

I believe that if more money and support were made available for our missions it would not only make the position more attractive for the missionaries but it would make it possible for them to carry their assistance and work beyond the stage of caring for 12, 13 and 14-year olds; they could make available for them, training and work for the future.

Sitting suspended from 9.26 to 9.50 p.m.

THE HON. G. BENNETTS (South-East) [9.50]: I might inform the House at the outset that this is a party Bill. I propose to support it because I cannot let my party down. I do, however, want to outline to hon. members just what has been given to me as the opinion of the people in my electorate. I will be quite fair. I think I can go back, when dealing with natives, perhaps a little further than anyone else in this House. I have heard the hon. Mr. Cunningham say that the native is not yet a problem. On the other hand, we heard the hon. Mr. Roche say that he is.

In my view the native is the biggest problem that the Government has on its hands, and I do not know how we are to overcome it. I have seen them in the early ages on the Goldfields when they were in their naked state. They did not understand the white race at all; they could not speak a word of English and they were dependent on wild game for their livelihood. They had their hunting

grounds; there were plenty of rockholes, and large numbers of kangaroos, emus, wild duck and wild turkeys to hunt. The rabbits did not come to the Goldfields until about 1904.

I think all hon. members have a copy of the booklet to which the hon. Mr. Cunningham referred in which an educated native in Queensland has said that—

Before the white fellow came we wore no dresses but knew no shame. We were all free and happy. There was plenty to eat and it was a pleasure to hunt for food. Then when the white man came among us we were hunted from our grounds, shot, poisoned and our daughters were taken away.

That is the sort of thing that happened; it happened in the North-West. I am not sure of the exact page, but I think it is page 183 of Hansard for the year 1888 where the hon. A. Forrest said that the police were sent to shoot natives, and to destroy the race in our outback country. They were said to be taking cattle, and for that reason they were to be shot. I would like to refer for a moment to 1910 when I was a member of a droving party. We came from Marble Bar to Cue and down to Day Dawn. There were 480 head of cattle and our crew comprised three young natives.

These young fellows were at the age when it was necessary for a certain operation to take place. At that time the stations were managed by natives. The station owner had plenty of natives. They were very good stockmen, and most capable at running stations. As I have said, all those stations were manned and controlled by natives. For their work they received poor rations and very few clothes. If they did not carry out their work satisfactorily they were given the stockwhip. I have seen an 18 ft. stockwhip wrapped around a native who had been thrashed. It was pitiful to see these poor fellows who were expected to keep awake 24 hours a day for the benefit of their bosses.

I saw one native flogged because he did not know how to tell the time; and this was necessary to call the drover up to take his watch at night. On one occasion the native fell asleep on his horse, and before he knew what was happening the lashes of the stockwhip had cut into his limbs, and great lumps were taken out of his flesh. The young people whom I have mentioned were natives who were at an age when a certain portion of their anatomy had to be removed. That was the origin of our first halfcaste population. It was because station owners kept what were called stud gins on their property. Before we approached a property, on our droving trips, it was necessary for us to give 12 hours' notice. I have seen what has happened in those places.

As the hon. Mr. Cunningham has suggested, we should go to these various missions and see the good work that is being done for these half-castes. At Norseman it is a pleasure to see the black and the white children running around hand in hand. There are about 75 of them at the mission at Norseman, and the children play together quite happily and are loved by the people of the district. On Thursday I called at a mission with Mr. Collard, secretary of the A.W.U. After talking to one of the officers we found that 12 of the Country Women from Norseman had arrived. They came into the school to teach these young children to sew and to make clothes. There are other women's organisations and male organisations that teach the children there to do different things.

There were five children going for their Junior—I think the hon. Mr. Cunningham has already referred to this. Last year the parents of one of the children were given citizenship rights, and this meant that the child could be withdrawn from school and be permitted to go bush. The child was particularly clever, and it meant his missing out on all he was striving for. Because of his going bush the mission lost the Government subsidy, but nevertheless it decided to finance this young lad's schooling, because he was particularly smart. Today we find he has gone over to the Eastern States where he is training to be a minister.

It is a great pleasure to see the children of the Kalgoorlie school running around hand in hand with our children. But when they reach the age of 16 they are taken into the various missions and taught the ways of the white man. What happens then? The ambassadors of these people about whom we are speaking would be doing a great job if they said to these people, "We will take one of you to our homes and see that you get a job." But nobody wants these native children once they reach the age of 16. There is a person in Norseman who had a girl as a housekeeper, and she was very fortunate to have the services of this young lass.

On one occasion the wife happened to go into hospital and the girl was able to carry on and look after the children and keep house quite as well as the lady of the house had done previously. This lassie reached the age where she wanted to seek a husband. However, as there was no-one suitable she migrated down here and is now married. I believe she found rather a decent sort of a native and they are happily married, and are equal to whites.

The man I previously spoke about has another of these girls from that mission and she is doing a good job, but I have no doubt that if we could train them and associate with them when they leave school and take them into our homes, help and

mix with them, we could do a lot with them. However, nobody wants to mix with the natives. We should do something for them between the ages of 16 and 21 and help them find employment. As was mentioned by the hon. Mr. Roche, we should give the natives technical education, or something of that nature, and train them to do work.

The hon. Mr. Cunningham said he picked up two natives who were working on the railways. Some are working on the Commonwealth Railways and are doing a good job; they are equal to a white. I was talking to one of the gangers at Norseman and said, "How do you find the natives?" He said, "George, they are good workers, but the trouble is, they get their pay and most of them have a day off or a couple of days with their friends and forget all about the regulations of the railways." Natives do not like having to comply with these regulations, and they leave to take on shearing. However, after a while they come back to the job again. They are good workers.

Although there is another Act to cover this position, I know that hotel keepers are perturbed about natives occupying rooms. Under the Health Act, if a native is not up to standard he can be refused accommodation. However, this could happen: Mr. Brown is a hotelkeeper and perhaps the policeman of the district has not much time for Mr. Brown. A native might complain to the policeman that he cannot get accommodation and so Mr. Brown is in the "blue" for not giving a bed to this person. It could happen. There might only be a two-bed room left in a hotel and one might find that he has to share it with a native who is not up to the standard one would like.

At Southern Cross the other day I was talking to some young native lads aged about 16, 17 or 18, and they were equal to any of our white boys. They are well-educated lads, nice and clean, and well spoken. Will our white population accept the idea of intermarriage with half and three-quarter castes? Will our white girls marry these boys? If we are going to be dinkum we will have to take them into our homes and help them.

The Hon. A. L. Loton: Have you ever taken one into your home?

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: No, I have not. I do not know whether the Minister who introduced the Bill has made inquiries from the sergeants of police in each town. I do not think they have been contacted yet.

The Hon. G. E. Jeffery: Tell us about Merredin on election day.

The Hon. G. BENNETTS: One sergeant of police told me—and I think it would be right—that if these people are given citizenship rights, for a start we may not

have gaols big enough in certain places to cope with them. However, that position will be overcome.

On the trans line, many years ago, there was a lady known by the name of Daisy Bates. Everybody knows of her and of the good work she did. She did a wonderful job for the natives. I have been over to this lady's camp and the conditions were so bad that this lady was worthy of the Victoria Cross. However, not very much good came from her work there.

At Esperance the other day I was told of Mr. Schenk's good work. He runs a mission there, and is training native boys about the age of 18 or 19 to be farmers; and from what the farmers of the district tell me, these lads are very capable. I was wondering whether it would be wise for the Government to obtain an area of land at Esperance or thereabouts and get its agricultural officers to train the natives with a view to their running huge areas and so provide employment for them. They could get married, rear a family and be employed by the Government. That would, perhaps, be one way of tackling the problem.

Perhaps we could employ some of them in our workshops, as I am sure many could compete with whites. I am not going to say how we are going to overcome the problem, but we do have a big problem on our hands. I do not know whether this Bill will overcome the problem, but I hope it does. I have a couple of natives in my district. One of these natives is at Bruce Rock, and I went to that town only a few months ago to see the sergeant of police there in connection with some natives further down who were giving trouble at the time. They were between two centres; Bruce Rock and I forget the name of the other place. Neither of the towns wanted the natives; nor did the police. And they were put out on the reserve there, and the storekeeper was at his wits end because of the natives' drinking. On one occasion, the town people, with the exception of two women, were away visiting with a cricket team, and these natives tried to break into the store. Of course the two women were very worried about it. The natives cannot control their drinking habits, and that is where the trouble lies. The police will have to act the same as they do with the white people—put them on the Dog Act. I am going to support the Bill as it is a party measure.

THE HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [10.11]: I am not going to speak very long but I feel this is an important matter, not only to the State but to all of us personally. I have not had the experience of the hon. Mr. Bennetts of being on one of these stations but I have for the past several years had quite a lot to do with natives in the farming areas of this State and I feel confident to express my opinions and tell of some of the incidents I have experienced, in the hope

that if there be those who have not already made up their minds, they may be influenced. I feel the Bill which is before us, and which was criticised most soundly by the hon. Mr. Logan the other night, is one which will not do what is required to uplift our native population. I am not going to reiterate what was said by the hon. Mr. Logan and also, what was said in the very excellent speech given by the hon. Mr. Roche tonight. But there are certain aspects which I feel I should impart to the House as I have had such close contact with the native people. In fact, on one occasion, I befriended one to the extent where I felt it was my duty and my right to give encouragement for the uplift of his family. I am going to relate that later because it turned out to be one of the most bitter disappointments of my life.

The Government, in the last few months, has had dealings with commissioners. We have had three railway commissioners, although we only have one at the present time, and it is my belief that whilst dealing with the subject of commissioners, the Commissioner of Native Welfare might also be discussed, because since he has been with us, for some 12 years, we have had more trouble with natives, due, I believe, to his inexperience of the natives of Australia, than at any other time.

I believe he came from New Guinea where the position is totally different from here; and I can recall that some eight, nine or ten years ago, whilst I was a member of the road board at Moora, and the Moore River Mission was still then controlled by the Department of Native Welfare, I saw the most outlandish things going on and the most outlandish advice being given by the officers some of whom had come from New Guinea with the present commissioner. One thing I vividly recall is that natives who had been very good citizens around the district and had taken part in district affairs—both in work and sport—were suddenly told by these officers of the Native Welfare Department that they were not natives under the Act, and therefore were entitled to go into the hotels to drink. They were given letters, if you please, Sir, signed by these officers, to present to the hotel keeper who had previously told them they could not acquire liquor. Of course when these letters were presented, the hotel keeper had no option but to supply the drink because some of the natives had been schooled to the state where they were bush lawyers and would go to the police station and demand their rights.

I can recall that two families—I will not mention names—quite considerable in number, degenerated to the point where they became an absolute nuisance to the community as well as to themselves; and most of them have done terms in gaol. At least about half of them are in gaol at

the present time. Therefore I feel that the wrong approach was made right from the start with the advent of this present commissioner and, according to what we can see for ourselves, it is still going on. Therefore it would be a good thing if the Government carried on with the present investigations regarding commissioners and relieved this particular commissioner of his post.

I feel that he has some good men in his department who have taken a very keen interest in the natives and if they were given the right to do the work as they wished, I think the natives in Western Australia would be much better off.

I have always believed that the church organisations should be given more money to do exactly what other hon. members have suggested. That is, take care of the native children from a very tender age so that they can be brought up correctly to the point where if they wished they could continue on with schooling which should be made available to them. Then when they reach the age where their schooling is finished, some organisation should be set up to carry on the training instead of allowing the children to go back to the camps and mix with the older native population again. It is only in this way that we will ever get away from the position as it exists today.

I feel that many aged natives—or even those around 25 or 30 years—are practically hopeless propositions. Perhaps five per cent. of them may make good citizens, but I doubt whether any more than that percentage could be once they reached the age where they were experienced in cunning. So I feel that it is with the young people we must make the start and definitely ensure that they have somewhere to go when they have finished school. I agree with the hon. Mr. Bennetts that it would be a sound proposition to establish some farming organisation where they could be trained and, if possible, later, be established on small properties of their own if it could be proved that they could make a go of such properties. They have a natural bent with the management of stock, and I feel we should encourage them in every way, not only in the case of stock husbandry but perhaps in the nature of science in regard to animals and veterinary work.

A native, good at handling stock, often makes a much better fist of it than can the average white man. If we could only take the younger natives away from their parents—although it may seem cruel—and educate them in the right way, I believe that would solve the problem. Although I will not mention the names of the people concerned, as they are doing their best to rehabilitate themselves, I recall the instance of a young half-caste who was sent to me with a good recommendation as a stockman and general farmhand, and whom I employed.

This man had a young wife and two children, and before long I realised what a great acquisition he was to the property; and so I properly housed him and paid him the full wages as applying in the district at that time. I did all I could to help him; and I encouraged him to open a bank account and put something by, so that he would become self-reliant and have a nest-egg against the time when he might want some money. For a while all went well and in the course of four or five years his family increased, until it numbered seven by the time his employment with me ceased. During that period I did all I could to help him and assisted him to get his citizenship rights; but from then on his troubles started.

Briefly, I found it was impossible to employ him after a further 12 months, because he was being hounded by so many of his people. He took to drink and brought liquor home to his wife, and even his children used to have some of it, until the position became so chaotic that, on returning from a holiday on one occasion, I found 37 natives resident on my property, together with a great number of kangaroo dogs and other dogs. How many of my sheep went off as rations, I do not know. Perhaps none went off, but I do not think all those natives would have lived on nothing.

At all events, I had to get rid of this man, although he could turn his hand to almost anything. Later on he got a job with Co-operative Bulk Handling Limited—they were looking for good men at the time—and he worked for them for a number of years, living in camps at the sidings and drinking a fair amount. He was twice before the court for supplying liquor to natives, being fined £50 on one occasion and £20 on another. His sons grew up in an atmosphere where drink was easy to get, and one of them finished up in Carnamah, with another young native, being tried and found guilty of murder, and he is at present in gaol. Another son is in gaol for robbery and battery and the father eventually died, about two years ago, after a fight with his own boys. It was never known how he met his death, but he died some days after a terrific argument in the camp.

The mother of that family, with one or two of the younger children, is at present dodging around the country from place to place, drinking wherever she can get drink and lending herself wherever she can lend herself. That is a very sad story and one on which I cannot help reflecting, because this man was one of the best citizens in the State when I first met him although, after receiving his citizenship rights and taking to drink, he ended up as one of the lowest. That is not an isolated case, although it may be one of the worst instances of how natives

can go downhill after they have received citizenship rights and have taken to drink.

I know natives who have done very well after receiving citizenship rights, but they are a small percentage of the total native population in the areas with which I am familiar. I believe that conditions in the North are different and if it is possible to segregate the natives in the North from those in the South, I would be happy to agree that, North of a certain parallel, the natives should be treated differently. In the southern part of the State, however, I believe it is imperative that the younger natives be taken from their parents early in life and given a proper grounding; because it is fatal to have them mixed up with the older natives. Once they have reached from 21 to 25 years of age in association with their parents and other natives they will never make good citizens.

I believe that the automatic granting of citizenship rights would ruin all but possibly five per cent. of the natives and would be a grave injustice to these people who need the protection of the Department of Native Welfare. For those reasons I strongly oppose the measure. I am sorry that more of the people who advocate this sort of legislation have not had greater experience of natives. In the main I believe the advocates of this kind of thing are church people or old ladies—very well meaning I have no doubt—but lacking experience, as otherwise they would not advocate such a course. It is a pity that more such people do not live for a little while in the districts where they could observe the native population as we who have lived among them for many years have observed them.

I know many natives who are good citizens or who could be made into good citizens if given the right start in life. I have played cricket and football with natives and have dined with them in hotels during country cricket week, but not many of them measure up to that standard. Until more of our natives can be educated and guided in a right way of life, I do not think many of them will make good citizens. Rather than grant all natives citizenship rights, thus making more bad citizens, I think we should perhaps take away those rights from some white people who are very poor specimens and set the natives a poor example. I am not a wowser, but I believe that some people are prone to indulge in too much drink, and I feel that many white people could well set the natives a better example than is sometimes the case at present. I oppose the Bill.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (Minister for Railways—North—in reply) [10.28]: I have listened intently to the views expressed by various members, both

for and against the Bill. It is unfortunate that we have not heard all members of this Chamber take part in the debate, so that we could get a clearer picture; but I would suggest that the ultimate destination of this proposed legislation appears to be clear enough at the present stage.

With the exception of one concrete proposal submitted by the hon. Mr. Willmott, I do not think there has been anything of substance submitted by hon. members as an alternative to the measure, although it is generally agreed that the native problem is a dangerous one in our midst today. With the exception of the one hon. member who made an alternative suggestion, other speakers are content to allow the position to dawdle along for the next 10, 50 or 130 years, in the same way as Governments of this State in the past have allowed it to dawdle along.

If the position is as serious and as fearsome as some hon. members would have us believe, why are they not prepared to come to light with some cure or some proposal by which we can arrest the deterioration? No statement has been made along those lines. Nothing! Just a condemnation of a Government for attempting to do something, and condemnation of the officers responsible. But I agree with the hon. Mr. Cunningham; those officers have achieved something. Firstly, I would briefly like to refer to the remarks that have been made about the Commissioner of Native Welfare. While I do not support every action that the Commissioner has taken, I am prepared to say, after watching his activities and studying his handling of the department since he was first appointed, that in my opinion he has done more for the natives of this State than any other Commissioner of Native Welfare has ever done. When I say that he has done more for the natives, I mean to better the position of the natives in our community.

The responsibility for looking after these unwanted and under-privileged human beings could have fallen into much worse hands than Mr. Middleton's. We have had one example of that already in this State. The present Commissioner of Native Welfare has always acted very quickly when there has been any untoward treatment or undue handling of the natives; and for that I think he deserves much credit.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: The missions in my district think him a very capable fellow.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I agree with the hon. Mr. Bennetts. The commissioner has done wonders in establishing and assisting native missions. It is due to his representations that the missions are continually being improved, and that they have now been taken over, almost 100 per cent., and become the responsibility of the Government through the Department of

Native Welfare. He has also been responsible for getting substantial financial aid for the missions from this Government. The native children, or the so-called native children—I do not say they are all native children because some of them are termed native although they are unfortunate to have only a small proportion of aboriginal blood in them—and the full-blooded natives who are in missions or orphanages approved by the department, receive exactly the same financial assistance as any ordinary white child in a foundling home or other institution to which he may have been directed by a court for protection. They are on an equal basis.

I cannot remember the exact figures, but up to and including part of 1953 the missions received 10s. or 12s. and two blankets, or something like that for each child. That was found to be unsatisfactory and the missions are now subsidised for an aboriginal child, or a so-called native child, to the same extent as they would if they were caring for an ordinary Australian-born child. While there are some who disagree with the published views of the Commissioner of Native Welfare, I am prepared to extend credit to him for having considerably bettered the lot of the younger generation of aborigines.

It would be a tremendous job to cover the whole of this State and bring about a transformation in the way our natives live. The Government realises that it cannot achieve such a transformation with this measure. I informed the House of that fact when I introduced the legislation. But the Government does claim, and can justly claim, that this at least is an attempt to bring about a transformation, even if it will take many years to achieve anything. It is a start. Some hon. members have claimed that this measure will indiscriminately confer citizenship rights upon the aboriginal population. The Bill is designed particularly not to do that. It is designed in such a way that those who are competent to be citizens shall become citizens, and those who need protection, and are unable to live up to the obligations of citizenship, will not be expected to do so.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Who will judge that?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: A court. I thought the hon. member had read the Bill.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: I read the Bill.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I interjected to that effect.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: I see no reference to a court doing the judging.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: A court; a magistrate.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: They are all to be lined up and taken through, are they?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Mr. President—

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Well, who is to do that?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Department of Native Welfare has a register of all natives living within the bounds of civilisation. It is an extremely up-to-date record of the capabilities and the failings of all those people. The department knows those who need protection and it also knows those who are imposing on the legislation and those who, by all decent Christian standards, should not be placed under the legislation.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Well, how are they to come before the court?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The Department of Native Welfare will know all about that. Had the hon. member sat here and listened to all the debates on this Bill I am sure he would not have asked that question. I do not agree with the remark made by the hon. Mr. Roche when he referred to this legislation as "political exhibitionism." If these unfortunate people are to continue, for the rest of their days, to be a football of politicians, as it were, it is high time that we gave earnest consideration to putting into effect some Christian principles and the Charter of Human Rights. There is no political exhibitionism about this legislation.

This is not the first time that a measure with a similar objective has been brought before this Chamber by this Government, or by hon. members of this Government when they were private hon. members sitting in Opposition. There was no accusation of political exhibitionism levelled against the present members of the Government then, and I would point out that such accusations now are ill-founded. It might be of interest to review the history of the legislation that has been introduced into the Western Australian Parliament over recent years, by whom, and with what objective. One hon. member spoke about flying political kites, so there is no harm in having a look at the records—

The Hon. H. L. Roche: Who said that?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member did not say it. He merely used the expression "political exhibitionism." It only requires some hon. member to use a queer phrase to hit the headlines of "The West Australian" and I hope the hon. member is successful on this occasion, but I still disagree with what he has said. There is no harm in having a good look at the political aspects of this question. Many amendments to this Act have been passed and I asked the Minister for Native Welfare if he could tell me what has been

attempted in recent years and with what purpose. This is the information I received.

In 1949 a private member's Bill was introduced by the hon. Mr. Doney to amend the Native Administration Act. This measure was designed to tighten up the provisions relating to the supply of liquor to natives. It was in 1944 that the first citizenship rights Bill was introduced for the benefit of the native. That was brought down by the late hon. A. A. M. Coverley when he was Minister for Native Affairs. That Bill contained the same objective as this measure, namely, to afford to aborigines an opportunity to become citizens.

Subsequently, in 1947, another Bill was introduced by the hon. Sir Ross McDonald to amend Section 42 of the Act and to vary the provisions relating to the areas prohibited to natives. I believe it eased the position in regard to some of the areas which natives were allowed to enter. In 1950—the first year I entered the Western Australian Parliament—the hon. A. A. M. Coverley, as a private member this time, brought forward another measure to enable those natives who had been granted citizenship rights under the 1944 amending legislation, to have their children legally regarded as citizens, because an anomaly had been created by the previous amendments. Whilst the parents were declared to be citizens, their offspring were still classed as natives. The then McLarty-Watts Government handled the hon. Mr. Coverley's Bill and I looked after the measure in this Chamber.

It was passed with the aid of the hon. Mr. Jones who, unfortunately, placed a condition on the support he gave to the Bill by inserting the very provision which brought about the circumstances encountered by the young woman mentioned by the hon. Mr. Roche, when she applied for citizenship rights. The hon. Mr. Cunningham has told us about the native teenagers who frequently drink in the cool drink shops which he patronises. He pointed out how well-behaved and what good citizens they were.

I agree with him. Of course they are happy and well-behaved, but whilst the hon. member was telling us this I interjected and asked him what happened to them when they turned 21. What happens is that when they reach 21 years of age they are brought face to face with the restriction that was placed in the 1950 amending legislation. In other words, they find that they are no longer citizens when they reach that age and they have to go through the performance which the hon. Mr. Roche outlined to us by quoting the remarks of Mr. Middleton which appeared in an article published in the "Sunday Times."

Only the other day a young fellow in Carnarvon was prosecuted. He grew up in the district, but he entered a hotel. He

had been on the premises of that hotel since he was 18 years of age, and he did not know what the position was likely to be when he became 21. This lad to whom I refer was a good footballer, and had taken part in the social activities of the district. He was a good citizen. One day, however, he went into a hotel and was supplied with—

The Hon. G. Bennetts: Polson.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Liquor. While he was walking out of the hotel a policeman tapped him on the shoulder and asked him what he was carrying, and what he was doing with it. He said he was taking it home for his dad. The policeman suggested that they go back to see who had served him. When the barman was asked if he had served the young fellow he replied, "Oh yes, of course I did." The policeman then said, "Don't you know he's a native?" That was the first inkling the young fellow had, that he was a native. The young man in question was not punished, but the barman was.

So, I ask hon. members whether this restrictive legislation is fair or reasonable. It does not matter how good a young fellow is, or how well he has been brought up; the moment he turns 21 he becomes a native. That provision was inserted in this House in 1950. Again, in 1951, the then Minister in the McLarty-Watts Government, the hon. Victor Doney, put a further restrictive provision into the citizenship rights Act. That Government set up two boards in lieu of a system of application to a magistrate. Obviously, too many natives were becoming citizens, and in order to put a brake on this trend in certain areas they introduced this legislation, and had it carried in the face of fierce opposition from the Labour Party. The board which was set up was to be constituted of two members from the district and a magistrate. The two members, however, could outvote the magistrate on every occasion; and that is the position today.

So when hon. members talk about political stunts I think it is time they had a look at the record which is there for everybody to see. If they looked up those records they would see who it is who restricts the freedom of the individual, and who it is who is prepared to ease his conditions and help him become an ordinary citizen, and be looked upon as such. I believe that the legislation introduced by the hon. Mr. Roche is the only legislation since 1940 introduced by anybody outside the Labour Party which would ease the restrictions on citizenship for the natives, or part-natives. The hon. member will recall that I helped his amendment along by inserting a little more as the opportunity offered.

I think I have said enough about the political angle. As I said before, it is shameful that a human being should be

the subject of a political issue. If the matter under discussion were one of conditions of service and wages it might be different. But to be a natural-born British subject, or to be legally classed as one, is something which no party should argue the point about. The object of this Bill is to overcome and ease that very position. We say, "Let us give citizenship rights, so that every child born in Western Australia will be a citizen"; as is the case with every child born in New South Wales and Victoria. They have full citizenship rights there, whether by birth or otherwise. I think that some places in South Australia and Queensland have similar conditions but I will refer to that later.

The object of the Bill is to say to a native, "You are a citizen, whether you are born in the Warburton Ranges or in Xanthus". On the other hand we know that these people cannot live up to the responsibility of citizenship and, accordingly, we provide in the Bill the very protection they are getting now. All this measure does is to reverse the existing position so far as citizenship is concerned. It says to those people who are born here, "You are British subjects and citizens. You have the full rights of every other British subject, but you are incapable of meeting your obligations and, therefore, we extend to you the very same protection, welfare and assistance that you are getting now".

The Hon. G. Bennetts: That is fair enough.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is all the Bill says. As I have constantly asked members in this House since 1950, are we to continue to extend this problem? The population has increased. I quoted the figures here the other night, and they clearly show that the population is increasing. The most unfortunate part is, however, that it is the part-aborigine population that is rapidly increasing, and that is the section of the aboriginal population that needs the greatest and quickest attention.

I do not deny that there are such cases as those cited by hon. members who are bitterly opposed to this Bill; by those who steadfastly resist it. But there is not the slightest doubt that they will continue to aggravate the position, which they say is growing around us, and which the people in their districts are beginning to fear. Is not the first step in the assimilation of the natives the necessity to overcome the real basis of their antagonism, or indolence—if that is one of their faults—or their helplessness? Is it not logical to say to them, "You start off equal with every other child. Let yourself grow up on an equal footing." If they go wrong we will have the necessary legislation as a safeguard against those bad cases that have been cited by the bitter opponents of the Bill.

We find them in every community and in every walk of life. Only the bad cases have been highlighted here. We have not heard of the fine examples of citizenship in the so-called native community; we have not heard them being exhibited at all. We have only heard of the riff-raffs and the ne'er-do-well types. Admittedly we have such types among the white community. Such types should be helped and not condemned. Is it right in condemning such types in the native community that we should condemn also the whole native community? I hope that hon. members here will give that aspect of the matter very serious consideration.

I wish to reply to some of the points mentioned by hon. members. It was said in one or two speeches that the police are opposed to the granting of citizenship rights. The hon. Mr. Bennetts told us that and said that one officer doubted whether we would have gaols big enough to hold all the native offenders. As a result of that kind of remark I asked the Minister for Native Welfare, who is also the Minister for Police, to make inquiries from the Police Department. The Commissioner was away but the officer next in charge dealt with the inquiry. He said that from his knowledge there was no opposition to it.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: He would not be game to tell the Minister if there was.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member might know more about this than I.

The Hon. G. Bennetts: I may.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member is a great help to me! Inquiries were made through the Commissioner of Police, and the department emphatically denied the existence of any widespread opinion held by it.

The Hon. C. H. Simpson: That is not the tone of the reports made by country police officers.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I do not know about that. There are many police stations in my electorate. I pass through that area, which covers over half of the State, two or three times a year. I have done so since 1950, and I have introduced of my own volition the subject of this legislation. On not one occasion was I told that I was on the wrong track.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: Did the country police officers express approval of the legislation?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I did not receive any complaints about it. I did not ask them whether they were opposed to this matter or that matter. The hon. member ought to continue reading

his book on anthropology and tell us about its contents. I do not know how he was able to make a speech on this matter. He went back some 12,000 years. That is a long time back to remember. He went on to tell us something written by a person in Queensland. If the hon. member had attended sittings of this House when the debate was on he would not ask these questions. They have all been explained.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: You ridicule hon. members when they ask questions. You do not explain.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I ridicule those who do not attend, and who, when they do attend, ask questions all the time. I was saying the Police Department denies that it opposes this legislation. I have travelled over half the State, within my electorate, and received no complaints. I have been an advocate for citizenship rights since three or four months after I became a member of Parliament. I stood up and addressed the public in the Perth Town Hall in regard to this question. I was condemned by "The West Australian" on that occasion; strangely enough on this occasion that newspaper supports this legislation. However, that makes no difference to me. I am competent to speak with as much authority as the hon. Mr. Bennetts or any other hon. member in regard to the views of the Police Department. I have given the official view of that department. The hon. Mr. Simpson implied that the Police Union might be against the legislation.

The Hon. C. H. Simpson: I did not mention that.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member did mention the Police Union and I got in touch with that union.

The Hon. C. H. Simpson: I must protest. I did not mention the Police Union.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I withdraw that remark, but I might be able to prove it later on when I am able to refer to his speech specifically. This is what the Police Union said on the 17th October, 1958—

The Hon. J. J. Brady, M.L.A.,
The Minister for Police,
Department of Agriculture,
St. George's Terrace,
Perth.

Dear Sir,

At the recent meeting of the Executive Council of the above union I was directed to inform you that the following motion was passed—

That the Minister for Police be informed that the Natives (Status as Citizens) Bill has never been discussed by the Executive Council of this union, and no statement in regard to the merits or otherwise of the Act have been authorised by this union. This

union dissociates itself from any statement by any member, if same is made.

The union does not deny that some hon. member might make such a statement. The reason for writing to that union arose from the remarks of hon. members.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: That union did not say it supported the Legislation.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member has not told us whether or not he will support this measure. I certainly hope he will not come over here and support it on a silent vote. That is not the right course to adopt when the destiny of human beings is at stake. I would view the action of any hon. member from the opposite side of the House who supports this measure on a silent vote with a lot of suspicion.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: You had better view with suspicion a lot of your own members who have not spoken.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: They will support the measure.

The Hon. A. F. Griffith: On a silent vote.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: I said I would view with suspicion any hon. member of the Opposition who supported the measure on a silent vote. I would question why they were doing that. They would be like the proverbial stickfast flea. I would view their action with very great suspicion and I would believe that they were kidding to the public and the aborigines. However, I hope that does not occur. Lots of quotations from newspaper cuttings have been made. There have been quite a number of them, all detrimental to the welfare of the natives.

The Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: That is a pretty sweeping statement, isn't it?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The hon. member may have spoken in their favour, but I am sure he is not going to vote for the Bill. This is what "The Sydney Morning Herald" had to say about this legislation on Thursday, the 4th September, 1958. It is in the paper's leading article, and is headed, "Welcome Experiment in Western Australia."—

The Western Australian Government's decision to give full citizenship rights to all the aborigines in that State—except "protected natives," who will have to be declared such after a formal legal procedure—will be received with sympathetic interest throughout the country. Generally speaking, it will reverse the present position in all other States and the Northern Territory. Legislation which is designed to protect aborigines inevitably, to some extent, restricts their freedoms. As things stand, they must apply to be exempted from protection. What Western Australia proposes is

that they will not be protected unless they, or Government officials request it.

The Bill was amended in another place to provide for others besides Government officials; and the agent of a native can also apply. The article continues—

On the face of it, this is a daring step. The aboriginal problem is a good deal more complicated in Western Australia than in, say, New South Wales. In W.A. there are about 21,300 aborigines and part aborigines classified as natives, of whom about 6,000 are "nomad natives beyond the confines of civilisation." That is to say, they are living at all stages of development, ranging from a wholly primitive life to a modern one. In N.S.W., the 12,000 aborigines, almost all of mixed blood, have had, and must continue to have, very close contact with white people.

What, then, will full citizenship mean? Its immediate effect will be to remove—or to begin to remove—what many Australians consider to be two serious injustices. Aborigines will be able to vote and (legally) to buy liquor. The first point is of considerable interest, but is not as simple as it may seem. In the first place, only in the Northern Territory, Queensland, and Western Australia does the aboriginal's right to vote depend fundamentally upon the state of advancement he has reached. In New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia there is no statutory provision which debars him from voting.

What Western Australia is about to do, therefore, is automatically to confer the franchise upon aborigines (unless they are declared "protected natives"). This will be whole-heartedly approved, with one reservation. If aborigines are to be full citizens, will they have to accept the accompanying responsibilities? That is, will they be obliged to enrol and vote—and be prosecuted and fined if they fail to do so.

The Minister for Native Affairs, Mr. Brady, is obviously taking a calculated risk in removing the second injustice and allowing aborigines to buy and drink liquor with the full sanction of the law. He admits that more drunkenness and "disturbances" may follow, but says that these can be dealt with "in the normal way." It is a courageous and commendable move, though it is bound to provoke sharp controversy—as it did in this State when Section 9 of the Aborigines Protection Act was suspended for a too-brief trial period in 1949. One may doubt whether officially denying liquor to aborigines serves any useful purpose. If they want it,

they get it; worse, it is often bad liquor and disgracefully expensive, because the white racketeers who supply it first adulterate it and then charge at least three times as much as a bottle of, say, good wine would cost. Mr. Brady's real trouble will come if and when hotel licensees refuse to serve aborigines—which they can do without giving any reason, just as they can with white people.

That is the important part. The licensing laws of this State, if properly carried out, govern the drinking of any person; and if an aboriginal is entitled to have a drink in a hotel and becomes a nuisance, he is treated in the same manner as any white person. That has been my experience in the North-West where I have seen them in all shades from full-blood aborigines to almost white. However, they have behaved themselves. Of course, there is the exception who does not, but we see that same exception amongst white citizens, whether they be rich or whether they be poor. It makes no difference to what family they belong or whether they are wealthy or whether they are poor. As I see it, the question of drink is purely and simply a matter of how much a person consumes.

There is some enlargement which I would like to make in connection with another portion of the restrictions. It has been said by interjection and in speeches by some hon. members that there was a Labour Government in Queensland for many years yet it did not give the rights that this Government proposes in the Bill. That is correct to a point, but only to a point. I would like to read another letter which was written to the Minister for Native Welfare (the hon. Mr. Brady) from the Minister for Health and Home Affairs in Queensland dated the 16th May, 1958. It is as follows:—

With reference to your letter of the 12th instant, in which you seek further information concerning native affairs administration in Queensland, I wish to advise you that the population of aboriginals and half-bloods, subject to "The Aborigines' Preservation and Protection Acts," and of Torres Strait Islanders subject to "The Torres Strait Islanders' Acts" is—

| | | |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| Aboriginals | ..... | 9,957 |
| Half-bloods | ..... | 7,133 |
| Torres Strait Islanders | ..... | 6,084 |

I think we can disregard the Torres Strait Islanders, so they have a total aboriginal population of 17,090, of which 9,957 are full-bloods and 7,133 half-bloods. The letter continues—

In addition, there are approximately 1,000 aboriginals and 19,000 half-bloods and people of mixed bloods, viz., aboriginal and other bloods, residing in the State. All of the full bloods

hold certificates of exemption from the provisions of "The Aborigines' Preservation and Protection Acts." The majority of the half bloods and mixed bloods would hold similar exemption certificates, but their children, being the offspring of exempted people, and not residing on an aboriginal reserve, would not require a certificate.

The 1,000 aboriginals have not full citizenship rights in that "The State Liquor Act" debars an aboriginal, exempted or otherwise, from obtaining liquor and "The State Electoral Act" debars an aboriginal, exempted or otherwise, from enrolment. My Government is examining the position with respect to these exempted aboriginals.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: The Labour Party is not in power in Queensland today.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: That is right.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: They have not altered the administration since they have been in power.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: The accusation was, Mr. President, that there had been a Labour Government for many years but nothing had been done. I am saying that some of them hold a certificate, but more than half of them don't. This letter goes on to say—

The 19,000 half-bloods and other bloods have full citizenship rights. They are entitled to obtain liquor and to the franchise, and are not in any way subject to the Native Affairs administration or machinery.

It may be interesting to note that in 1956, 286 Exemption Certificates were issued and last year 153 were issued. As infant children of adults receiving exemption do not obtain a separate certificate, it can be estimated that over the last two years approximately 1,200 individuals were released from the control of the Department of Native Affairs, and at least 1,000 of them automatically became eligible for citizenship rights.

I desired to read that letter to illustrate to hon. members of the Council that some people are really not fully informed in connection with the position in other States.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: You have not proved that one iota.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: To have on record just what the citizenship status is throughout the States of Australia, I would like to read the following:—

Provisions of citizenship in Western Australia are—

- (1) Application made through clerk of courts under Natives (Citizenship Rights) Act 1944-1951.

- (2) Application heard by citizenship board.
- (3) No appeal from decision of board.
- (4) Board empowered to grant, refuse, defer, suspend or cancel certificates of citizenship.

South Australia—

No specific citizenship legislation. By obtaining a declaration of exemption from the Aborigines Protection Board under the Aborigines Act, an aborigine acquires full citizenship rights.

That is in the Liberal-controlled State of South Australia.

The Hon. G. C. MacKinnon: The whole 1,340 of them.

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: There are, to our disgrace, only that number here with citizenship, but they do not get it automatically. They have to stand up to all the paraphernalia and the examination which have been described here tonight. To continue—

New South Wales—

No specific citizenship legislation. A certificate of exemption issued by the Aborigines Welfare Board gives a native full citizenship rights.

That is in New South Wales, where there are some thousands of them. I have explained the position in Queensland, but I have not explained the conditions which are—

No specific citizenship legislation. A certificate of exemption issued by the Director of Native Affairs gives a half-blood native full citizenship rights, but a full-blood so exempted is not thus entitled in that the State Liquor Act and State Electoral Act debar an aboriginal from obtaining liquor and from enrolment.

But there are those 20,000 which I mentioned. All half-bloods there are not considered to be aboriginals nor are quadroons. In this State there arises the ridiculous position of mixed families—different proportions of native blood, some quadroons and some half-castes and so on—and that is where all the liquor trouble occurs. The eligible will take it to the ineligible.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: What is the position in Queensland?

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: They do not seem to have any bother there.

The Hon. L. C. Diver: They must have.

The PRESIDENT: Order!

The Hon. H. C. STRICKLAND: Another problem here is in relation to franchise. The situation with regard to franchise in the various States is as follows:—

Western Australia—

A native within the meaning of the Native Welfare Act and not the holder of a certificate of citizenship rights is disqualified under the Electoral Act from enrolment or voting at any election.

South Australia—

All aborigines, regardless of caste, have the right to vote at both State and Commonwealth elections subject to usual qualifications required of all citizens.

There is an astounding position where a Liberal-Country Party Government has been in power for many years. In fact, the longest term of any Government in Australia. They are certainly Liberal in their views and in the correct sense of the word. To continue—

Victoria—

All persons of aboriginal descent have full rights and obligations of citizenship and can exercise the vote.

New South Wales—

All aborigines have the right to vote subject to usual qualifications required of all citizens.

Queensland—

- (1) A half-blood with a certificate of exemption is entitled to vote.
- (2) A full-blood, even with a certificate of exemption, is debarred from enrolment and voting under the State Electoral Act.

In view of the foregoing, it is evident we are miles behind the rest of Australia and behind the Commonwealth legislation. In fact, we are so far behind that we have growing up in our community a class of natives who, because of their proportion of native blood, are denied the British justice of full citizenship. We say we can handle the problems which I have described to-night, and I am sorry to have encountered so many who will not support this Bill in sufficient numbers to enable it to be passed.

However, from time to time it will be brought before this Parliament, and there is not the slightest doubt that eventually some overdue consideration will be extended to these people and to this type of legislation.

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

Ayes—12

| | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| Hon. G. Bennetts | Hon. G. E. Jeffery |
| Hon. E. M. Davies | Hon. F. R. H. Lavery |
| Hon. J. J. Garrigan | Hon. H. C. Strickland |
| Hon. W. R. Hall | Hon. W. F. Willesee |
| Hon. E. M. Heenan | Hon. F. J. S. Wise |
| Hon. R. F. Hutchison | Hon. J. D. Teahan |

(Teller.)

Noes—15

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Hon. C. R. Abbey | Hon. R. C. Mattiske |
| Hon. J. Cunningham | Hon. H. L. Roche |
| Hon. L. C. Diver | Hon. C. H. Simpson |
| Hon. A. F. Griffith | Hon. J. M. Thomson |
| Hon. J. G. Hislop | Hon. H. K. Watson |
| Hon. A. R. Jones | Hon. F. D. Willmott |
| Hon. A. L. Loton | Hon. J. Murray |
| Hon. G. C. MacKinnon | |

(Teller.)

Aye.

Fair.

No.

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Hon. G. Fraser | Hon. L. A. Logan |
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Majority against—3.

Question thus negatived.

Bill defeated.

ADJOURNMENT—SPECIAL.

THE HON. H. C. STRICKLAND (Minister for Railways—North): I move—

That the House at its rising adjourn till 2.15 p.m. tomorrow.

Question put and passed.

House adjourned at 11.32 p.m.

Legislative Assembly

Wednesday, the 22nd October, 1958.

CONTENTS.

| | Page |
|---|------|
| QUESTIONS ON NOTICE : | |
| Frankland school, deferment of additions and renovations | 1683 |
| Jerramungup school, attendance, capacity and future enrolment | 1683 |
| Bremer Bay, selection of schoolsite | 1683 |
| Lake Gwelup school, legal action re septic installation | 1683 |
| Lake Monger, action to reduce midge plague | 1684 |
| Wanneroo Road Board, reconstitution and Marmion-Sorrento area | 1684 |
| Scarborough High School, intake of students and number leaving primary schools | 1684 |
| Native welfare, Victoria Park Hostel | 1684 |
| Legislative Council elections, polling booths | 1685 |
| Electoral, Assembly and Council rolls and votes cast | 1685 |
| Adulterated milk, punishment of offending company | 1686 |
| Goldfields high schools, zoning of pupils | 1686 |
| Railway refreshment rooms, supply of small drinking containers | 1686 |
| Prospectors, exemption from sales tax | 1686 |