

*In Committee.*

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; Mr. Watts charge of the Bill.

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

Clause 2, page 1:—Delete all the words after the word "by" in line 12 and insert in its place the following words:—"deleting the proviso to subsection (1) thereof and inserting in lieu thereof the following:—"Provided that the alternative condition contained in this subparagraph (b) shall be a qualification for registration under this Act, in the case of a person other than a person who is or was a member of the Defence Forces of the Commonwealth during the war in which His Majesty is or was recently engaged and which commenced on the third day of September one thousand nine hundred and thirty-nine, until the thirtieth day of June one thousand nine hundred and forty-six, and in the case of a person who is or was a member of the Defence Forces, until the thirtieth day of June one thousand nine hundred and forty-six or the expiration of nine months from such person ceasing to be a member of such Defence Forces, whichever is the later."

Mr. WATTS: I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

The Legislative Council has sent down an amendment to this Bill which considerably widens the scope of the proposed amendment. As the Bill left this House it provided that persons who had been members of the Forces or those who, in consequence of the war, had been out of Western Australia during the war but had returned to Western Australia, should be given an extended time within which to apply for registration, provided that they had been practising as builders for at least two years prior to the passing of the Act. The Legislative Council has decided to widen the proposal so that everyone who was carrying on the profession or occupation of builder or supervisor of buildings before the Act came into operation, but who failed to apply, should be given till the 30th June next year if they were not a member of the Forces and, if they were a member of the Forces, a period of nine months after their discharge. To that extent, therefore, the Council proposes to allow applicants who were practising as builders before the passing of the Act to register, up to next June, whether they were absent from the State or not. The Council has extended the provisions of the Bill as it left this House.

My intention was to undo a measure of injustice that I saw had been done to cer-

tain sections, but I am advised that there are other people who, for one reason or another, were not aware of the existence of the law and who therefore did not apply within the prescribed time. I do not want there to be any doubt on this point. This amendment of the Legislative Council does not give any rights to a person who was not engaged in the building business as a builder or a supervisor for two years prior to the passing of the Act, which means two years prior to 1940. If he was not so engaged he will still have to pass the necessary examinations, whatever happens to this Bill. I had, originally, no desire to go beyond the scope of the amendment that I introduced and the further amendment carried by this House, but I see no objection to the proposal of the Legislative Council. Question put and passed; the Council's amendment agreed to.

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

*House adjourned at 10.30 p.m.*

## Legislative Assembly.

*Thursday, 8th November, 1945.*

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

### QUESTIONS.

#### RAILWAYS.

(a) *As to Fuel Used on Perth-Northam Run.*

Mr. TRIAT asked the Minister for Railways:

1, How many tons of oil are used on the run from Perth to Northam and back on engines converted to oil burning?

2, What is the cost of oil per ton?

3, What amount of coal is used to do the same trip on coal fired engines of the same class?

4, Cost of coal per ton?

The MINISTER replied:

1, Tests have not been made from Perth to Northam and return but the consumption on a test trip from Midland Junction to Chidlow and return was .63 of a ton.

2, £11 16s. 11d. per ton at Midland Junction.

3, Under similar conditions to No. 1, 1.843 tons.

4, £1 16s. 11d. per ton at Midland Junction.

*(b) As to Service of and Repairs to Locomotives.*

Mr. STYANTS asked the Minister for Railways:

1, How long have the first three S class locomotives, respectively, been in service?

2, What amount of time has been occupied for repairs?

3, What was the nature of these repairs—(a) mechanical, (b) boilers, (c) other?

4, Has a greater amount of boiler repairs been necessary on this class of engine than on P or PR class?

The MINISTER replied:

1, No. 541 since 11/2/1943; No. 542 since 26/6/1943; No. 543 since 17/9/1943.

2, No. 541, 17 weeks; No. 542, 18 weeks; No. 543, 8 weeks. Being new type engines, this time included examination and inspection of new features embodied in the design.

3, (a) Bogie control gear and minor adjustments after examination such as is carried out on all new engines; (b) replacement of flexible stays with improved material; (c) faulty tender tank plate material.

(4) No.

**NATIVE CHILDREN.**

*As to Separate Schools, Etc.*

Mr. WATTS asked the Minister for Education:

1, Is it the intention of the Education Department to establish separate schools for

the education of native children (including half-castes) where these are at any centre sufficient in numbers to warrant the establishment of a Government School?

2, If so, will the education of these children include special training in hygiene, and will facilities be provided for the practice of the same?

3, If not, why not?

4, Have reports been received from any teachers of Government schools where substantial numbers of native children are enrolled as to the peculiar difficulties experienced in the teaching and control of such children and/or the attitude of the white population towards them? If so will he table these reports?

5, At what Government schools are there more than fourteen native children at present enrolled?

6, If it is not the intention of the department to establish separate schools, will he state any proposals which are likely to be carried out to improve the methods of instruction of native children and to inculcate cleanliness and other hygienic practices among them?

7, Is it true that where numbers of natives attend Government schools the incidence of sores and similar ailments among all children is increased?

The MINISTER replied:

1, 2 and 3, The policy of the Department is non-segregation and separate schools for the education of native children, therefore, will not be established.

4, Yes. Reports will be tabled.

5, Ajana, Bluff Point, Brookton, Marble Bar, Mullewa, Northampton, Pingelly, Wagin.

6, The district inspectors have given special consideration to the provision of a curriculum specially adapted to the needs of native children. The following objectives are envisaged:—(i) To provide the rudiments of our civilisation. (ii) To attain literacy (a) to provide a working knowledge of English, so that they may speak correctly, correspond with friends or on elementary business affairs, read for recreation or of current news; (b) to provide a working knowledge of our money, weights and measures systems. (iii) To inculcate desirable habits of hygiene and living. (iv) To secure a training in rural pursuits. (v) To promote desirable moral and spiritual attitudes.

7, The department is not in the possession of evidence which will prove either the truth or falsity of this.

### BASIC WAGE.

*As to Fixing Standard for Computation.*

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Labour:

1, Is he aware that the present method of computing the basic wage is the cause of serious discontent among the workers of Western Australia?

2, The soaring prices of foods essential to health and not included in the regimen on which the basic wage is computed is beyond the purchasing power of the average worker?

3, That it is essential that a Royal Commission of a Commonwealth-wide nature be appointed to lay down standards of living on which Arbitration Courts can determine the workers' basic wage?

4, Has he made any representation to the Commonwealth Government on this matter, if so with what result?

The MINISTER replied:

1 to 4, This matter was raised before the State Arbitration Court by the basic wage advocate of the Australian Labour Party and it was then considered that it was a subject for Commonwealth action. The State Executive of the Australian Labour Party made representations direct to the Federal Executive of the Party for submission to the Commonwealth Government.

### BEER SUPPLIES.

*As to Shortage.*

Mr. PERKINS asked the Premier:

1, Is he aware that shortage of beer supplies is causing disgraceful overcrowding in hotel bars during the restricted trading hours made necessary by such shortages?

2, Is he aware that malt, hops, labour and other essentials are sufficient in this State to enable a considerable increase in rations to hotels, but that the total gallonage is restricted merely to prevent this State being better served than the Eastern States where malt is in short supply; whereas some other commodities are in short supply in this State but freely available in the Eastern States, and consumers there are not obliged to accept restricted rations of these commodities merely to remain uniform with this State?

3, Will the Government make representations to the Commonwealth Government to rectify the present unsatisfactory state of affairs?

The PREMIER replied:

1, Yes.

2, I am advised that sufficient beer could be manufactured in Western Australia to enable an increase to be made in the ration to hotels.

3, An approach has already been made to the Commonwealth Government in connection with this matter, and a reply is awaited.

### COMO STATE SCHOOL.

*As to Connecting with Sewerage System.*

Mr. CROSS asked the Minister for Works:

1, Is he aware that the lavatories at Como State School are in a dilapidated condition and inadequate for the number of children now attending the school?

2, That the pan system is still in operation at Como School?

3, Will he arrange to have new lavatories built and connected with the deep sewerage system, whilst the tradesmen are still engaged on the construction of the new classroom?

The MINISTER replied:

1, and 2, Yes.

3, Approval has been given to the construction of new lavatories and a septic tank system. The work will be carried out as soon as the necessary material has been obtained. Deep sewerage is not available.

### BILLS (2)—FIRST READING.

1, Building Operations and Building Materials Control.

Introduced by the Premier.

2, Milk.

Introduced by the Minister for Agriculture.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE.

On motion by Mr. Wilson, leave of absence for two weeks granted to Hon. P. Collier (Boulder) on the ground of ill-health.

### BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, South-West State Power Scheme.

2, Legal Practitioners Act Amendment.  
Transmitted to the Council.

# **BILL—SUPREME COURT ACT AMENDMENT (NO. 2).**

## *Recommittal.*

On motion by Mr. McDonald, Bill recommitted for further consideration of new Clause 3.

## *In Committee.*

Mr. J. Hegney in the Chair; Mr. McDonald in charge of the Bill.

### New clause 3:

Mr. GRAHAM: Last night the member for Kalgoorlie moved for the insertion of a new clause to stand as Clause 3, to which I moved an amendment to insert after the word "has" in line 4 the words "at any time during a period of not less than five years immediately prior to the presentation of the petition". My amendment was accepted, but I now find that the meaning of it is not clear. The object of my amendment was to provide that at any time in the five years preceding the lodging of the petition, there should not have been a breach of the matrimonial laws. To make the intention clear, I move an amendment—

That the words "a period of not less than five years immediately prior to" be struck out and the words "the period of five years immediately preceding" inserted in lieu.

Mr. STYANTS: I do not like the present proposal any more than I did the amendment moved last night, but as the Committee accepted it and it will not materially affect the application of the new clause, I shall raise no objection. The amendment now before us means that the 10-year period shall still constitute a ground for divorce, and though the petitioner may have lived a life of profligacy during the first five years, he will still be regarded as approaching the court with clean hands if there has been good behaviour during the second five years. Last night's amendment meant that the period could not be less than five years and the court could decide that it might be seven years, but the present proposal is that it shall be five years, neither more nor less.

Mr. McDONALD: The amendment now before us will simply express the position as I and doubtless other members understood it last night, namely, that the petitioner should be free from any matrimonial offence during the five years immediately preceding the petition. The new clause, as passed last

night, would have left the court at a loss to know what period it should have regarded as relevant.

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

The Bill again reported with a further amendment.

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

## *Second Reading.*

**THE MINISTER FOR WORKS** (Hon. A. R. G. Hawke—Northam) [4.50] in moving the second reading said: This Bill to amend the Municipal Corporations Act contains several amendments, some of which are of great importance in principle and some of which, although not of great importance in principle, are nevertheless important in the administrative work of municipal councils. It is proposed under this measure that no meeting associated with the work of a municipal council shall commence earlier than 7 p.m. on any day. The almost universal practice at present is that meetings of municipal councils are held at night. The Perth City Council holds its meetings in the daytime; therefore, many ratepayers are deprived of an opportunity to stand for the position of councillor within the area of the Perth City Council. They are so deprived because they are unable to attend the meetings of the council, owing to their being tied to their employment during the day. This means that an unfair restriction is placed on probably the majority of the ratepayers of the Perth City Council, thus allowing a small minority to have almost a monopoly of the right to stand for the position of councillor, to be elected and to carry out the duties of the position. It is thought that no hardship will be imposed upon any person in the meetings of municipal councils in the metropolitan area and in the country area held at night-time. The adoption of this principle will place almost every ratepayer upon the same footing in regard to offering his services as a councillor for the municipality in which he lives. Of course, regular shift workers on night work would still be unable to offer their services; but it is not possible to meet every difficulty and to place all ratepayers upon an equal basis.

The Bill also aims at overcoming a slight difficulty that should have been dealt with when the amending Bill of 1938 was before

Parliament. That measure provided that annual elections should be held only on a Saturday; but a consequential amendment to provide that extraordinary elections should also be held on a Saturday was overlooked. Therefore, extraordinary elections can be held on any day except Sunday; and in some municipalities extraordinary elections have been held on a day other than Saturday. Most people would agree that Saturday is the most suitable and convenient day for the great majority of ratepayers and this Bill provides that extraordinary elections as well as annual elections, shall be held on a Saturday. As members are aware, the mayor of a municipality is elected for a period of one year only. An idea has been growing over the years that this period is too short and does not give to the occupant of the mayoral position a reasonable chance to become properly established and to develop the ideas and policy in which he might believe. True, the mayor of a municipality may, at the end of his first year of office, offer himself for re-election; and it would be fairly logical—perhaps almost completely logical—to argue that if he had given satisfaction during his year of office he would almost certainly be re-elected.

The Minister for Lands: That would depend upon Mr. Swaine.

Mr. Watts: It would not prevent the mayor from being re-elected.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It would be advisable to extend the present term of one year to a period of two years. There can be no reasonable objection to that proposal and so this Bill aims at increasing the period to the extent I have mentioned.

Mr. Doney: Is that the only reason you are advancing?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Others could be advanced, but this is considered to be the main reason. It is also considered to be a sufficient reason to justify Parliament in increasing the term from one to two years. It is interesting to compare the position of a mayor of a municipality with that of a chairman of a road board. The systems are different to a very great extent. The chairman of a road board is elected by the members of the board from among their own number. Therefore, before any person can become the chairman of a road board, he must at the time be a member of the road board and be representing

one of the wards, if the district is divided into wards. A person may, however, stand for the position of a mayor of a municipality without being at the time even a councillor. I am inclined to think that the road board system is more satisfactory and in accord with commonsense than is the system operating in a municipality. However, this Bill does not try to place the mayoral system on the same basis as the road board system.

Mr. Mann: What is the reason you are not amending on those lines?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: One argument in favour of the existing system in regard to the mayoral position is that all the ratepayers in a municipality have a vote to decide who shall be elected; whereas all the ratepayers in a road board district do not in a direct way have a vote to decide who shall be chairman of the road board.

Mr. Doney: It would not be a great hardship if you deprived the electors in a municipality of that privilege.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There might not be any great hardship, but there might be a solid argument put up in favour of all the ratepayers within a municipality having the right to select or elect a person for the position of mayor of a municipality.

Mr. Abbott: They do not do that in a good many municipalities in the other States, do they? In Melbourne, I think he is elected by the members.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: That may be. I could not express any decided opinion as to what operates in the other States as to that point. This Bill aims to provide municipalities with some power regarding the parking of caravans within municipal areas.

In recent years, caravans have developed not only as a means of taking people from place to place, but also as a means of providing living accommodation for them. Considerable trouble has been experienced in some districts by those who use caravans for this purpose, because they have parked their caravans continuously for long periods in public streets and have not only become to a certain extent a danger in regard to causing traffic congestion, but have also to some extent become a menace in regard to the health of the particular locality in which they have parked the caravans.

Mr. Willmott: It is quite all right on a camping area, is it not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Even in a camping area, the local authorities should have some power of control and supervision so that the people who use this method of living for weeks, or perhaps months, might be called upon by the local authorities to do the reasonable thing in regard to traffic control and also in regard to reasonable health measures.

It is possible that later this session a Bill will be introduced to enable a superannuation or endowment scheme to be developed to cover employees of municipal councils. Briefly, the idea would be that a pool might be established of those municipal councils which would be prepared to come together to develop a scheme of that kind.

Mr. Watts: Why not make it the Local Government Act and include road boards as well?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There may be some municipal councils which might not desire to enter into a pool arrangement but which might nevertheless desire the authority to establish a scheme of their own.

Mr. Doney: Who would sponsor the scheme?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The local authority concerned would sponsor the individual scheme applying to only one municipality; and this Bill provides authority for any local governing body, any municipal council, to develop a superannuation or endowment scheme of its own for its own particular employees, as against entering into a pool covering a number of municipal councils.

The Bill contains some provisions dealing with the question of housing so far as municipal councils are concerned. Those councils will be authorised to erect houses for leasing to their own employees. I think there will be no objection to this principle. It already finds a place in the Road Districts Act and has been used by some of the road boards within the State. A further proposal is that municipal councils might erect houses to be let on lease or sold under contract to any person, irrespective of whether the person concerned is employed by the municipal council or otherwise. Some members may think this is moving ahead too fast; but some municipal coun-

cils in the metropolitan area and some in the country have asked that power of this kind be given to them because they are anxious, especially in view of the acute housing shortage, to play a part in establishing more houses within their areas, so that the people within those areas requiring better housing accommodation may have it made available to them much more quickly than would be possible if they had to wait for some other authority, such as the Workers' Homes Board, or for private builders, to erect the additional number of houses required in the districts.

Mr. Doney: Has the Municipal Association expressed an opinion on this matter?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The member for Williams-Narrogin will be pleased to know that the Country Municipal Councils Association has asked for this power to be inserted in the Act, so that the proposal in the Bill has the approval of the association; and that, no doubt, will indicate to members just how strong the support for the proposal is, not only in the country but also in the metropolitan area. There have also been requests from other directions for this power to be given to the municipal councils. Another proposal dealing with the question of housing aims to give municipal councils the power, should the Governor by proclamation so declare, to use wood or other structural material other than bricks in the construction of the external and internal walls of a dwelling house, notwithstanding any restrictions to the contrary in the by-laws of a municipality. Provision to this effect was inserted in the Road Districts Act of 1933, and that power has been available to road boards since that time.

Mr. Doney: It is likely to be a bit contentious.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It might be contentious to some extent. I think, however, the provision could be justified at any time, but more so at a time such as the present, when it is extremely difficult to obtain bricks because they are not available in any great quantity and because of the fact that the demand is very great.

Mr. Doney: You want the provision to be permanent; at least the Bill makes it so, does it not?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The provision will be permanent in the Act if it

is approved by Parliament, but no authority will be compelled to operate it unless the circumstances in the particular district are considered such as to warrant its operation.

Mr. Watts: Will they have power to approve the design of these dwellings?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes.

Mr. Watts: That is what the road boards have.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. The insertion of this provision will not mean that a municipal council will have to approve the building of a house irrespective of what design or type it is. The municipal councils will still have supervision in that regard, and will have the opportunity to seek a modification of any plan or type of house which might not be acceptable in accordance with the requirements of the district. It is, however, thought very strongly that there must be some power to enable steps to be taken to overcome the difficulty now existing where there is a rigid insistence upon the use of bricks for house-building purposes.

Mr. Watts: It has never been reasonable.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If that insistence is continued it is certain that the districts concerned will suffer considerably, because the existing brick shortage is not likely to be overcome this month or this year. Taking into consideration the almost certain demand for bricks I think we can say with some confidence that there will be a shortage of bricks for the next three or four years. This State produces a great quantity of timber, and we have factories that produce other suitable building materials. If people are prepared to expend money in the building of houses which do not contain bricks to any great extent it is, I think, unreasonable to say to them, "Unless you are prepared to build your house almost entirely of bricks you cannot build one at all."

Mr. Doney: It is not so bad now that we know the observance is optional on the part of the local authorities.

Mr. Leslie: It is not optional.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will not be optional to the extent that a municipal council can decide whether or not it shall apply the principle, but the municipal council will have the opportunity to make representations to the Minister concerned regarding its objections to the type of house to be erected.

Mr. Doney: That is a different matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: If this becomes law a person in a municipality might decide to have a house built of wood and other materials, not being brick. He might submit to the municipal council plans that are most unacceptable. In that case the municipal council will have the right to take action by putting forward a case for the refusal of the plans and the right of the person concerned to go ahead with the erection of the proposed building. The Government is anxious to ensure that a provision of this kind will not be abused so as to enable any sort of place to be erected, especially in areas where the general type of house is of a reasonably good class.

Mr. Leslie: Would the Government make a proclamation contrary to the wishes of the local council?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Not as far as I am aware, and I have no objection to any members consulting the municipal councils as to their views. I know that some will be thankful if this power is included in the Act. If members take the trouble to look around even the metropolitan area they will find houses, not built of bricks, which are of a splendid type, a credit to the builders and the occupants, and which no-one could reasonably criticise. Therefore it is considered that any person who desires to build a house of materials other than bricks should have the opportunity to do so provided there is some safeguard against that person erecting a house that would be a discredit to the locality concerned. At present in the Road Districts Act there is the right of appeal to the Minister in regard to the alteration of existing buildings, but there is no such right in the Municipal Corporations Act although for a long time it was thought that this power was contained in the latter Act.

Early this year an appeal was made to the Minister in connection with some alterations that were proposed to be made to a building in Mount-street. The alterations were to be effected for the purpose of increasing the accommodation within an existing house so that an additional family could be accommodated. The Perth City Council refused the application and that refusal led to the appeal being made to the Minister. After close investigation by the appropriate officers of the architectural branch of the Public Works Department it was thought

that the alteration should be approved and the appeal upheld. However, on reference to the legal officers of the Government it was found that this power did not really exist in the Municipal Corporations Act although the practice had been over the years to hear and decide appeals of that description.

It is thought that persons desiring to make alterations to existing buildings in a municipal area should have the right of appeal whenever their applications are rejected by the local authority. This Bill, therefore, aims to establish that right so as to enable the Minister to consider the decision of the local authority, have it investigated by the Government's expert officers and, if thought necessary, reverse the decision of the municipal council concerned. The practice in these matters is to give each party an opportunity fully to present its case. Representatives of the municipal council are given the chance to present their case and so is the appellant, and the whole question is finally decided on its merits.

Mr. Read: Do you mean the appeal to the Minister?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Yes. Before the war a fairly extensive move was made to develop uniform building by-laws to be operated in the metropolitan area. An excellent set of uniform by-laws was drawn up and action was contemplated soon afterwards to have those by-laws put into operation. However the war intervened and that action was set aside for the time being as it was realised that building operations would decrease during the war because there would be many difficulties in the way of building, and any interference with the existing system might not provide the benefits that would be afforded if the uniform building by-laws were applied in peacetime when conditions would be moving, to some extent, towards normal.

This Bill proposes to give the Governor-in-Council authority to make building by-laws and to apply them. There will, of course, be power also to modify the uniform building by-laws where they are found to be not properly applicable and where, as a result of their operation, it is found that local conditions require them to be altered for the purpose of enabling buildings to be satisfactorily erected in those areas. This matter has received the attention and

consideration of the Institute of Architects and advice has also been given by the Principal Architect, Mr. Clare, and was given at the time by the building surveyor of the City of Perth. It is thought that this is a move in the right direction, because not only will it be of assistance to those engaged in the actual erection of houses and other buildings, but also persons desirous of having houses built, because they will be able to obtain a knowledge of the by-laws and will know just what might be done in the erection of houses. I think it would also be of assistance to many other people who are associated, either directly or indirectly, with the erection of buildings in municipal districts.

At the present time municipal councils are authorised to erect abattoirs, but only within the boundaries of a municipality. With the growth of population in municipal districts there is not much room for abattoirs to be established, and that position will become worse as time goes on. Members are aware that already, in this State, some municipal corporations have asked that their boundaries be extended—that applies particularly to Bunbury—so it is not at all difficult to realise how impossible it is, in some municipal districts, to establish an abattoir within the boundaries of the municipality. A number of municipal councils are anxious to establish up-to-date abattoirs, and the only method by which they could do so would be to establish them outside their own boundaries.

Mr. Doney: What is the proposal at Bunbury? Is it that it should be a municipal abattoir or a South-West abattoir?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I understand that the proposal is to establish abattoirs on a very large scale, to serve not only the needs of the municipality, but the needs of outside areas as well.

Mr. Doney: Is the oversight to be by the municipality only, or is it to be general?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proposal is that the municipality of Bunbury will establish and operate the abattoirs. I am not entirely in the confidence of the municipality of Bunbury in this matter, so I cannot say whether it proposes to co-operate with adjoining road boards in the project.



Mr. Willmott: To what area would it extend?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I could not say. The proposal in the Bill is to give to municipal councils the right to establish abattoirs outside their own districts.

Mr. Doney: That is, in some road board district.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The proposal in the Bill, if adopted, would give the municipal council at Bunbury the right to establish an abattoir in the area covered by the Bunbury Road Board.

Mr. Doney: There is plenty of room for a row in that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No, the Bill goes further and proposes to give the right to any adjoining local authority, which has objections, to state those objections to the Minister, and the Minister is empowered to uphold the objections and decide against the municipal council if the facts are such as to warrant his coming to that decision. I think that in most instances it will be found that the municipal councils concerned will be able to make suitable arrangements with the adjoining road boards. After all, each road board covers a large area and I cannot imagine there being any serious objection from the majority of road boards if asked by municipal councils to make land available to enable the councils to establish up-to-date abattoirs. That would be of advantage to everybody concerned.

A somewhat similar provision is contained in this Bill to deal with landing grounds for aircraft, and aerodromes. Almost the same arguments apply there as I mentioned in speaking of abattoirs. I think there would be very few municipal councils, if any, within the State, that would have sufficient land within their own boundaries to establish landing grounds for aircraft. At present municipal councils have no right or authority to spend money on establishing such grounds outside their own areas. The proposal contained in this Bill aims to give power to the municipal councils to establish landing grounds in the areas of adjacent road boards, and to spend money in connection with such projects, or to join with an adjoining local authority for the purpose of establishing a suitable landing ground. At present a municipal council could subsidise a road board in the establishment of a landing ground, but it is thought advisable to give municipal coun-

cils the power to establish such grounds themselves, if they wish to do so, or to join with a local authority for that purpose.

Mr. Doney: Is this sponsored by the association?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it is.

Mr. Willmott: Bunbury again!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think more municipalities than simply that of Bunbury are concerned in this, and I think the road boards themselves are concerned. It would be much more satisfactory for road boards and municipalities to join together where possible, in country districts, for the purpose of sharing the responsibility and cost of establishing up-to-date landing grounds. I think members will agree that there will in future be rapid development in the use of aircraft in most parts of Western Australia, and the rapidity of that development will be considerably hampered in many districts unless adequate steps are taken to establish landing grounds that will be safe and suitable for the aircraft to be operated within the State.

Mr. Abbott: That might really be a Commonwealth matter. It should be a Commonwealth matter.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not know whether it could be regarded absolutely as a Commonwealth matter. It might be contended, quite logically, that local authorities anxious to establish adequate landing grounds could, with justification, approach the Commonwealth Government for financial assistance, especially where the landing grounds are likely to be used by the Commonwealth itself, when it establishes and operates its own air service.

Mr. Watts: What about the Federal Aid Road Agreement?

Hon. J. C. Willecock: The Civil Aviation Department would have to approve for safety reasons, and so on.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The Commonwealth authority controlling aviation would certainly have to approve of any plans for the establishment of landing grounds and would have to pass or approve of the ground when completed, before it could be used for the purpose of taking aircraft. This Bill will also give local municipal councils the right to subsidise health clinics, kindergartens, and similar institu-

tions within their areas up to a sum not exceeding in the aggregate 10 per cent. of the ordinary revenue. Several requests in connection with the matter have been received from municipal councils, and it is thought that the right should be given to those municipal councils that wish to assist undertakings of this kind, to do so.

Mr. North: Will they require further power to raise revenue for such purposes?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: No. All they require is power to use portion of their revenue for these purposes. It is not thought that every municipal council will use this power if it is made available, but there are within Western Australia some very progressive municipal councils that are anxious to join with local committees in developing institutions of this kind. I think it is a good thing for the local governing authority to play a leading part financially and otherwise in connection with these matters. There is a growing tendency these days for some people to say the Government ought to do this and that, and provide the money for this and that, but I think that is an unfortunate trend in many respects because it deadens the initiative of local people and makes them quite unconcerned about the establishment and management of institutions of the kind to which I have referred.

I think those towns which are the best and most progressive and in which the people get the best results are those where the local people have demonstrated initiative and organising capacity in connection with infant health centres, kindergartens and similar institutions. These people should be encouraged not only by the Government, but also by the local authorities, and I am sure that the extent to which that is practised will serve as an example to other municipalities, where the same spirit does not exist, to do likewise in the years of the future. There are some other provisions in the Bill which are more or less minor, with the exception of one. The exception to which I refer is an extremely important provision and one in connection with which there will probably be a fair amount of discussion and perhaps some difference of opinion. That provision aims to abolish the system of plural voting which has applied in connection with municipal council elections over all the years of the past.

Mr. Leslie: You are scaring us now.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think it is a severe reflection upon the Parliament of this State, if I may be permitted to say so, that the system of plural voting operates in Western Australia in connection with elections associated with local government. Several attempts have been made over the years to remove this system and replace it with something more in line with modern thought and modern requirements. The proposal to abolish plural voting is by no means revolutionary. In some of the other States of Australia it has been abolished.

Mr. Doney: In which ones?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: In New South Wales and Queensland. In New South Wales every ratepayer is entitled to vote and only one vote. That applies also in regard to the position of councillors and also in regard to the position of mayor. I do not know that the municipal councils of New South Wales have done anything destructive to the interests of their ratepayers under their system of voting, nor do I know that those municipal councils are any less progressive than are municipal councils in Western Australia.

Mr. Abbott: What about Queensland?

Mr. Watts: The Sydney municipal council was so progressive that it had to be dismissed.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: But it has come back again.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I do not suggest one or two local authorities should have been dismissed in Western Australia several years ago. There may be in our State that should be abolished now.

Mr. Doney: It was the Sydney municipal council that was mentioned.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Under any system of franchise it is possible over a hundred years to get a council which needs to be straightened up.

Mr. Watts: I was suggesting that New South Wales was not necessarily a good precedent to follow.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fact that one municipal council there had to be suspended does not prove that their system of voting was wrong.

Mr. Watts: That is not the suggestion that you may have thought it was.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** That was not the suggestion but it certainly was the inference. The Local Government Department of Western Australia has had to dismiss more than one local governing authority in this State and put in commissioners for the purpose of rectifying the very serious position which the local authorities in question had developed under our system of voting.

**Mr. Doney:** Quite right!

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I think we can argue that our system of voting is not satisfactory even judged on that basis.

**Mr. Watts:** I think we will discuss the matter on the basis of what is good for Western Australia.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** We should judge the question on the basis of what is right and proper to do.

**Mr. Doney:** I take it that this is a Government proposal as distinct from an association one.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I have to admire the seriousness with which the hon. member puts the question.

**Mr. Doney:** It is a serious question.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In Queensland the system of plural voting was abolished many years ago, and the local authorities in that State have been elected under a system that gives to every ratepayer the right to vote once and once only. I am not sure at the moment whether adult suffrage does not apply in Queensland in connection with local authorities.

**Mr. McLarty:** It does!

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I am having that position checked today, and will be able to make that information available officially next week.

**Mr. McLarty:** They are the highest taxed ratepayers in Australia.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** I do not think the test as to whether a municipality or a State or a country is the highest taxed is the only and final test. I think the final test is as to what results the people concerned get for the taxes they pay.

**Mr. Leslie:** You can always get results with the other fellow's money.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** It is not the other people's money, but if all the people within a municipality over 21 years of age have the right to vote to elect representatives to the municipality, and those men when elected impose rates, then the rates are applicable to the people within the municipi-

pality in just the same way as we operate our taxation system as a Parliament.

**Mr. Doney:** It would not be applicable to all the voters.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Under the Parliamentary system of taxation not every voter pays taxation.

**Mr. Doney:** That is a proper answer.

**Mr. Watts:** Most of them do.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In normal times most of them do not. It may be that at this desperate stage of Australia's history most people in the Commonwealth over 21 years of age pay taxation.

**Mr. Watts:** You are thinking only of income tax, and there are many other forms of taxation.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** If we are to proceed on that line of argument, I say that everyone in a municipality pays taxation indirectly.

**Mr. Watts:** Not in a municipality.

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Of course all such people do.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Rates levied on a man living in a municipality are recovered by way of rents or, if he is a shopkeeper, in the prices he charges.

**Mr. Watts:** I am thinking of entertainment tax and other impositions.

**Mr. SPEAKER:** Order!

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Though members sitting opposite indicate their opposition by interjections or speeches, I think their contentions can be answered fairly logically—at any rate, to such an extent that I hope will convince the more progressive of them that the plural voting system should be abolished.

**Mr. Watts:** You are too fond of that!

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** In other States of Australia, except Queensland and New South Wales, plural voting operates. In South Australia it does not operate to the same desperate extent that it does in Western Australia. In that State the maximum number of votes that one ratepayer can have is two, whereas in Western Australia it is possible for a ratepayer to have eight and, in fact, as many as 16 in connection with the Perth City Council.

**Mr. Watts:** Most improper!

**The MINISTER FOR WORKS:** Therefore we can say that in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia the posi-

tion in this respect is much more progressive and democratic than it is in Western Australia. We often refer to England as the conservative Old Country and oftentimes deceive ourselves in the belief that Australia is far more progressive and democratic than Britain.

Mr. Doney: I do not think we have made that mistake.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: We have in this regard.

Mr. Berry: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It most certainly is so. We often hear people here and elsewhere in Australia talking about conservative England, and one would think that Great Britain was a thousand years behind in matters electoral and political. On the other hand, the people of Great Britain, through their Parliament, abolished plural voting several years ago. They went further and inaugurated a system of adult franchise in connection with municipal elections.

The Premier: That should be a good claim for support from all English-born members opposite for the adoption of that principle.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Therefore in England and, so far as I know, in Wales and Scotland as well, every person over 21 years of age has the right to vote at local government elections. Members may have read in "The Daily News" of the 31st October last a cable message from London under the heading "Britain Again Goes to the Polls." The first part of the message read—

Local government elections tomorrow throughout England, Scotland and Wales, the first held since 1938, will have an unprecedented large electorate. There will be 7,000,000 new voters because of the extension of the franchise to all qualified to vote in the parliamentary elections.

Mr. Seward: That does not mean everyone!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It will be seen, therefore, that in Great Britain the Parliament of that country has given to every man and woman in England, Scotland and Wales, provided he or she is over 21 years of age, the right to vote, without question, at local government elections.

Mr. Fox: Do not tell them about the result of the poll, will you?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: They have been given that right without the need for any other qualification apart from that of being 21 years of age.

The Minister for Lands: And they did a pretty good job at that poll!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The tendency all over the world is in this direction, and it would appear to be a very severe reflection upon the Parliament of this State that we in Western Australia should lag so far behind other States of Australia—

Mr. Doney: Some of them.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: —which have instituted the necessary reform, in common with Great Britain.

Mr. Seward: I think this Parliament will bear favourable comparison with any other Parliament in Australia.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The hon. member may think so.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It is part of the peace settlement that democratic elections shall take place in all occupied countries.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: The fact remains that we do not compare favourably with Queensland, New South Wales and South Australia in this respect.

Mr. Seward: I hope we do not get down to that level!

Mr. Doney: Do you like the South Australian way?

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: Much better than our own way!

Mr. Doney: I know that.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I like the Queensland system better than that of South Australia, but all we are asking in this Bill is that we shall go as far as New South Wales, and abolish plural voting. We are not asking at this stage that every person over the age of 21 years shall have a right to vote at local government elections. Even if we were to ask Parliament to approve of that principle, we would not suggest anything unfair or revolutionary, seeing that we would have the precedent set by Queensland and the even greater precedent of Great Britain. In my opinion, the interest taken in municipal elections and affairs would be greatly increased if all the people within municipalities were given the right to vote at elections. I do not know what may be the experience of other members who represent districts in which municipal councils are located, but I know that in Northam very

little interest is taken in the affairs of the municipality and only once in a while is any greater interest taken in elections. I think one reason for that situation is that so few people have any direct interest in the election even of councillors for the municipality.

Mr. Abbott: You will admit that they are doing a great deal of good work.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: There is no need for me to admit that, because I have suggested nothing to the contrary.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order! The Minister will address the Chair.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think the interest in municipal affairs would be greatly stimulated if the franchise were extended. The Bill does not propose to extend the franchise by bringing in new voters but only to give each ratepayer, qualified under the existing law, one vote in connection with the election of mayor and one only for the election of a councillor. I hope there is no member in this House who approves of the principle now operating, especially with regard to municipal councils, by which the local government area concerned is divided into wards, because under the ward system a person can possess qualifications to vote in each separate ward and as a result can obtain the right to exercise more than one vote in each ward. I mentioned earlier that some of the ratepayers of the Perth City Council have the right to cast as many as 16 votes for councillors by having the necessary qualifications in each of the eight wards. From whatever angle we consider the matter and whatever municipal council area we take, excepting those not divided into wards, we find there is available to those people who are prepared to obtain property in each ward a very strong voting power, which gives any number who care to join together an opportunity of casting a heavy vote in favour of one particular councillor and thus exercising a most undue influence upon the affairs of the municipality.

In a matter of this sort, the least that Parliament might do at this stage is to declare that no one person shall have more than one vote. This is not asking very much; it would not be a very great step forward; it would not be nearly as progressive as the action that has been taken in Great Britain and in some parts of Australia.

Mr. Doney: It is not necessarily a progressive idea; it is a change.

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: It is necessarily progressive, because this is a move in the direction of reducing the weight and value given to property as against the weight and value given to human beings.

Mr. Leslie: Is each of them prepared to pay rates?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

The MINISTER FOR WORKS: I think that each ratepayer who can qualify under the Act is entitled to the same voting power, just as each person who is qualified to enrol for parliamentary elections is entitled to one vote and receives only one vote. Nobody would give Mr. Coles, of Coles Chain Stores Ltd., more than one vote for parliamentary elections simply because he is a millionaire or something thereabouts. No-one would give an elector for parliamentary elections more than one vote simply because he owns perhaps half-a-million pounds worth of property in any city or a million pounds worth of property outside of any city. Parliaments have to consider and decide matters a thousand times more important than those determined by the local governing authorities. If it is reasonable, democratic, progressive and safe to apply that system of voting to parliamentary elections, surely from any angle we regard the position it is reasonable to apply the same system to ratepayers for local government elections! Consequently, Parliament, in my opinion, is being asked to agree to a comparatively small instalment of reform, to take a comparatively short step along the road of progress.

What member of this House would agree to give any person at a State or Commonwealth election two, three, four, or even more votes simply because he owned a lot of property? Is there one member in the House who would agree to that? There might be one or two or three members of Parliament who think that should be done, but I will guarantee there is not one member here who is prepared to stand up and say he agrees with its being done. If it would be wrong in principle and undemocratic to give any person more than one vote for a State or Commonwealth election, then there is no argument at all for retaining the system of plural voting as it applies to municipal council elections. So I ask members opposite to give very serious consideration to the points and arguments that have been put

forward, which do not by any means exhaust the points and arguments available to support the proposal. If Parliament is not prepared to go as far as this in the matter, then we shall deserve to be condemned on the ground that we are reactionary and that we are not prepared to do something that is desirable and capable of being justified on very many grounds.

I trust that every proposal in the Bill will receive careful consideration, and that the one dealing with plural voting will be approved and become part of the system applying to elections of municipal councils. If it does, I am sure it will do what I suggest, namely, considerably increase interest in municipal affairs; and in a few years—not very many, I hope—the members of this Parliament will then feel that the State should make another step forward for the purpose of bringing the franchise for municipal elections on to the same basis as that in Great Britain and in Queensland. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Mr. Doney, debate adjourned.

## **BILL—SOIL CONSERVATION.**

### *Council's Amendment.*

Amendment made by the Council now considered.

### *In Committee.*

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

The CHAIRMAN: The amendment made by the Council is as follows:—

Clause 22:—Insert a new subclause after Subclause (4) to stand as Subclause (5), as follows:—

- (5) It shall be deemed to be a lawful excuse within the meaning of Subsection (4) of this section if the defendant proves to the satisfaction of the court hearing the complaint that he committed the act alleged in such complaint in the belief that such act was not unlawful, or for the reason that he did not possess and was unable to obtain the money necessary to enable him to carry out his obligations as required by or under the said regulations.

The PREMIER: I arranged to have this amendment made in the Council following a promise given to this Chamber that I would endeavour to find a reasonable way to overcome the difficulty anticipated by the Leader

of the Opposition in enforcing payment by farmers for work done on their properties when they might not be in a position to finance necessary work involving any major project of soil protection. This amendment will give them the opportunity to prove to the satisfaction of the court that they had not the necessary money to enable them to discharge their obligations. It will be remembered that when the Bill was passing through this Chamber some amendments were moved which made its provisions far too wide; they would have opened the door to all sorts of abuses and possibly have enabled people to evade their responsibility. The amendment was drafted to meet that position. As it originated from the Government sponsoring the Bill, I move—

That the amendment be agreed to.

Mr. WATTS: I wish to say that the amendment which has been inserted in the Bill and which is acceptable to the Premier is entirely suitable to me, as the member—as the Premier stated—who first raised the objection. The magistrate has been equipped with the necessary authority to deal with cases of hardship that may arise, and I am quite satisfied to support the amendment.

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

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

## **BILL—INCREASE OF RENT (WAR RESTRICTIONS) ACT AMENDMENT.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 6th November

MR. ABBOTT (North Perth) [6.3]: The Minister, in introducing the Bill, said that it was to ensure the continuance of the parent Act until the 31st December, 1946. With that I am in agreement. The Minister also said that Western Australia was one of two States to which the Commonwealth had not thought fit to apply its legislation relating to rents. I do not think that statement is entirely correct. The Commonwealth legislation is contained in the National Security (Landlord and Tenant Regulation, No. 97 of 1945, and certain amending regulations. The regulation is divided into three parts, of which two apply to Western Australia, namely, Part 1 and 3; Part 2 does not. Part 3 deals with the recovery of premises by a lessor. The

parent Act also deals with that matter. Section 12 of the parent Act deals with the recovery of rent. I therefore suggest that the statement that the Commonwealth legislation does not apply to Western Australia is not correct.

The Minister for Lands: I did not say that it did not apply. I said that it had not been insisted on in this State.

Mr. ABBOTT: The Federal legislation is in force in this State and has been availed of quite recently. It is used in our courts, with the result that much confusion arises. As both the Commonwealth and the State legislation is in operation in the State, the community is put to much worry and trouble and also to some expense. I hope the Government will approach the Commonwealth authorities with a view to removing the application of those regulations to Western Australia, so that the provisions of our own Act may apply fully and solely. I think that would give great satisfaction to the community. It may be noticed that, insofar as the State Government is concerned, that has recently been done. Whether it was done because of any particular occurrence that did not meet with the Government's favour, I do not know; but none the less, only as late as last month, the provisions of Part II of the Commonwealth Government regulation were altered so as not to apply, as previously, to the State Government. I think that what is good for the State Government would be equally good for the community at large. As I said before, I hope that in view of the existing situation, the Government will consider the advisability of carrying into effect the suggestion I have made of approaching the Commonwealth Government to remove the regulations entirely so far as this State is concerned.

Reverting to the subject of the Bill: The Minister stated that he agreed with the Leader of the Opposition that there should be no opposition to our own legislation being extended for a short period. Again I state that with that I agree, but I think the period should be fixed and definite. In my view, the Act as amended by the Bill will not give any definite fixed time when the operation of the measure will cease. It was pointed out by the Minister that Section 15 of the existing Act provides that the Act shall continue in force during the

continuance of the war in which His Majesty was at the commencement of the Act engaged and for a period of six months thereafter. I take it that the war referred to was the war with Germany.

The Minister for Lands: We are still at war with Germany.

Mr. ABBOTT: I agree. From what the Minister stated, and also from what the Premier stated in introducing an earlier Bill, we shall remain at war with Germany until the signatures of representatives of all the countries participating in the war have been affixed to a peace treaty, and until a proclamation of peace has been made by the Governor-General. As the Minister says, it is impossible to know when that is likely to take place. It may be a number of years before the peace treaty is finally signed; it was many years before the peace treaty was signed in connection with World War I. Having that in view, I propose later, when the Bill is in Committee, to move an amendment so as to fix the time suggested by the Minister, as the definite time; namely, the 31st December, 1946. It will then be quite clear how long the measure will operate without renewal, and everyone will be able to be advised accurately what the position is.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: It will be an open go for the profiteer after that.

Mr. ABBOTT: I am not suggesting that it will not be necessary to renew the Bill. We have to impose some limit. Price-fixing, as suggested by the Government, is to be for three years. No doubt this measure will have to be renewed for three years.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Do you think the Legislative Council would pass the Bill in peacetime?

Mr. ABBOTT: I did not fix the 31st December, 1946; the Government did that. But I think we need a definite time stated. I feel sure that the Legislative Council will fix the date provided there is price-fixing with regard to other matters. So long as there is price-fixing with regard to commodities, and wages are pegged, rents must naturally be fixed. I think a definite time should be fixed and that it should not be a matter of uncertainty. I support the second reading.

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

**MR. SEWARD** (Pingelly) [7.30]: I intend to support the Bill but for, I hope, a more limited period than has been put to it by the Minister. When the hon. gentleman introduced the measure he did not tell us very much about it. He contented himself by saying that the Premier had anticipated what he intended to tell us when he, the Premier, introduced the Commonwealth Powers Bill just immediately before the Minister spoke. I agree that there is need to control rents. If we were to take away all control of rents at present, or in the immediate future, chaos would probably ensue. Therefore I support the Bill in so far as it deals with that particular phase. But it goes a long way further than that. Some very grave injustices are being perpetrated under the parent Act, and have been for some time. They have been rendered necessary by reason of the fact that the war was in progress. As a result, we have given general consent to the Act. But the time has arrived when we should make a very searching investigation to see how far the Act is affecting the people. I know of people who have been deprived of the possession of their own homes; they are still not able to get into them.

Before we grant a general extension of this legislation an inquiry should be held. If that were done I feel sure ample evidence of the grave injustices that I have referred to would be forthcoming. I think Parliament is entitled to get such information in order to guide it in forming its legislation. I could mention one or two cases of injustice that have been brought to my notice and I expect that other members could do the same. We want to know how far that extends. It might be confined to a comparatively few cases, or it might extend much further. I think it goes further than I have personal knowledge. Rather than grant an extension of the Act until the 31st December next, or six months after the termination of the war, whichever is the longer, we should put a shorter period to it. When we get into Committee I shall probably move an amendment to make the date the 30th September next, or six months after the war, whichever is the sooner, so that some inquiry may be set afoot in the meantime. Parliament would then have the result of that investigation to guide it.

If the inquiry were put in hand soon after the rising of this Parliament the findings

would be available immediately we re-assembled next year, and we would be able then to amend the Act; or repeal it and bring down a new one early in the coming session. It is eminently desirable to do that so that the many injustices occurring at present may be stopped. Besides rents, leases of properties are being arranged and because of this Act the owners cannot get their properties back. The leases may have been made on equitable terms when they were entered into but be on quite inequitable terms now. The people are entitled to have the position reviewed so that we may see what the effect of the Act are today. With these remarks I give a qualified support to the Bill. I shall probably move the amendment to which I have referred so that we can determine just how much of the Bill should be re-enacted and how much we can dispense with in the future.

**MR. McDONALD** (West Perth) [7.36]: I want to make some observations on the Bill because I agree with the member for Pingelly that it is of great social importance. The relation of landlord and tenant is one that affects a large proportion of the people of this State. I propose to support the continuation measure but I propose also to support the suggestion of the member for North Perth that it be limited to a very definite date, not that it may not be necessary to extend the measure again when that date is reached. I do not like any continuation of the phrase in the parent Act which refers to the period of six months after the war in which His Majesty is now engaged. I do not intend to enter upon a legal discussion as to when the war ends. It has been suggested, as the Minister has said, by eminent legal authorities that the war will not end until the peace treaties have been signed. I have not considered this matter and I do not propose to express any opinion on it. I only say this, that the ordinary man, using ordinary language, has always understood war to involve two belligerents.

It seems to me somewhat difficult to say that a war is still continuing when all belligerents, except one, have unconditionally surrendered. If, however, the interpretation that has been suggested in the Commonwealth Parliament is correct and the war does not end until the peace treaties have been signed, then by the present continuation Bill we may be extending this Act, or the Act itself may operate by virtue of the



original provisions, for a period of many years. I think there should be a definite date for the termination of this Act, not necessarily because it should go by the board at the end of that time, but so that we should be forced, as a Parliament, to reconsider its provisions in the interests of the people whom it affects. This Act has been in force for six years, and it was a very necessary provision. I think every member of this House supported it originally and has supported its continuation up to the present day, but in general it froze rents as they were on the 31st August, 1939, six years ago.

While the people in receipt of wages, and in many cases salaries—as in the case of public servants, and even salaries that are very high—have received additional remuneration to compensate for the rise in the cost of living, no provision has been made for those who are dependent on rents for their livelihood. The landlord is in some cases, a man of means, but in many cases landlords are retired people who own a house, or perhaps two houses or cottages, on the rents from which they live; perhaps £2 or £3 per week, just sufficient to keep them from any benefit under the old age pensions legislation. There are also children, whose parents have died, who may be dependent for their maintenance on the rents from a small estate. Six years have gone by, and the cost of living has been increased by at least 22½ per cent. That is the admitted statistical figure, but I think everybody knows that for all practical purposes—any housewife will confirm this—the cost of living has increased by much more than that.

Mr. Styants: The increase is nearer to 50 per cent.

Mr. McDONALD: I think the hon. member is probably right. There is a class of people of small income, income drawn from rents, whose income has been frozen at the 1939 figure, and to whom we are offering no relief at the present time. I do not think that injustice should be suffered by this Parliament to continue any longer than is necessary. I appreciate that this is a matter of far-reaching consequences and that prices and costs—which include wages and salaries—need to be pegged as far as possible in view of the immense amount of free money that is now banked up in this nation. I believe the general policy of the Commonwealth Government in that respect is one

that should be supported, but it is not proper that Parliament should grant some relief, by way of cost of living increases, to almost every other section of the community and yet keep one section, which may be as much or more in need of consideration, in an under-privileged state indefinitely.

I therefore associate myself wholeheartedly with the suggestion of the member for Pingelly, that the Government would be discharging a duty to the people and would also earn their approbation if it immediately took steps to set up some committee—it might be some informal committee—of members of this House, to ascertain the operation of this legislation at present and to arrive at some recommendations as to the way in which it should be amended when the matter next comes before this House. It is not only a matter of treating one section of income-receivers in an anomalous and under-privileged position compared with the rest of the community; there is also the matter of the equitable operation of this legislation. I am completely in agreement with any measures that at the present time will protect tenants from oppressive or profiteering action on the part of landlords, but I am equally of opinion that this legislation and the regulations of the Commonwealth Government under the National Security Act should not be used by tenants or exploited by tenants in the way that is taking place in some cases today.

I do not propose to suggest that exploitation by tenants is on a large scale, any more than I would say that exploitation by landlords is necessarily on a large scale but, whether legislation is abused by landlords or by tenants, that abuse should immediately be subject to attention and proper action by the Legislature. Without going into details, I desire to mention two cases. The first, which comes within my personal knowledge, is the case of a woman who was going into the country and who owned a furnished house in a suburb of Perth. She let that house for two months to another woman, two months being the period during which the owner of the house proposed to visit a relative in the country. When the landlady returned at the end of two months, the tenant pleaded the National Security Regulations, having a privileged position, and declined to go out. The lessor, the landlady, could not recover her own house and furniture for two years.

Mr. Abbott: She could have done so under the State Act.

Mr. McDONALD: Yes, but not under the Commonwealth regulations. She was an elderly woman and during that period she was going round, staying with relatives and friends, until she felt her welcome was worn out, and she had not a roof over her head. At the end of two years, through an accident, into the circumstances of which I need not go, she was able to get back her own house and furniture. I do not wish to weary the House with details, but I desire to mention the kind of thing I believe is occurring in some instances. The facts of the second case that I am about to mention are not those that I can verify personally, but facts conveyed to me by the party concerned, in whose credibility I believe. I am informed that a woman, no longer young, let a house that she owned in a suburb some four or five years ago, at 30s. per week rent. It turned out that the rent, although a very fair rent, was 5s. per week more than the amount for which the house had been let on the 31st August, 1939. The first thing the tenant did was to get a reduction in the rent. There was nothing very wrong in that, though it was perhaps unlucky that the rent, at the outbreak of the war, had really been less than the house was worth. The tenant is now in that house and refuses to leave, and is in a privileged position under the regulations. It is alleged that the house has not been looked after and that a heavy bill will have to be met for renovations.

The owner of the house has no source of income apart from the rent of the house, although assisted by some relatives. On the other hand, the tenant is said to have an income of about £12 a week, which is several times that of the owner of the premises. The tenant has let two of the rooms in the house to different people, from whom she is receiving rent, by way of subleases. That is the kind of case that might well be reviewed in order to afford as much relief as possible in the present circumstances. I agree with the suggestion of the member for North Perth that it might be desirable to invite the Commonwealth Government to withdraw its regulations completely as applying to Western Australia in order to allow the State legislation to function. The provisions of our Act regarding the recovery of possession of premises are, I think, much more

equitable than the Commonwealth regulation and are much less likely to be abused. Moreover, the rents which were frozen by our Act as at the 31st August, 1939, were in some instances too low, and considerably less than fair rents for the houses affected. Certainly at the present time they are too low, having regard to the prevailing values of properties.

I would like to see considered some provision under which a magistrate could be given wider power than he now possesses with regard to the fixing of a fair and equitable rent. Under the Act that we are now asked to extend, the owner of a house that was let on the 31st August, 1939, may apply to have the rent reviewed by a local court and may have that rent varied if he can show, as the Act sets out, exceptional circumstances. The courts, very properly, have construed the term "exceptional circumstances" as referring to something more than or different from, mere under-value in the rental fixed. We have now reached the stage where I think it would be equitable to the landowner—I am not thinking of the large owner but of the smaller people in particular—should have an opportunity to submit his case to a local court, which would be empowered to pronounce a rental basis according to equitable principles as between landlord and tenant.

There are other aspects to which I shall not allude beyond mentioning one that is specially worthy of consideration. I refer to instances that occur where there is a long lease, generally of commercial premises, on what is described as a step-up basis. To enable a tenant to become established, a lease may be for five, ten or 25 years, and operate so that the rental at the start is low but rises over the term so that the average rent for the whole period may be regarded as a fair one for the building. In some cases that occurred shortly before the Act came into force, the rent was frozen at a low figure so that the owner is getting what is really less than an equitable rent for the premises and the tenant, by reason of the amount of money in circulation and the prevailing spending power, is receiving, or doing, far more business than he ever anticipated, and therefore is in a far better position to pay an equitable rent for the premises than he ever thought he would be able to pay when he took up the lease. I will not say that this case for commercial premises has more urgency than that for premises upon which

people may be dependent for their livelihood as the result of the moneys received as rent. On the other hand, I do say that the principle of arriving at an equitable basis should necessarily apply to all cases as between landlord and tenant.

Therefore I support the second reading of the Bill with the reservation that I think we should make the continuance of the legislation for a definite time so that this Parliament may be reminded, within a comparatively short period, of the obligation it is under to the people to reconsider the effects of this legislation, which was introduced to meet the emergencies of war. I do not desire to suggest necessarily the appointment of a Select Committee at the present time, but I invite the Premier to set up some form of inquiry, with which I would like representatives of both sides of the House to be associated, in order to study the question of any adjustment to this legislation that it would be desirable to make in justice to both landlord and tenant.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [7.57]: I support the second reading of the Bill. The Government could hardly do otherwise at this stage than renew the legislation. During the time it has operated we have all had an opportunity to watch the attempts made under the Act to control rents and cost of living. In the Claremont-Cottesloe district people interested were not defeated by this legislation. What happened there was that tenants were able to become petty landlords and many made small fortunes during the war period by taking advantage of the difficulties of the situation and exploiting it because of the pronounced lack of housing. That enabled them to let a number of rooms or so-called flats, and thereby to derive much benefit. We know how difficult it is to prevent lawyers and some clever laymen from driving a horse and coach through legislation. What occurs to me as important under this legislation is the fact, as the member for West Perth suggested, that there is need for some rise to be allocated to certain landlords, both on account of the cost of living and because of the fact that at the time the Act was put into force their properties were let at low rentals. The difficulty there in view of the whole economic system at present is to determine how it can be done.

When we reflect upon the rising costs and the effect upon wages and salaries, we would all like to see prices held. That is the general impression. Some of us may have heard an important broadcast a few nights ago when we learnt from America that President Truman, is, so to speak, on a 30-day trial for his job. He may be out of it if he is not able to furnish a satisfactory answer to the question of how he will adjust conditions to meet hardships without the cost of living rising. If I had the power and the opportunity, I would not hesitate to deal with the matter of rents as the Commonwealth Government has dealt with potatoes, tea and about half a dozen other commodities. It did not allow prices and consequently the cost of living to rise in those instances; it held prices stable or reduced them by paying subsidies. Some people contend that the payment of subsidies by the Government amounts to inflation and that ultimately this must wreck the economic system, but as a matter of fact, the payment of subsidies has not had that effect, even during a war. Whichever way I view the situation, I feel convinced that in the payment of subsidies will be found the real answer to these problems in future.

Member: Who is to pay all those subsidies?

**Mr. NORTH**: Who is paying them today? Twenty or 30 years ago only one subsidy was being paid by the Commonwealth Government. Australia then led the world by paying a subsidy on sugar produced in Queensland.

**Mr. SPEAKER**: The hon. member had better not get on to the subject of sugar.

**Mr. NORTH**: I admit that it is a long way from the subject of rents, but all the same it has a very close bearing on the basic wage. During the next 12 months we should endeavour to ascertain whether it would be possible to deal with rents by way of subsidy just as we have done with tea, sugar and other commodities. If we could do that, I think we should arrive at a point when the consumer would gain, the landlord would gain, and there would be no hardship inflicted upon anybody, provided the Government could tell us where the money for the subsidies was coming from.

**MR. BERRY** (Irwin-Moore) [8.2]: I think this is a sort of cleft-stick Bill. We all know that hardships are being inflicted

upon some sections of the community. We are all aware that men who own houses, on returning from the war, are unable to obtain possession of them. The problem as I see it is not one of subsidising; what we need is sufficient houses to cope with the situation that led to the bringing of this legislation before Parliament. If it was fair to grant increases in the basic wage and in the standard of living during the period of the war and also during the present period, would it not be possible to say to people who own houses, the rent for which was fixed as at a certain time, "There has been a basic wage adjustment of 15 or 20 per cent., and during the next quarter the rent you will be allowed will be increased by an amount equal to that being enjoyed by the worker under the basic wage adjustment"? That is the only way I can see of overcoming the difficulty.

I shall support the Bill because no other course appears to be open to us. If we defeated the measure, we would bring about a state of chaos equal to or greater than that existing at present. The Government is certainly in a cleft-stick, and we shall not be able to split that stick from top to bottom until the problem of house building is faced and dealt with. I trust that every effort will be made to overcome anything savouring of procrastination in demobilising the men who could provide the material and erect the houses that would make all this control legislation as futile as it is unnecessary. I feel certain that the Government, which is a balanced Government, is averse to control. Everything in the wide world seems to be controlled at present and, while control in some directions may be necessary, I feel that a little less control and a little more practical commonsense to get men out of the Services would bring a quicker solution of the problem.

**MR. CROSS** (Canning) [8.5]: The problem of rent control, in my opinion, is of more far-reaching consequence than is generally realised. Unless legislation is passed to continue the Act, chaos would inevitably occur and rents would soar sky-high. The member for West Perth spoke of the decreased purchasing power and incomes of certain people as a result of which they have been penalised, but I maintain that comparatively few people have been penalised, and that a majority of the people have benefited from

the rent control that has operated during the war period. In Great Britain rents were controlled long before the outbreak of the war, and control is still in operation there. It would be suicidal for this State not to re-enact this legislation so that it may be continued when Commonwealth control is lifted. We have to bear in mind the serious shortage of housing that exists, combined with the fact that wages have been pegged. Though the basic wage has been increased, I venture to say that the purchasing power of money has declined to such an extent during the war period that the value of margins has fallen by almost 50 per cent.

There is another phase which ought to be considered and which might even affect the economy of the State. If this legislation were not continued and rents increased by, say, 33 per cent., the basic wage would then be adjusted proportionately. At the end of the next quarter, there would be a sharp increase in the basic wage rate, and that increase in turn would be passed on to the various industries. It would be interesting to ascertain how few of the houses out of the total number in the greater metropolitan area or even in the State would be affected. Large numbers of people are endeavouring to purchase homes of their own on the instalment system, and it is safe to say that in the strongest industrial part of the metropolitan area—Victoria Park—in which there are more rented houses than in any other area except Perth, the number of houses rented is very low. In my opinion more than three-fifths of the people residing in Victoria Park are purchasing homes. We must continue rent control, as any increase would be immediately reflected in the basic wage. The statistician obtains his rent figures from the agents who let houses. Houses that are let are usually of the worst type; they are premises for renting purposes only. Any increase in the basic wage would naturally affect every worker in the State and might have a detrimental effect upon our industries. This might be a factor in closing down some new industries which are competing with similar industries in the Eastern States.

Plainly this legislation must be continued in this State for at least three years. We all know that at least three years will be required to build a sufficiency of houses. The only way to shorten that period is to adopt a bold policy of house construction in order

to make up the shortage. People come to me daily inquiring where they can secure a house. I have already mentioned in this Chamber that in South Perth alone there are at least 2,000 homes in which a woman or a woman with children is living with the person renting or owning the house. Those figures were carefully compiled by a canvass of the houses. That alone is evidence of a shortage of 2,000 homes. I know the position will improve as we get back into industry again. Since the war large numbers of people have come to the metropolitan area from the country districts and the goldfields. When the mines reopen and when there is a flow of population back to the country districts, the position will be eased considerably; more homes will then be available to people who must live in the metropolitan area. The amendment proposed by the member for North Perth will not, in my opinion, stand analysis, and I shall oppose it. The Bill is a good one; in the circumstances it is the only measure that could have been brought forward. It is in the best interests of the State and I shall support it.

**MR. GRAHAM** (East Perth) [8.13]: My remarks on this Bill will be extremely brief. Actually, I desire to make only one observation. It concerns the administration of measures designed to control rents. At present we have a most obliging, and I will add efficient staff, even though it be small, which is responsible for the policing of this legislation. My complaint, however, is that we have no inspector charged with the responsibility for seeking out those people who unquestionably are making a welter of rents at present. We have an officer who, when a complaint is made, undertakes to investigate it. I am certain, and I think members will agree with me, that a tenant probably thanks his lucky stars that he has a roof over his head, and he is unlikely to take action, which might embarrass his landlord, particularly if he is renting rooms, because obviously if someone went to the premises there would be only the one informant, namely, the tenant. The position would be made so intolerable for that tenant thereafter that he would be eventually compelled to find quarters elsewhere, if that were possible. But if there were an inspector, or preferably a number of inspectors, charged with the task of making surprise calls and working according to a regular plan, land-

lords and landlords would be deterred from overcharging, as they would know the relative documents would have to be produced to the inspector. I feel that would have a salutary effect upon them.

Examples have been given of most extortionate rents; it certainly is not my purpose to weary the House with additional examples. Many cases are known to members where individual rooms in a house have been sublet at a rent far in excess of the rent paid for the whole premises by the tenant.

**Mr. Watts**: I do not think the Act covers that position at all.

**Mr. GRAHAM**: If the standard rent for a house were fixed, because of the date factor, at 30s. a week it should not be possible for the tenant to sublet two rooms at 15s. each, as in that case the standard rent is being charged for only portion of the premises. Sub-tenants know perfectly well that they are being overcharged, but they will not complain because of the repercussions that would take place. Therefore, nothing is done about the matter. I think the Government should appoint at least one inspector, who could either go from door to door, or call at every tenth house, following out some system of surprise visits. In that way, the control would be tightened up during this period of acute housing shortage. I am no prophet, but I say it will be necessary to continue this control for at least three years. If it is not continued, members can easily visualise the chaotic conditions which will occur as a result of extortionate charges for rents. I sincerely hope that the Government, to whom I know representations have already been made, will give further consideration to the point that I have raised this evening.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [8.19]: I did not intend to intervene in this debate had it not been for one or two remarks of the member for Canning. I wish to say, however, that I shall support the second reading of the Bill, not because I think it is the only solution of the present problem, but because it is the only means offering to us at present. Being a continuance Bill it is impossible for us to do more than accept it as such, either for the period mentioned in it or for some less or greater period. But the member for Canning suggested that the proposal should be for a term of three years

from the present time and not the period mentioned in the measure, which is a double-barrelled period.

Mr. Cross: If we do not control rents for the next three years, the position will be disastrous.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order!

Mr. WATTS: If the hon. member would allow me to elaborate the argument I have in mind he might find I am not so greatly at variance with the object he desires to achieve as he appears to imagine. He wishes to extend the measure for a period of not less than three years. I personally am of the opinion that some sort of control of rents may very likely be required for a period of three years. My concern, however is—as it usually is with continuance Bills, the parent Acts of which have been in operation for a considerable time—that the Act itself requires some review. Almost every member on both sides of the House who has spoken this evening has given some reason why there should be some sort of review one way or the other of the Act at present on the statute-book. The member for East Perth made reference to the practice of sub-letting which is indulged in, and I agree there are instances—perhaps there are many more than I know of—of that kind. He showed that it is not the landlord, the person whose rent is controlled as at the 31st August, 1939, who is in those cases responsible for the exorbitant charges to which he referred: it is the tenant to whom the landlord has let his premises, presumably at the rates prescribed by the parent Act.

So far as I know, there is little or nothing in the Act to ensure that those tenants can be controlled. There is ample room, in my opinion, for an alteration of the Act to ensure that cases such as that can be controlled. On the other hand, the member for Canning complained of the grave shortage of houses, particularly in the area of South Perth. I have no doubt whatever that that shortage exists there. I have no doubt that a similar shortage exists in many other places—and not all confined to the metropolitan area, either. But I submit that as the Act stands as present, no private person can be expected to be anxious to erect a house for letting if he is confined to the provisions of the parent Act in the way of obtaining rent for it. So the parent Act, as I see it, in its present form acts as considerable dis-

couragement to persons who might otherwise be interested in building homes, and might be quite prepared to let them at reasonable rentals, from doing it.

It therefore seems to me that there is ample room for the Government to appoint either some committee or other body of inquiry to investigate the many problems raised this evening; or alternatively, through departmental officers, to have them investigated itself and accept the suggestion that this measure should be extended for a short period in order that we may be sure that a new Bill, in consonance with events not taking place, might be introduced and the happenings of the past few years that have crept in under the original Act might be rectified. I have no doubt that the House and the Parliament would be prepared to accept the principle of control for a period as long as that mentioned by the member for Canning, for which there was undoubtedly some justification; but certainly they are not going to accept the thing as it stands for a further period of three years, because it is a measure that does not take into consideration the many changes that have taken place in the affairs of both individuals and of the country since the parent Act was passed.

The Minister for Lands: No-one suggests that this should remain for the three years.

Mr. WATTS: I know the Minister does not. I am referring to the observations of the member for Canning. I would be prepared to see a statute effecting a measure of control for a further three years; but not this one, because it does not give any consideration—it has not had an opportunity to do so—to the circumstances that exist now. The measure was enacted in 1939, the time when the war had just begun and we saw difficulties of a certain type about to occur. We see, however, that in the meantime other difficulties have occurred and new ones are cropping up; and it is our duty to make some provision for this new phase.

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. J. H. Panton—Leederville—in reply) [8.25 p.m.] I want to assure the House that the Government is fully appreciative of the many anomalies that have crept into this particular piece of legislation. I venture to say there is hardly any war legislation or Na-

ional Security Regulation that has not created more than one anomaly. When giving consideration to this matter the Government was faced with the alternative of introducing this Bill or drastically amending the Act. It quite appreciated all the anomalies created and the necessity for a complete overhaul. It is very difficult to say on what day or in what week the war will be declared over by the Governor-General in accordance with the legal practice. If that had been brought about, both the National Security Regulations and this Act would have gone out of existence; and the general impression gained from the speeches of members who have spoken on this matter is that they do not want to see that happen at the moment. Most of the disabilities mentioned by the member for West Perth have been brought about not by this Act but, as the member for North Perth said, by the National Security Regulations.

If this Act goes out of existence, we will have the whole of the National Security Regulations operating until the war ceases. That is something the Government did not want to occur. If I gave the member for North Perth the impression that I said I controlled our Act, I am sorry. I may have said so; but I did not mean to. As far as possible, I want our own legislation to control the position here.

Mr. Abbott: You would approve of the National Security Regulations being abrogated and our own law operating?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: We do not mind that. But if this Act goes out of existence before it can be renewed in any way, we will have the whole of the National Security Regulations operating so long as the war is considered to exist. If Parliament went into recess and peace were signed before it could act again, that is the position in which we would find ourselves. Consequently, this Bill was introduced. In the meantime, I can assure the House that the whole of the legislation will have a complete review. As a matter of fact, I have on the file already many suggestions from the Crown Law Department as to what can be done about it. By this time next year, we hope that we shall have some more definite idea as to whether we are still in a state of war. If we are not, the National Security Regulations will, to a very large

extent, have ceased, and this amending Bill will come into operation until the 31st December.

In the period between the time Parliament meets again and the 31st December, no doubt the Government will have the measure reviewed, and it will be for this House to decide what system of legislation concerning rent control shall operate and for how long. That is the position we are faced with. I do not quite understand what is meant by the argument that we should have this measure terminating on a certain date. The Act provides for the duration of the war and six months after. The National Security Regulations provide the same thing. The measure provides for the event of the war ceasing. It will then continue for six months, or until the 31st December. Surely that is a definite date.

Mr. Abbott: The war might not be over until long after.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: If it is, this Bill will not be required. If we are to have a definite date, irrespective of whether the war finishes or not, I do not agree. We will simply be running into the chaotic conditions that have been suggested.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is the ordinary practice.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is for the 31st December.

Hon. N. Keenan: No.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, if the war ceases, but if, as is suggested by the amendment, the Act is amended to delete the words "the duration of the war and six months after" I do not see what advantage there will be so long as the National Security Regulations operate until that particular time. We will simply be saying that we do not propose to carry on with our legislation for six months after the war, and we will come under the National Security Regulations. I am surprised at the member for Nedlands wanting to do that, because he is the one member who has consistently said that we should have our own legislation.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is so.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Now he suggests the very thing that will bring us under the control of National Security Regulations. I do not see any reason why this should not be until the 31st December,

or six months after the war has ceased. If the war does cease, then the present Act will continue. I hope the Bill will not be amended. In the meantime, a complete review is to be made. We know of several anomalies and we hope to bring down legislation to give this House an opportunity to rectify these anomalies and to decide how long the Act shall operate.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

### *In Committee.*

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

Clause 1—agreed to.

Clause 2—Amendment of Section 15:

Mr. ABBOTT: I move an amendment—

That in lines 2 to 5 the words "inserting therein after the word 'thereafter' in line four of the section the words 'or until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and forty-six, whichever shall be the longer period'" be struck out and the words "deleting after the word 'force' in line one of the section the words 'during the continuance of the war in which His Majesty is at the commencement of this Act engaged and for a period of six months thereafter,' and insert in lieu thereof the words 'until the thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and forty-six'" inserted in lieu.

I have already outlined the reasons for this amendment. The Minister suggests that in all probability legislation relative to this measure will be brought forward for the consideration of this Chamber before the 31st December, 1946. If that is so, is there any reason why the Act should be extended beyond that date? If no legislation is brought down and the date expires, where are we? We do not know because it is a matter of some doubt whether the war will have been declared ended or not. That is not good legislation. We do not want legal arguments as to whether the Act applies or not. What harm can there be in having the 31st December, 1946, a fixed date? There has been voiced from all sides of the House the opinion that the Bill needs serious consideration. Surely 12 months will be long enough for the Minister to consider it. To allow that date to expire and be in the old position where it is a matter of uncertainty is quite unsatisfactory.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The Minister, when replying to the second reading debate, intimated that it is necessary in the circum-

stances of this case to use the phraseology appearing in the Bill. No-one knows better than the Minister that there are many Acts on our statute-book that have to be renewed annually. There is no difficulty about them. Parliament sits once a year, and if a renewal is necessary, it is made. The member for North Perth is asking that the same course be followed in this case. It does not matter whether there is a Commonwealth statute, because that enactment need not and does not in fact apply to Western Australia except to a limited extent, and that limited extent can be abandoned at any time. The point that is really of magnitude is that it is undesirable to have uncertainty where it is not necessary. If this Bill is made to continue until the 31st day of December, 1946, and if any possible reason exists at any future time to extend that date, there will be no question about there being a full opportunity to make that renewal, as Parliament is certain to sit next year long before the 31st December. In the meantime there would be a definite date, and on that date the provisions of the Act would come to an end. I suggest that the Minister should reconsider his opinion.

Amendment put and negatived.

Mr. SEWARD: I move an amendment—

That in lines 3 to 5 the words "thirty-first day of December, one thousand nine hundred and forty-six" be struck out and the words "thirtieth day of September, or thousand nine hundred and forty-six" inserted in lieu.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I am unable to accept the amendment because the Committee has already decided that all the words after the word "by" in the first line shall remain in the clause.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 3, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## **BILL—COMMONWEALTH POWERS.**

### *Second Reading.*

Debate resumed from the 6th November.

MR. WATTS (Katanning) [8.40]: This is a Bill which, as indicated by the Premier when introducing it, is to refer to the Commonwealth the control of prices for a period of three years. That type of reference provided for in the Australian Constitution and the Commonwealth is at liberty to legis-



late in respect of the matter referred in the State or States which referred the power, so it is, of course, practicable, if the legislation before us is passed in this State and is not passed in one of the other States which has hitherto not referred this power, for the Commonwealth to operate in the control of prices so far as that part of the Australian Constitution is concerned, in Western Australia, without troubling about the State which does not refer the power. If that state of affairs should arise I am quite unable to answer the question as to what would be the position regarding interstate commerce, which apparently is the ground for the introduction of this Bill by the Premier, because it has been generally understood that unless the power over prices is capable of being exercised in every State of the Commonwealth by the Commonwealth Government, the efficacy of the power would be in some doubt.

I do not find in this Bill, nor did I hear from the Premier, any reference to any agreement at the conference to which he referred, nor is there any provision in this Bill which requires it to be passed in all the States before it shall become operative. Yet if I understand aright the effect of Section 92 of the Australian Constitution, it seems to be essential that the power should be capable of exercise in all the States of the Commonwealth, and it also seems that in those circumstances consideration should have been given to making the power exercisable by the Commonwealth in this State only, if that state of affairs was arrived at. The Premier informed us, as is quite right, that in the original reference of powers in 1942-43 the State of Queensland and the State of New South Wales referred this power over prices along with all the other powers that the Commonwealth then sought. The State of Queensland, by its mouthpiece—the Premier of that State—has on one or two occasions, according to the daily Press, expressed some regret at the speed with which that reference of powers was indulged in, but that State has been saved from the exercise of those powers in many respects by the very fact that I mentioned just now, that there was no such general reference of powers in all the other five States of the Commonwealth.

The State of Victoria, however, made the reference of powers, so far as the first five or six sections of the Act of that State were concerned, and then proceeded to take away

the whole of the reference, at least for a considerable period, by providing that unless the other States of the Commonwealth did exactly the same thing the Victorian Act should be without effect. The State of Tasmania refused to refer any powers at all. The State of South Australia referred some of the powers, including prices, and the State of Western Australia referred some of the powers, excluding prices, so we had a very mixed grille so far as the 1942-43 proposed reference of powers was concerned. I find that this measure is to be supplementary to the Act of 1942-43. I find, indeed, that in the preamble to the Bill there are recited all the adventures that took place in 1942-43 in relation to the reference of the powers that I have been discussing.

I have come to the conclusion—and have verified it to some extent—that there is no need, constitutionally, for this prices Bill to be supplementary to the Act which we passed in 1942-43 and which, for the reasons that I have given, is inoperative in this State and, indeed, in every other State of the Commonwealth. There is no need for this Bill to be supplementary to that Act, because the reference of prices, as an individual item of reference, could take place in a separate Act to be passed by this Parliament for that purpose, and the immediate requirements of the Commonwealth and, as we believe, the immediate needs of this State as part of the Commonwealth, could be complied with by a separate Act making no reference to the enactment of 1943. There was in my mind an implication, when I saw that paragraph, of an intention to make use in this State of the 1942-43 reference of powers although it was not to be applicable to all the other States of the Commonwealth.

I recollected the observation that had been made by responsible Ministers of the Commonwealth Government, after the various Acts were passed or not passed by the State Parliaments, as the case might be, that the whole reference of powers was useless, and that the matter was then referred to the people by the referendum of the 19th August of last year. Irrespective of the fact that a small majority of the voters of Western Australia and South Australia agreed to the reference of the powers—in some aspects I think they were under a grave misapprehension—the requirements of the Commonwealth Consti-

tution were not complied with in that four States and, throughout the Commonwealth, a majority of the voters defeated the proposal. As the requirements of the Australian Constitution were not complied with, there would be no justification whatever for the Federal authorities making use of the reference of powers in New South Wales and Queensland in particular, because they were the two States above all the others that rejected with contumely the proposals embodied in the referendum.

So I view with disfavour the suggestion that the Act, which will follow the passing of this Bill, should be supplementary to the measure of 1942-43 because I can see no constitutional need for it and I can see the implication that it might be taken advantage of by the Commonwealth in conjunction with the 1942 legislation, which activity would, in my opinion, be entirely unjustified. My apprehension in that regard has to some extent been laid at rest by a discussion I had with a Crown Law officer, through the courtesy of the Premier. That officer assured me that only the legal aspect was considered when the Bill was being drafted and that the legal aspect led him to the belief that it was justifiable for these two Acts to be tied together. He said that as far as he was concerned there was no constitutional need for it and he had given no consideration, because it was none of his duty to do so, to political aspects to which I have made some reference. In the circumstances, I have modified the feelings which I had of suspicion with regard to the phraseology of that particular part of this Bill.

I realise that a measure of control over prices in the immediate future cannot be avoided. I had expressed the opinion in this House, and I am not ashamed of it now, that such control should be exercised under State legislation. I think I even gave an undertaking to the former Premier on one occasion that I would definitely give support to legislation for the control of prices in the post-war period, to be passed by the State Parliament, but it does appear on careful examination of the position and in view of the constitutional difficulties created by Section 92 of the Constitution, that for the immediate present at any rate we would be landing ourselves in more difficulty than would be advisable if we endeavoured to govern the matter by State

legislation. I think we are in the position if I may make use of this analogy, of a man who is about to set sail for some tropical area and is assured of the danger of suffering from certain dread diseases at the end of his journey, which danger he could avoid if he were to submit to the painful inoculation of four or five different types. He decides that rather than risk suffering from those dread diseases when he reaches the tropical area—although he appreciates that he may never catch them, at the same time he realises the risk that he may run—he will accept the advice and suffer the pain of inoculation rather than risk suffering from diseases that might lay him aside or even lead to his demise. I think it can be said that we are in that position.

None of us—at any rate I do not—wisely a greater measure of Commonwealth control to beset this State. Therefore I do not desire to run any risk of that happening. At the same time I feel impelled to agree with the Premier that we must take this dose of nasty medicine, which is what the Bill before the House really is, and abandon our desire for State control of prices for the period contemplated in the legislation, in order that worse evils may not befall us. I believe that if we do agree to a measure of suitable control of prices, we are likely to have even worse evils upon us. That is not to say I am in any means satisfied with the method of price control that we have seen in operation under the Commonwealth regime during the past two or three years. I remember when the present Minister for Works introduced an anti-profiteering Bill in 1939, which met with general support and comprised provision for the control of prices to a very great degree.

I think Mr. W. H. Whyte was appointed Controller of Prices for this State. When he operated under the State legislation there is no doubt in my mind that, although operating with much more limited scope than was available to his successor as deputy controller under the Commonwealth measure, he gave a great deal of satisfaction. He was always approachable and ready to alter a decision that had been made—and to alter it quickly—if evidence were placed before him indicating the desirability of that course being adopted. It struck me as one who never desired cumbersome methods but preferred to exercise suc-

measure of control as seemed to be essential and to make provision respecting price rises where those rises were in any way appreciable. Since then we have, of course, had the ramifications of Commonwealth control. First of all we had Mr. Whyte's appointment as a deputy controller by the Commonwealth, and then his death. Subsequent to that we have found that while there has been a tremendous volume of regulations and a great deal of meddling, there has not been, in my opinion, as effective a control as would have operated under the direction of such a man as the State Government appointed when our legislation was passed. I do not doubt that that has been because a system has been brought into operation for the whole of Australia, which might suit the peculiar requirements of places where those in supreme authority resided and knew something of the conditions obtaining there but which, in my opinion, has been altogether unsuitable for Western Australia.

Incidentally, too, although this Bill excludes State instrumentalities, there has been attempted by the Commonwealth a measure of control over the operations of those instrumentalities. Even the regulations which have been promulgated went so far as to cover increases in the prices charged by the State railways, but we see now that the reference of powers will not allow that state of affairs because the State instrumentalities are expressly excluded. That is a relic of the proposals which came down in 1942-43, because in the Bill of that year State enterprises were to be excluded from control in respect of prices, if I remember the matter right. From some aspects, it is entirely justified; from the point of view of my political belief, it is all right. I am one of those, as I have repeatedly stated who, except it can be shown that it is essential so to do, as it can be shown in this instance, are not prepared to surrender any further rights of the Parliament of Western Australia to the Commonwealth of Australia. But I assume that the Government of this State is not going to impose upon the people of this State the measure of control that is implied by the continuance of this legislation and not impose upon itself control in regard to price increases concerning instrumentalities. I assume, and I anticipate the Premier will be prepared to say "Yes" to this, that the State, though it will be exempt under this law so

far as instrumentalities are concerned from actual price control, will nevertheless control itself. If this is so, no objection whatsoever can be taken to the proposition that State instrumentalities should be excluded.

Great pains have been taken in this measure to deal with the legal argument that, under the Commonwealth Constitution, a reference of powers once made cannot be withdrawn. That argument, I understand, is based on the fact that there is no mention of a temporary reference of powers in the relevant section of the Australian Constitution, and the argument is therefore raised that, if we once refer a power to the Commonwealth, we cannot get it back. I recall that when I sat on the Select Committee in 1943 with the member for Geraldton, the member for West Perth and, I think, the Minister for Works, this matter was discussed at considerable length with the Solicitor General as the legal adviser of the Government and Parliament, and the wording of the proposal which is in this Bill is almost exactly the same as the proposal which the Solicitor General then made to deal with the same problem. It provides that if the temporary reference is found to be invalid, then there is no reference at all. So far as I can see, that is the only thing we can do to ensure that an actual limitation of three years shall be placed upon the reference contained in this measure.

I sense in this Bill a measure of reluctance on the part of the Premier himself to refer this power to the Commonwealth. I see in it only the stern needs of the times actuating him in agreeing to this reference. I trust that I am not mistaken in that belief, because, if I am correct, it indicates that we shall not have any suggestions made to this House in the future of any unnecessary references of power to the Commonwealth such as we have had on one or two occasions in the past when the matter could, within the confines of this State, have been effectively handled by State legislation. I repeat that I trust I am not mistaken in this belief. I take some comfort from the hope that I am not; and I shall conclude by saying that, because without some control it is possible that the prices of many articles may get out of hand and hardship be imposed upon people whom we should save from hardship if we can, I am prepared to support a temporary reference of powers to the Commonwealth in this matter.

**EON. N. KEENAN** (Nedlands) [9.5]: The Leader of the Opposition is disturbed, and justifiably so, by the reference in this Bill to the Commonwealth Powers Act of 1943. It is wholly immaterial that reference is made to the Commonwealth Powers Act in the preamble. That is absolutely of no possible effect. The only part of a Bill that is effective is the part which occurs after the words "It is hereby enacted." The preamble, interesting though it may be, has no legislative effect whatever. So it is immaterial that this reference is found in the preamble. But it is found also in the Bill itself, namely in Clause 2. There it appears in clear terms—

This Act shall be, and shall be construed as being, supplementary to the Commonwealth Powers Act, 1943.

I should like from the Premier some explanation of the necessity for that clause and what it really means because, in fact, we know that the Commonwealth Powers Act that we passed in 1943 is a dead letter and was treated as a dead letter almost immediately after it was passed. This was brought about by the circumstances to which the Leader of the Opposition referred—by the States refusing some of the powers for which the Commonwealth asked—one State refused all the powers—and the Commonwealth therefore, in the person of Dr. Evatt, determined to go to the people of Australia by way of referendum and obtain what it had not been able to obtain from the States separately. So, in fact, the measure we passed in 1943 became a dead letter, and, so far as I know, has been treated as a dead letter ever since. I cannot understand any ground for its being dragged into this Bill or why this measure should be construed as being supplementary to that legislation.

I do not think it is open to any question that the control of prices must be continued. I consider that the arguments submitted by the Premier, and generously admitted by the Leader of the Opposition, are unanswerable. This control must be continued for some period, and not only must it be maintained; it must also be lifted slowly and gradually and not be brought to an end at any one time. I might offer as a comparison what is necessary to be done with a diver when he has descended to great depths in the sea. As he is being brought to the surface from that extreme pressure, he has to be dealt with by staging. He has to be kept for a

considerable period of time at different depths, and then finally he can be brought to the surface with safety, whereas if he were brought up in one single movement the result would be disastrous to him. That illustration holds good in the matter of relaxing the control of prices. If the control is removed gradually and as circumstances permit, it can be done with safety, but it is impossible to imagine that control can be lifted in its entirety at once without great danger of chaos occurring.

Now the position is that the State Parliament possesses full power to control prices and if it chose it could pass a measure which would amply control the fixing and charges of prices in this State for ever, possible article. That power, without question, exists; and the only reason we do not proceed to deal with the problem is, as was said by the Premier—and I am prepared to agree with him to a large extent—that any such attempt on the part of our Parliament to control prices, whilst it would be entirely within our competence, would be without result because of the fact that we are part and parcel of the Commonwealth; and for the various reasons given by the Premier, which I do not dispute, a statute of that character passed in this State would be practically valueless and could be broken in a manner we are not capable of dealing with. So it is said that we must refer this power that the State Parliament now enjoys to the Commonwealth, under Section 51, paragraph (37) of the Commonwealth Constitution. That paragraph was referred to at considerable length by many members, including myself, when the Commonwealth Powers Bill of 1943 was before the House. It is perfectly clear, on reading the paragraph, that the only power given to a State by that paragraph is the power to refer any matter that it chooses, which is part and parcel of its own prerogative, to the Commonwealth Government.

I do not intend for one moment to reassert the legal arguments which took place at that time nor to re-assert what I said then, but I might illustrate it in a very short manner by saying that all powers must be exercised, as everyone would naturally expect, within the terms of the power. We are given a power to do something, we cannot do anything beyond the power, and anything less than the power. For i

stance, if the power were to deal with large sums of money by making grants for various purposes, that power could not be exercised by lending the money; it would only be a power to make grants. Similarly, the power that the States have in this matter is not the power to lend or give temporarily, but a power to refer. However, I mention these matters only to draw attention to the fact that precautions are taken on a very considerable scale in this Bill that I think on the whole would be effective, although I am by no means certain; because to my mind the only effective precaution that could be taken would be to make it a condition of the reference that in every use of the power by the Commonwealth Parliament there should be included a statement that it was temporary. That, members may recall, was the suggestion made by a gentleman who is now on the Bench in South Australia, as being the proper and only certain means of making it a temporary grant.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: That was Mr. Ligertwood.

Hon. N. KEENAN: Yes. For all of those reasons, which I say I do not for a moment challenge or cast any doubt upon, I shall support the Bill. They all rest on this ground, as was pointed out by the Leader of the Opposition, that the other States of the Commonwealth do likewise. If they do not, then the argument put forward by the Premier and accepted by the Leader of the Opposition and myself, falls to the ground. If some other State remained adamant and said, "We will not allow you to exercise this power"—I mean the States which have not delegated it or have not undertaken to delegate it—what would the position be? We would have to rely entirely, so far as it is possible to do so, upon our own legislation and our own authority, because Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution would immediately come into play. So the position should be, I think, as was suggested by the Leader of the Opposition, that this law of ours and this reference of ours should be made conditional on the other States making a like reference, in order that the power may be capable of being enforced. When we reach the Committee stage I will ask the Premier to consider—not offhand—this question, after having consulted with his legal advisers.

I said I did not desire to speak on that part of the Bill which has been dealt with by the Leader of the Opposition, and dealt with very fully and effectually. I shall not do so. I only intend to refer to matters to which I have drawn the attention of the House, and also to point out again that, in order that we should have this Bill as an effective measure—and it is a necessary effective measure, we admit that without any question—steps should be taken to obtain an assurance, not necessarily that the other States have already done so, but that the other States intend to do likewise. If they are not prepared to do likewise, there are only two alternatives. One is that we should bring in our own Bill and use it for what it is worth, with all its drawbacks and all its difficulties. The other would be to make direct approach on our part to the other States, as was done in the dried fruits case, and ask for legislation of a character which will work in with our legislation to be passed by their Parliaments. The member for Geraldton will recollect how that was dealt with and that it was successful.

Hon. J. C. Willecock: Yes.

Hon. N. KEENAN: The same measure of success can be achieved in this case, although I admit that if this reference to the Commonwealth were to lead to the result desired because of the other States also making a like reference, it would be more complete and much more concise and proper. With those observations, I support the Bill.

**MR. NORTH** (Claremont) [9.17]: Mr. Speaker, a few moments ago you stopped me, very properly, talking about sugar. In supporting this measure, I wish to refer to one aspect only in a very few words, because, after all, the machinery of this work is for experts, and that is the question of how long it may be necessary to maintain this sort of control. Many speakers have said—and the member for Nedlands made a very interesting analogy when he spoke about the diver and explained how we would get back to normal—that we should approach a new aspect after the war in one particular at least, and have regard to control of prices. There is proposed not only here, but in other countries such as America, what is now called the job budget, which must surely come in conjunction with a measure for price

control. In the past, until this war, the normal market of unemployed varied according to prosperity. Just before the war it is alleged that 250,000 Australian artisans were out of work. Under this new proposal of job budget, instead of loans being raised each year based upon currency, they are to be based apparently upon the number of men that are to be employed each 12 months. Under that proposal, surely the question of the pressure of prices will be quite different from the pressure which we had before the war, when it was said that under the economic system then prevailing prices would find their own level through competition and so forth. Surely we shall have to consider the point.

Under the full employment or job budget, there will be a pressure exerted on the economic system which never existed before and which may require some form of control. It is not for a member of this Chamber to say what the control should be, but I take it we are permitted to observe a little what has been going on. Until 1942, when the Japanese menace occurred, the system of price control was faulty. The price level rose 30 per cent., and the purchasing power fell. Then came a new system, a system of subsidies and reduction of prices. It is alleged by economists and price controllers that since then prices have risen only 1 per cent., yet in all the statements we read, that are pushed down people's throats through the Press, the suggestion is made that the 30 per cent. rise occurred generally under price control. If the experts are correct, that is utterly false. While we are supporting legislation now in the hope that, as the member for Nedlands said, the diver will come to the surface in due course by easy stages, we might find, with pressure of full employment—meaning that there is always a big purchasing market for any goods supplied and always occupied houses, and that everything is on a high level in business—that the old economic system, which was said to find its level in prices may need some correction for some time to come.

I would draw attention to the figure that Great Britain has allotted in her Budget for this year under the new Government. No less a sum than £300,000,000 sterling has been allotted to maintain the artificially reduced prices. That shows the problem we are against here. I will give some subsidy figures for this country: Butter, £8,500,000;

milk, £1,500,000; potatoes, £2,500,000; tea, £2,250,000; jute products, £2,250,000, and fertilisers, £2,500,000. Those figures were given in the Sydney "Morning Herald" on the 22nd August, 1945. This sort of thing is new; it may be dangerous, but surely it is fascinating and interesting. Nobody can say where the subsidies are coming from. We are told they are coming from the taxpayer but as this Parliament meanders on from year to year we find the total Treasury overdrafts—popularly called loans—continually soaring. Our own Federal figures are between £2,000,000,000 and £3,000,000,000 and the British figure is £25,000,000,000. The price control we are discussing tonight is involved in these problems.

Let us remember that before price control was inaugurated in 1942, under the present system of subsidies and selling below cost, prices rose in Australia 30 per cent., but since then they have not risen more than 1 per cent.; though, of course, housewives do not accept that when they see the prices charged in the shops! We are entering upon a most exciting new era, which may fail but which is at least quite different from anything in the past. When we have to face this full employment proposition, I for one will not be at all surprised to find that a few years go by something of this sort will become a permanent measure, even if it is in a form which will be a good deal more suitable to the people and to traders than the plans now in force.

**HON. J. C. WILLCOCK** (Geraldton [9.25]): It seems to have been implied that unless the power to control prices were vested in the Commonwealth Government we would have an almost futile chance of doing anything in regard to price regulation. I agree that Federal control is a great deal better than control we could exercise under the State's sovereign powers, because of the limitation of Section 92 of the Constitution but I do not want it to get abroad that if the State did not pass this legislation, or if for some reason the agreement is not made and the Commonwealth does not want to go on with effective control of prices which it can exercise, it would be futile altogether for the State to attempt to enact a price-fixing measure. It would not be. As a matter of fact, I think the State could exercise jurisdiction

tion and apply 70 to 80 per cent effective control over commercial transactions in this State.

Mr. Watts: So do we all.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: But the opinion may get abroad that if the Commonwealth does not pass a measure along these lines, it will be absolutely useless for the State to attempt to enact a price-fixing measure, and I do not want that impression to get abroad. In the event of this 100 per cent. effective control measure not being passed, doubt should not be cast on the State's ability to exercise 70 to 80 per cent. control over prices. It would be difficult for people to exercise their rights under Section 92 of the Commonwealth Constitution and make individual bargains and contracts with people in some other State and get things brought over here to defeat price legislation enacted by the State. It would be difficult, and very few people would do it, because the individual transactions which most people exercise in their ordinary domestic economy budget are so small that it would not pay them to start dealing on an interstate basis in order to take advantage of the provisions of Section 92 to dodge State price-fixing. Consequently, if we have to enact under our own sovereign powers a measure giving the State the right to control prices, it must be realised that that measure will not be ineffective or futile but will be to a large extent effective and worth the trouble taken to give people the protection we all consider to be necessary during the next two or three years.

Mr. McDonald: In some ways, State control would be more satisfactory.

Hon. J. C. WILLCOCK: Yes. The Leader of the Opposition indicated that during the preliminary stages of the war we did get on rather well under our own legislation. I thought it worth while to mention that aspect because it is easy for the opinion to get abroad that the State cannot do this sort of thing. None of us says that; but we say that the Commonwealth can do it more effectively; and that was the remark of the Premier in introducing the Bill, and it is our justification for not proposing a measure under our own sovereign powers, which the Commonwealth might much more effectively administer. But while the Commonwealth measure might provide much more protection, a State measure would

probably be at least 80 to 85 per cent. effective in regard to commercial transactions. If my intervention in this debate does anything to scotch any idea to the contrary, that will be my justification for having spoken.

**THE PREMIER** (Hon. F. J. S. Wise—Gascoyne—in reply) [9.29]: I appreciate the contribution of the member for Geraldton—his intervention as he called it—because it specifically clarified a point upon which considerable doubt might arise. When introducing the Bill I stressed the limitations which State law, in this connection, imposed upon such control. It is the important percentage that the State cannot control that renders the Bill so necessary. The limitations imposed by Section 92 of the Constitution, which otherwise would permit of free trade and intercourse between the States and over which the Commonwealth itself legislates for Australia, are the sole reasons rendering for the time being this course necessary.

The Leader of the Opposition raised two important points, one of which was also stressed by the member for Nedlands. The particular clause in the Bill that has reference to this Act—when it becomes an Act—being supplementary to the Commonwealth Powers Act, 1943, is I have been advised, in consultation with the draftsman of this Bill, a matter of importance more from the point of view of draftsmanship than from the constitutional or legal point of view.

Since both this Bill and the Commonwealth Powers Act, 1943, have a reference to similar actions and have a kindred purpose, it was considered necessary by the draftsman that there should be a pointer in this measure to the legislation of 1943. He pointed out that to remove that reference would have no effect whatever on the efficacy of this Bill, when it became an Act. But he considers that, from a draftsman's point of view, it is necessary to have that reference and, indeed, for the notice of the Commonwealth Government to be drawn to the inter-relationship of the two Acts. He admits that it has no legal or constitutional importance other than that. The last point raised by the member for Nedlands, and on which he forecast an amendment, is something on which I can at this stage give

him this assurance, that all States that have not this point covered in their existing legislation have agreed to introduce a similar provision into their Parliaments. The Premier of Victoria promised to refer the matter to his Cabinet with that recommendation, but since then another Premier has taken charge in that State, and the Government of Victoria will change.

The Premier of Tasmania has already presented this matter to his Cabinet and, on his advice, has received approval for its introduction into Parliament. We can only conjecture as to whether the Victorian Government will find it necessary to introduce a Bill containing this principle. If that be not so and legislation is not introduced then, because of the course we are intending to follow, the addition of the proviso that the hon. member indicated he would introduce would not be necessary. So, in any case, although we may expect that this course will be followed by the States that have not at this stage this provision, and if for other reasons he raised this cannot become law, this Government will, I assure the House, immediately take the necessary steps to assume State control, even with the limitations of State control. Every step that can be taken to prevent the chaos and confusion that can ensue, will be taken. I have no intention to delay the second reading. I hope the explanation of the points raised is satisfactory to members.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

#### *In Committee.*

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

Clause 1—Short title and commencement:

Mr. McDONALD: This clause provides that the Act shall come into operation on a day to be fixed by proclamation. By a later clause the operation of the measure is to be for three years from the date fixed by proclamation. In the meantime the Commonwealth Government is exercising power over price-fixing by reason of its wartime powers and under its legislation, namely, the National Security Act, which is in operation for the duration of the war and six months after. It appears to be the opinion of some authorities, particularly those in the Commonwealth Parliament, that under the provisions contained in the

National Security Act the powers of the Commonwealth Parliament in respect of price-fixing and other matters, will endure until the peace treaties are signed. In other words, they may endure for some years. I am in accord with the desire of the Premier to refer this power to the Commonwealth for a period of three years; but I want to see this Chamber in a position at the end of that time to review the matter.

At the end of three years the equilibrium between demand and supply should be more or less established, and it may well be within the compass of the State to undertake the control of prices if such control is still desirable. It may be that State control would then be preferable because I believe that this is one of the matters where decentralisation is of extreme value to the commercial and consuming communities. They could then get a decision from the authorities in Perth without the vexation and loss of time entailed under the present system when trivial matters have to be referred to Canberra. This should be a three-year Bill with the reservation that at the end of that time it could be renewed by Parliament for a further term. We should keep this matter under our control for a period of three years from the present time, and not for a period of three years dating, say, from five years hence when the peace treaties may be signed. If the opinions expressed by the Commonwealth Parliament are correct, the Commonwealth power should expire six months after that date. As the Bill is now, when the peace treaties are signed, perhaps five years hence, the Government would be within its rights in proclaiming this proposed Act for the first time. The Act would then have an operation of perhaps eight years from the present time, and that may or may not be desirable.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: It might not be at all desirable.

Mr. McDONALD: That is so, and therefore I suggest that the date of proclamation should be, say, the 1st January of next year and in order to invite the opinion of the Committee on that point I move an amendment—

That at the end of the clause the following words be added:—"which day shall not be later than the first day of January, 1946."

I am not wedded to the first day of January, 1946, and would not be unduly alarmed



if that was changed to the first day of January, 1947, but I do not want this Bill, if it becomes an Act, to be a kind of "Kathleen Mavourneen" Act which might have an operation beyond what I think either the Government or the members of the Committee would think necessary.

The PREMIER: The date suggested in the amendment moved by the member for West Perth might be quite inappropriate to the need for getting consistency in connection with this legislation. I understand that South Australia has passed its law with a proviso similar to that in this Bill, which gives a temporary reference of such powers. From memory I think the South Australian Act gives a period of five years.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: I take it no uniformity was agreed upon between the Premiers?

The PREMIER: No.

Hon. N. Keenan: But does not this special Bill come into it?

The PREMIER: Not in the case of South Australia. They included prices in the Powers Act of 1943. If the member for West Perth will give me the opportunity to look at the point and endeavour to ascertain that this is consistent with those other Bills to be introduced, I will see that the matter is held over for the time being and in the meantime will make the appropriate inquiries.

Mr. McDONALD: I am pleased to accept the Premier's assurance and, if he will give the matter consideration and will see whether we should provide in our Bill that the matter is not so very indefinite as it might be, from the interpretation that has been placed on the wording, I will, with the leave of the Committee, withdraw my amendment.

Amendment, by leave, withdrawn.

Clause put and passed.

Clause 2—This Act to be supplementary to the Commonwealth Powers Act, 1943.

Mr. WATTS: I cannot say that I am yet satisfied as to the need for this, and the remarks of the member for Nedlands only added to my doubts on the subject because, as everyone knows, remarks by him, especially in a matter of this kind, must be given the utmost attention. I feel that as the Premier has admitted that there is neither constitutional nor legal reason for this clause being in, and that it is only a matter of draftsmanship, it leaves the whole of the

question open to the implication that we are going to do something under the Commonwealth Powers Act of 1943, which has been rejected by the people of Australia and which is a dead letter, or should be, and I think it becomes essential to vote against this clause. Apparently it serves no useful purpose in this Bill. It raises doubts in the minds of people who do not want to be in doubt, though they are prepared to do something which they think is necessary for the effective control of the matter we are discussing, but are not prepared to go further than that. I do not think the Government should expect the Committee to go further than that. I think there is no virtue in this clause, and that it ought to be removed from the Bill. It will not have the slightest effect on the validity of the reference contained in the Bill. I cannot move to take it out but I ask the Committee to vote against it in order that there may be no unnecessary wording in the measure.

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

Ayes	..	..	..	19
Noes	..	..	..	13
				—
Majority for	..	..		6
				—

AYES.	
Mr. Fox	Mr. Smith
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Styants
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Triat
Mr. Leahy	Mr. Willcock
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Millington	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Withers
Mr. Nulsen	Mr. Graham
Mr. Panton	(Teller.)

NOES.	
Mr. Abbott	Mr. North
Mr. Doney	Mr. Owen
Mr. Keenan	Mr. Seward
Mr. Leslie	Mr. Watts
Mr. Mann	Mr. Willmott
Mr. McDonald	Mr. Thorn
Mr. McLarty	(Teller.)

Clause thus passed.

Clauses 3 to 5—agreed to.

Clause 6—Duration of this Act:

Mr. WATTS: I want to be certain that the Premier does not intend to proclaim this legislation until the other States of the Commonwealth lacking this reference pass similar enactments. I think he has already said so, but I would be glad to know if I am correct in that belief.

The PREMIER: I do not wish to adopt the attitude that was followed in Victoria in connection with a matter such as this.

Since it is expected that all States which, at the Premiers' Conference, agreed to introduce legislation of this description, will, in fact do so, I feel quite confident that that will be the position. I do not wish to make the prescription that was made by Victoria in connection with the Commonwealth Powers Act at the time it was passed in that State. However, I do assure the Committee, that, in view of I do assure the Committee, that, in view of the nullifying effect on this legislation if all States do not pass similar measures, the Government will be anxious to do its part by introducing suitable legislation giving State control in all necessary directions, if such legislation is not passed in other States of the Commonwealth.

Mr. Watts: That will do.

Hon. N. KEENAN: I want to ask the Premier if he would consider, with his advisers, the desirability of inserting a clause in the Bill that this reference is made to the Commonwealth Parliament on the distinct agreement that the exercise of the powers so referred will be gradually reduced over the term that is provided for. It is obvious that if the control remains with the same intensity, the same necessity will exist at the end of the term for the passing of legislation of this character. If the control is just as severe at the end of three years as it is today, the position will remain the same as it is today.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: But different commodities will be excluded from time to time.

Hon. N. KEENAN: A clause could be inserted making the position clear.

Hon. J. C. Willcock: Commodities will be gazetted out of control.

Hon. N. KEENAN: At any rate, I ask the Premier to consult his legal advisers as to whether what I suggest should not be done, so that there will be gradual relief from control. I hope that the control will be gradually eased so that at the end of the prescribed term the power referred can be safely lifted and so that the circumstances that make this legislation necessary will not continue. I do not desire to move in the matter but merely ask the Premier to consider the point I raise.

The PREMIER: The fears expressed by the member for Nedlands will, I think, be answered by the almost automatic proceedings as a consequence of normality being

reached in respect of some products and their availability to the public. Just as some commodities today are not subject to price fixing because their exemption has been granted, so that procedure will continue. Although there is no schedule attached to the Bill setting out the commodities brought within price control, that control will be gradually relinquished with the return to normality.

Hon. N. Keenan: That is what ought to be done.

The PREMIER: That is what is being done. In order to ease the mind of the member for Nedlands, I give him my assurance that I will make the necessary inquiries and let him have a letter stating the exact position.

Clause put and passed.

Preamble, Title—agreed to.

Bill reported without amendment and the report adopted.

## ANNUAL ESTIMATES, 1945-1946.

### *In Committee of Supply.*

Resumed from the 6th November; Mr. Rodoreda in the Chair.

*Vote—Department of Native Affairs.*  
£50,000:

**THE MINISTER FOR LANDS** (Hon. A. H. Panton—Leederville) [9.58]: On behalf of the Minister for the North-West, who, as members know, is unfortunately ill, I shall briefly introduce the Estimates for the Department of Native Affairs in order to give members an opportunity to discuss them if they so desire. One of the virtues of the war, so to speak, has been the opportunity provided for natives to prove their worth in the field of employment. During that period they have enjoyed considerable prosperity and have received good wages, especially in the southern areas. Very little rationing has been required except for aged and infirm natives. It is pleasing to note that upwards of 6,000 natives are employed at present, and it augurs well for the future that during all this period they have proved, given reasonable treatment, their possibilities with regard to employment. The department has of necessity favoured rural rather than industrial employment for these people. It is obvious that they are much better engaged in the rural areas where there is less tempta-

ion than they would be in the industrial reas where they would be likely to fall by the wayside. Consequently they have been kept as much as possible in the rural districts. Now that they have shown that, if treated well, they can work, an opportunity is presented to the department which is being availed of, to open a path for post-war proposals for their welfare and training.

For a start it is proposed to open a new settlement for the better class of natives now at Moore River. We propose to leave only the less industrious natives and the bush natives, who are harder to deal with, at the Moore River station. The department, with the assistance of the Lands Department, is seeking a suitable place for this purpose. It requires an area of not less than 1,500 acres, situated not more than 100 miles from Perth, if possible, and not more than 10 miles from a railway, and the intention is to inaugurate a native school of agriculture. If it is possible to get a reasonably good piece of country answering those requirements and inaugurate a school of agriculture for the natives, we shall be able to keep a large number of them in employment in that area and be able to train more, especially the younger section of that community and fit them for rural work, which they now seem to have taken to. Otherwise it is possible that, with the influx of other labour, they will revert to their former condition, and that is something the department feels concern about. I do not see why it should not be possible to train the men in that way and also train the women for domestic work.

It is proposed to continue the building programme at Carrolup. At present there is a shortage of white labour to supervise and instruct the workers, but as soon as that is available, together with material, the building programme will be proceeded with. Members will be interested to learn that one of the churches is establishing an up-to-date mission at Wandering Brook. I have been informed that it will cover a radius of some 50 miles and be the best appointed mission in the State. My information is that those responsible hope to make it a model place, and we trust that it will be successful. I am sure that if it is possible to make a job of the place, this organisation will do it.

Another proposal is to have the Moola Bulla cattle station re-sited. This station has been a substantial asset to the State, but it badly needs modernising, and we intend to do that as soon as possible. At the moment there are 31,700 head of cattle on the station and the annual sales total about 2,000 head. There is a native institution at Udiella Springs, between Derby and Broome, which has recently been purchased and will be brought up to date. Another mission is to be established in the Roebourne district if suitable land can be found, but there is doubt at the moment whether the church will be able to establish a mission there. Since I have taken over the North-West Department, there has been a rush of churches to establish missions here, there and everywhere. Whether they will be established on right lines is another matter. Certainly some of the land that has been chosen, according to the expert advice we have, has not been very suitable, and the churches have not been encouraged to establish settlements at those places.

On my way back from Esperance through Norseman, I paid a visit to the mission at Norseman, which is occupied by the Church of Christ. I was greatly interested in that mission because I know a good deal about it. It has a large piece of land, but I had to tell the people responsible that I was more than surprised at their establishing the settlement within two miles of the Norseman township. I pointed out that if the mining industry goes ahead, Norseman will be one of the largest mining towns outside Kalgoorlie. Knowing mining towns as I do and knowing that a lot of young single men will be engaged in the industry, I could not help feeling surprised, when I saw the fine full-blood and half-caste women at the mission, that the church should have established the buildings within two miles of the town. I said I thought it would be far better to have the settlement at the far end of the area, and I think that point is now appreciated. To put a set of buildings so close to a town like Norseman would be only courting trouble.

Hon. N. Keenan: How long has that mission been opened?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: More than two years.

Mr. Doney: Was it within your power to have it removed to a more suitable spot?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I was Minister for Mines when I called there. I think those responsible now appreciate the position and will move the buildings further away. This leads me to mention what is known in the department as the five-year plan, after which the position will be reviewed. No doubt much could be said about the aborigines, but I do not propose to speak at length tonight. From what I have gathered in the short space of time I have been in control, the department is doing the best possible in the circumstances, and after the experience gained during the war of the ability of the natives to work, the department is hopeful that something may be done to induce these people, by better and more systematic training, to improve their condition considerably. The department is hopeful of showing a practical application of the Government's obligation to the natives.

With regard to the Harbour and Light Department, the main activities are the working of North-West jetties at Carnarvon, Onslow, Point Samson, Broome and Derby. The department controls all ports and harbours in the State with the exception of Fremantle. It also controls pilotage services at Albany, Bunbury, Geraldton, Wyndham and Esperance, and has the administration of the State Navigation Act, the Boat Licensing Act and the Jetties Act. I was rather surprised to find how much administrative work came under this department because we hear so little of it. The revenue and expenditure of the department fluctuate with the volume of shipping and tonnage of cargo handled. Costs at jetties have risen owing to war conditions and the difficulty of getting skilled labour, particularly at the outposts. To anyone who has watched waterside workers handling cargo and working machinery on the wharves, it is obvious how expert they have become at their work. When the experts who are at present away with the Forces return we hope the position will rapidly improve. At present the work is being done by men not so expert and naturally the costs rise. A considerable amount of increased expenditure will be required to repair and restore jetties; some machinery has become obsolete,

while considerable expenditure also will be involved in restoring lights.

Hon. N. Keenan: And laying down buoys?

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes. Now that the lighting restrictions have been lifted, the buoys will have to be laid down and the lights replaced on them. This lighting has been suspended for a long time. The only other increase of any note is the sum of £1,692 for handling increased tonnage. This increase will be mainly made up of wages.

The other item I wish to deal with is fisheries. I could talk for a long time on this subject, if there were necessity to do so. The revenue of this department is mainly derived from fishing licenses and royalties on marsupial skins. A slight increase in revenue is expected on account of returning soldiers recommencing fishing and re-opening the pearling grounds. The expenditure is approximately the same; although there is a slight increase in connection with pearling. The appointment of a guardian of game and an inspector of trout hatcheries is under consideration. For some considerable time past we have had requests to appoint an inspector of trout hatcheries. These hatcheries have been doing excellent work. Unfortunately the hatcheries at Collie were burnt out and millions of fry were lost. The hatcheries are getting under way again, however. At Pemberton an excellent job is also being done. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research has allocated an officer to Western Australia to make investigations. The ketch "Isobel" has been chartered for sea and aerial surveys. The council has also allocated an officer to this State to investigate crayfish, crabs, etc. The fish production is interesting. The past year's catch was over 3,000,000 lbs. The canning production for the 12 months ended the 30th June, 1945 was—Crayfish, 200,208 7oz. tins; Perth beer, 81,308 16oz. tins; salmon relishes, 135,372 16oz. tins.

The Premier: A very good product.

The MINISTER FOR LANDS: I have not tried it. With regard to the trout hatcheries, the Collie and Pemberton Trout Societies have again been granted £50 each. Pemberton produced 50,000 fry for distribution. The Collie hatcheries, as I said, were unfortunately destroyed by fire. The department has a difficult task in blending many different interests and national temperaments. I had an interesting conference some

three weeks ago. I had received many requests to see whether something could be done about our fisheries. I had a discussion with the Premier, and it was decided that the best thing I could do was to call a conference of those interested and ascertain whether anything could be done, even to the point of bringing down legislation, for our fishing industry. I also discussed the matter with the Fisheries Department and invited seven people to meet me at my office to talk things over. I fixed a date some 12 or 14 days ahead, and finished up with 35 people in my office. Every day after I issued the invitation, someone intensely interested in fishing wanted to put his side of the question.

I explained to the conference the difficulty which the public were experiencing in obtaining fish, while at the same time we were told that the Australian waters were teeming with fish. Everyone seemed to be dissatisfied, both the fishermen and the community. I was interested to hear the various arguments of each section of the industry and to learn of the disabilities they were allegedly labouring under, particularly the retailers. There was one rather interesting episode. One of the representatives of the fishermen—a strapping young red-headed Australian—said, "It has been stated that Australians will never make good fishermen, but they will if the prices are stabilised." He explained that he and his partner had caught a large quantity of pilchard at Albany which they sent to Perth, where they brought 4d. per dozen. He had hardly got the words out of his mouth when several retailers, all sitting in a row behind him, jumped to their feet and wanted to know where "they were that day; they didn't hear anything about it." I spent some time trying to settle the argument about what was likely to happen in the industry. They were all of the opinion that it was necessary to get some legislation to control the industry, particularly from the point of view of stabilising prices. They were unanimously of opinion that we should introduce legislation along the lines of the Queensland Act, which they thought was satisfactory.

The outcome was that those present appointed a committee of five to draw up a scheme, which presumably will be based on the Queensland legislation, with a view to placing it before a subsequent meeting to be convened. Eventually they expected that it would find its way to the House as the

basis for legislation to stabilise the fishing industry. It was one of the most interesting conferences I have had. The subject was new to me and I got a view of the issues involved and of the disabilities under which those men were labouring. I feel sure that confidence could be established and the fishermen would be working in increasingly closer collaboration with the Fisheries Department if we could introduce legislation along the lines that I have mentioned. I do not think there is anything more I can add. The department is brand new to me and I have given the Committee all the information I have been able to gather.

**MR. MANN** (Beverley) [10.19]: I desire to express my regret at the absence of the Minister for the North-West and my hope that he will soon be restored to health and be with us again. I wish to touch briefly on the native question as it affects my electorate. There we have a large number of half-castes and the number is increasing. They are under no control, nor is there any settlement for them. The greatest curse to the native I consider to be the child endowment. I have said before in this Chamber that on a Sunday natives can be found gambling at two-up schools. Perhaps I should not mention this in Parliament, because the police will be notified and action taken by them. I would point out that these natives are competent rabbit-trappers and can earn easily as much as £20 a week at that work. They go out and trap in the mornings and then sell about the towns. The whole position is serious. I believe that there should be some proper system of settlements where the natives could be educated and turned into good citizens.

The half-caste down there is quite a good type. One has only to travel on the East-West railway to see the difference. There one sees the low class of native that congregates around Ooldea. They are wretched specimens; but by the infusion of white blood into them in the southern areas, a different type of person has been evolved. I have seen some of these young men and women well-dressed and highly-respected; but there is a problem which will have to be faced some day: the increase in the birthrate. There is no birth control amongst these people, as there unfortunately is amongst the white people. The natives are

increasing, and in 25 years' time the problem will be very serious. The Government is not actively handling the question, but is simply allowing it to drift on. What is the use of a half-caste child attending some of the mixed schools? The children of the natives may stay for no longer than a fortnight or a month in the one place.

The Minister for Lands: I suggest that you discuss this with the Minister for Education.

Mr. MANN: This comes under the heading of native affairs. These children attend the schools for a while, and then the parents wander away somewhere else. They have the wandering craze in their blood. Consequently, when a child is placed in a State school he is very backward, and at 12 years of age may find himself in the first standard. That is not a good thing. The age of puberty of the native is more advanced than that of the white child. Consequently, a serious problem arises in placing male or female native children from 10 to 13 years of age with a class of white children from six to eight years of age. I appeal to the Government to take some steps in this matter. Consider the Badjaling area! It is on a sand patch, and the position is hopeless. There are children in that district as fair as the children of white parents—flaxen-haired children with no future. We need to come up to scratch in this matter.

I would like to see a settlement established where these children could be trained in proper schools by teachers well versed in handling half-caste youngsters. They are different from white children to educate. The Country Women's Association is raising objections to the treatment of these children. I pay this tribute to the Country Women's Association: It is an Australia-wide organisation. The views of these women are sound in many ways. They are concerned not merely with their own children, but with the welfare of this unfortunate element which is growing up and not making any headway. We have heard of the marvellous part played by the churches; but there is no clergyman who would be prepared to allow his daughter or son to marry a half-caste. So I have very little faith in some of the churches in this matter of the natives. It is easy to preach Christian ideas to them and to make them fit to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and then to say they are not even fit to enter the homes

of white people. There is a very vast distinction—very big indeed—and the position is not getting any better. We will be faced like America, as the years go by, with the problem that a growing population of this kind creates. I suggest that the matter should be handled very definitely in our southern parts, and appeal to the Government to act in this matter and alter conditions that have prevailed for many years. I hope the Acting Minister of the department will take some action, or that the Government generally will do so.

The Moseley report which was produced in this House many years ago was never really given effect to, and there were some excellent suggestions in it. We realise there is some justification for white people refusing to allow their children to go to schools attended by the half-caste children, such as was the case at Pingelly. I think this is definitely a matter for a conference between the Education Department and the Minister for Native Affairs with a view to the future of these children being decided. I believe that by proper education and training the men could be made into excellent carpenters and blacksmiths. These people are entitled to the enjoyment provided for white persons. They are rightly denied the privilege of entering hotels; but they are also debarred from attending picture shows. If they were admitted, there would be such a crowd of them spitting on the floors, and attending in a fairly smelly condition that white people would not patronise the theatre. Because of that, these natives are told they are not allowed to go to picture shows or any amusement at all; so they drift back to their old class again. I have seen some who have been well-educated and well-reared; but once they get back to the old camp life they adopt the old system very easily, living in frightful shacks and filth and dirt; and nothing is gained from their training. I reiterate that there should be a conference between the two departments concerned.

With regard to fisheries, I would say that when the members of the Royal Commission on Vermin were on tour they inspected the Pemberton hatcheries. That is a wonderful enterprise, and the work was done without a request for Government help. Those responsible launched this scheme themselves and it is a wonderful sight to see. It gave us an idea of the excellent opportunity we have of attracting tourists who could be

persuaded to visit the South-West for trout fishing.

The Premier: I am not going to be ungenerous to them.

Mr. MANN: I think it is a marvellous scheme.

The Premier: Yes, it is a wonderful achievement.

Mr. MANN: I was most impressed by the swimming pool, and by the marvellous fisheries and the keenness of the men who started the scheme. They are worthy of all commendation. We are the smallest fish-catchers in the world, not because we do not like fish, but because we cannot get it. Yet I understand our seas are teeming with fish. In 1914, just before the outbreak of the first world war, I visited Derby and saw the tremendous amount of fishing that took place on the North-West coast. There is a wonderful fortune to be had from fish in this State. Many of our young men will be coming back from the war and could engage in this industry. I refer to those who joined the Navy and had experience in corvettes. They have had a taste of the seafaring life and have got the sea into their blood, so to speak. They would be excellent men for this industry.

The Premier: Research has reached a very certain stage now with regard to development of the industry.

Mr. MANN: I understand that is so. I think that some of our young returned men could make an excellent job of fishing.

The Minister for Lands: They need a guaranteed price.

Mr. MANN: I agree there should be a guaranteed price for the producer; and a price, too, which the consumer could afford to pay for fish. It seems to me that one of the greatest curses of this State is the foreign element which controls so many of our industries. Our clothing factories, dress shops, eating-houses, fish shops and fruit shops are controlled by foreign elements. Many men returning from the war are not going to tolerate the foreign element controlling our fish shops. If we are going to open up our fishing business let it be to Australians who have been fighting overseas. Let them have first preference instead of foreigners.

MR. FOX (South Fremantle) [10.31]: I listened with interest to the remarks of the member for Beverley about the fishing indus-

try. Last Saturday I attended a big meeting of fishermen. I was surprised to see the large number of Britishers who attended. The greatest percentage of foreigners are naturalised Italians and they are as much entitled to the protection and other conditions that are enjoyed by all British subjects.

Mr. Doney: We do not think so.

Mr. FOX: We guarantee them those things when they leave their country to come here and become naturalised.

Mr. Doney: The preference should go to soldiers.

Mr. FOX: It is hard to get soldiers to enter this industry.

Mr. Doney: It does not matter whether it is hard.

Mr. FOX: It has been difficult to get Britishers to take on fishing. I agree that the control of fish after it is captured is in the hands of people who should not control it. They put nothing into the industry but they get a lot out of it. The fishermen are making a determined effort to organise the industry and I hope the Government will be prepared to give them some assistance.

The Premier: We will.

Mr. FOX: The fishermen should be able to control the shops selling the fish. A board should be established so that we may have effective control of the industry and of price. It is not the men who do the hard work who get the rake-off at present. It is those who control the industry. If fish is plentiful they buy it and store it and sell it later.

Mr. Doney: Who does control the industry?

Mr. FOX: I do not know. If a determined effort is made the men who catch the fish should be able to control all the transactions and get the whole of the profit. There should be no loafers in between!

Mr. Mann: Has not the Commonwealth Government power to stop that profiteering?

Mr. FOX: It set up an Act—

Mr. Watts: It soon set it down again.

Mr. FOX: Some people in this State connected with the Labour movement objected, and the regulation was wiped out. To show how fish has risen in price I point out that last year the fish supplies for the Fremantle Hospital cost £180. This year the supply cost £360 and not nearly as much fish has been provided for the patients as in previous years. Some people in Perth get the profits and not the fishermen. I would not be sur-

prised if there are some people waiting for the fishermen to organise in order to get the rake-off that these other people are getting now.

Mr. Doney: It should be an easy matter to find out who these people are.

Mr. FOX: It would not be hard to find out who controls fish in the metropolitan area. Some amenities are required at the fish jetty. A larger breakwater is needed to shelter the boats. In the last 12 months or so two or three boats have gone on the rocks and become total wrecks. They were big losses to the fishermen concerned because, I understand, they were not insured. The Government should run the breakwater out another 300 or 400 yards to give ample shelter for the boats there. With the object of being recouped the Government could assist the fishermen by installing at the fish market jetty a refrigerator, winches and so forth. If a board were established I am sure that the price of fish would come down, and those doing the major portion of the work in the industry would get something like what they are entitled to. The present organisation is a strong one and, I understand, is confined to Fremantle because the people who live in the outside estuaries represent only a few members and they wanted the same voting control as the people at Fremantle where there are many members.

MR. NORTH (Claremont) [10.36]: I would like to know, on the subject of jetties, whether the Government can establish a general policy for jetties. There seems to be some doubt about the matter. Many jetties were erected by the Government originally, but as the years have gone by the local authorities have been left to maintain them in certain cases. We read of jetties being blown down in the North-West and being replaced with no trouble to the local authority. It is very sad to see the state of the Cottesloe jetty. Cottesloe is said by some people to be the best seaside resort in the State. Only eight or ten piles are needed to be replaced, but it is rumoured in the district that the Cottesloe council is going to allow it to fall to pieces. I hope that is only a rumour. It has been in a state of disrepair for some time. Years ago the Government repaired the jetty and the council re-paid the Government, on easy terms, the cost involved. I have been to Busselton and Rockingham, and the jetties at those places are falling to pieces.

Mr. FOX: It is a private jetty at Rockingham.

Mr. NORTH: It was originally.

Mr. FOX: There is a new one there now.

Mr. NORTH: I sometimes hear company directors say, "You cannot get something for nothing." That seems to be true about jetties. People appear to want to use jetties for fishing, etc., but there does not seem to be any money when they need maintaining. I suppose it is beyond the capacity of the Government to look after all these jetties, but there is room for clarification of policy. A conference could be held between the local authorities and the Government so that the different authorities could learn where they stood. There is a fine jetty on the river at Claremont. It got into a shocking state two years ago and, Mr. Chairman, it came under your notice. You, as an elector, drew my attention to it and compelled me to take action. In that case the Government had announced years before that it was no longer looking after the jetty. The local authority was not clear as to whether it had the power to do the necessary work itself. The jetties that are falling to pieces along our coast should be removed or repaired. There should be some policy, on a broad basis, under which money could be made available.

I suggest to the Government that the policy should be handled by the new tourist body there is talk of creating. If we are to have a strong tourist policy, such as the Premier has announced, I think part of that policy should be to maintain and improve these jetties, so that the visitors may contribute, by their spending power while touring, to the maintenance. Today we want the use of the jetties for nothing, and consequently many of them are falling to pieces. I trust the Minister will give consideration to that suggestion and, if possible, arrange with the Tourist Department to establish a policy for the maintenance, repair and improvement of those jetties. It is a sad state of affairs that so many local bodies should feel encumbered with what are really public utilities, in the absence of a policy concerning those structures. I do not ask the Government to find all the money necessary, but I think there is a prospect of a large tourist traffic being milked to the slight extent



necessary to meet the cost of such improvements for the benefit of the tourists themselves.

Mr. BERRY: I move—

That progress be reported.

Motion put and negatived.

**MR. BERRY** (Irwin-Moore) [10.43]: The item I am interested in on this Vote is one that has become a hardy annual with me, the need for greater attention to be paid to the fishing industry. When in your seat, Sir, you made some pertinent remarks on the subject, and had my full agreement. I will not go over the history of our estuary fishing, but I say that, at the moment, we are again catching schnapper full of spawn in Safety Bay, in spite of the fact that for a considerable time I have endeavoured to make it clear to the Government that it is just as important to the welfare of this State to protect the fishing industry as it was some years ago to take precautions to protect the jarrah and karri forests of this State. I am sorry that no provision has yet been made for the establishment of a research vessel such as has been asked for for so long. Now the war is over that question should be considered, bearing in mind the fact that there must now be available, either from the State shipbuilding yards or through the sales at the naval depots, a ship that would be suitable for carrying out the necessary investigations.

**MR. WATTS** (Katanning) [10.45]: The questions involved in the Department of Native Affairs and Fisheries are extremely important, and not to be dismissed lightly, especially when we have the department in the hands of an acting Minister because the Minister for the North-West, who has been in charge of these matters and has dealt with them in his own way for a long period, is away. Speaking personally, I greatly regret that he is unable to be with us tonight and I regret the ill-health that has afflicted him. I join with the member for Beverley in wishing him a speedy return to us, restored to health, though I realise how serious is his illness. Quite apart from his departmental duties, I think we have all found the Minister for the North-West to be a man whom it is a pleasure to know. In expressing regret at

his absence, I am saying the least I can to express our feeling for him. As we believe his absence will, unfortunately, be for a considerable time, I have a few words to say to the acting Minister and the Minister for Education in regard to natives and the other matters that come under this department.

Turning first to the natives, I asked the Minister for Education yesterday some questions which were answered today relative to the difficulties attendant on attempts at educating natives, including half-caste children, and as to whether it was intended to open separate schools for them under the Education Department. I asked for the reports that might have been given to the Education Department by teachers who have been responsible for the instruction of natives in schools where there were a considerable number of them. Those reports have today been laid on the Table of the House. It has not been possible to peruse them, in the short time since they were placed there, and consequently a discussion on their contents will have to wait until we come to the Estimates of the Department of Education. In the meantime, it is possible to put a few aspects of the position to the respective Ministers, in order that they may give them a little more consideration than they have given them. The member for Beverley made some reference to this matter and indicated, in his usual picturesque language, the difficulties attendant upon endeavouring to teach these children in conjunction with the children of the white races. Those difficulties, as I see them, exist mainly because the youths of the half-caste and native sections of the community either have not been taught to keep themselves reasonably clean and tidy, or else cannot be taught.

Mr. McLarty: It is due to the conditions under which they live.

Mr. WATTS: I am not prepared to say they cannot be taught. It should be possible to prove that that is not so, but I believe the effort has not yet been made, and it is an effort that ought to be made, because they are increasing in numbers. I have before me the annual report of the Commissioner of Native Affairs and I shall draw attention to some figures which I shall suggest are conservative, to say the least of it.

Mr. Seward: I think they are hopelessly wrong.

Mr. WATTS: The member for Pingelly may have some justification for that assertion because statistics previously made available had disclosed a far greater number. Let us see what we shall find in the report of the Commissioner regarding the number of natives and half-castes in certain areas of the State. He says—

In the more settled area of the State from south of Geraldton and west of Kalgoorlie an attempt ought to be made to provide detribalised natives with cheap housing facilities on native reserves for those natives who ordinarily live on reserves, and such houses should be provided by the Commonwealth Government, particularly for half-castes who are natives in law.

Here is the point I specially wish to mention—

In the area in question, that is, south of Geraldton and west of Kalgoorlie, there are approximately 2,000 native adults with 1,619 native children. Included in these figures are 390 adult full-blood native males, 265 adult full-blood females, 696 male half-caste adults, and 641 female half-caste adults.

Taking the statement that south of Geraldton and west of Kalgoorlie there are only 3,619 native adults and children, including half-castes—of course, under the law, half-castes are included in the term "native"—I think the Premier will agree with me that he and I must have seen at least 25 per cent. of the total number at one show we attended.

The Premier: I think 60 per cent. of those we saw were children.

Mr. WATTS: I understand that at one place in the Great Southern there were supposed to be 550 natives. We have always thought there are at least between 4,000 and 5,000 natives along the Great Southern line. If we accept the figures supplied by the Commissioner of Native Affairs, we have an immediate problem of dealing with 2,000 children in that area who require education first of all in cleanliness, if we can manage to give it to them, and secondly, we must educate them so that they will be able to play some useful part in the community in the future. I believe I can state truthfully that not a great deal has been done in the past to bring about such a state of affairs. It will probably involve, as the member for Murray-Wellington implied by way of interjection, the cleaning-up of quarters in which the adult natives live and an endeavour, if it be practicable, to inculcate in them some idea of decency and hygiene in order that they may the more easily take their places

among the remainder of our people. No-one least of all myself, desires in the slightest degree to be in any way unkind or unhelpful to these people. It is not their fault that they are in the position in which they find themselves, and the only thing we can do is to put the best face on the matter and give them the best possible. We cannot do that by neglecting them and breeding dissatisfaction and dislike between them and the white people. The more we go to places where they are to be found, the more evident it is that white people have sound reasons for their objections.

In one area in my electorate it is freely stated that white children are kept away from schools because of minor ailments and sores which, their parents contend, have been contracted from native children attending those schools. While in the home of a white family we may safely assume a bath is installed and even if the children do not make regular use of it, it can be assumed as well that occasionally they are made to use it, it can also be assumed with little hesitation that in the homes of natives or half-castes there is neither any provision for baths nor any intention, even if they were installed, to make use of them. In a minority of cases that is not true and quite a different state of affairs exists in those homes. It has been my pleasure to know one or two half-caste families that would be a credit to any community. I believe that if it is possible to have one or two families attain that status in the community, it is also possible for others to be equally situated. I believe that it would by that means be possible for a great percentage of natives to become useful members of the community and to participate in useful work. That will never be done by the Education Department refusing, in the areas where the natives are in considerable numbers—and their numbers will steadily increase—to establish separate schools.

If separate schools were established there would be a better opportunity to inaugurate separate methods and appoint teachers possessing special qualifications to deal with this problem. In the reports which have been tabled this evening and which I propose to read, there will be, I feel sure, statements from teachers who will express the opinion that individuals possessing special qualifications for teaching native children are necessary. The methods that apply in deal-

ing with the normal white child cannot, I assert, be applied to the children of half-caste and native parents, particularly those who live in communities where the whites predominate. There must be a separate system evolved to deal with them, to educate them and help them so that they may occupy a reasonable position in our midst. If we do not do that, we shall be sadly lacking in our duty, because the natives are with us in large numbers and those numbers are likely to increase. We shall be lacking in our duty not only to them but to our own people. That is what we must consider—the duty we owe to our own people as well as to the natives.

It has been a very great disappointment to me that during the 10 years I have been a member of this House, little if any substantial improvement has been effected in the methods adopted in dealing with this section of our community. The Commonwealth Government has succeeded in making the position a great deal worse than it was because it has altered their mode of living. Formerly, adult natives and half-castes had to work and earn an honest living, because there were no other means whereby they could maintain those dependent upon them. Now those people find that under the child endowment system they have a means of acquiring quite considerable sums without doing anything—in the way of manual labour—in order to secure them. The result of that has been commented upon freely by the Commissioner of Native Affairs. I do not suggest that the child endowment payments should not have been made in respect of native and half-caste children, but I do suggest that the money should have been made available in such a manner that it would have been spent for their benefit.

The Commissioner of Native Affairs might reasonably have been made responsible by the Commonwealth Government for managing the expenditure of that money. I have some idea of the difficulties he has experienced in trying to get some control of it. He has been given very little assistance, in fact, in regard to another aspect of this matter—the maternity allowance. He even makes reference to my colleague, the member for Pingelly, for the interest he took in trying to persuade the Commonwealth Government that the procedure in regard to the payment of the maternity al-

lowance to certain natives was quite a wrong one. In that point of view, the Commissioner agreed that the Commonwealth Government had altered its practice.

A couple of years ago when we were discussing the Commonwealth Powers Bill, I stated in this House that we could not expect the Commonwealth Parliament as a whole to have much knowledge of the affairs of natives or the conditions likely to be suitable for them or the legislation likely to be good when the representatives of the States of New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania, where the majority of the members of the Federal House come from, have practically no natives, in one case none at all, and therefore know little if anything about the conditions under which natives exist, whereas in this State there is hardly a member outside of those representing the metropolis—and even they have had some opportunity to study the problem—who is not almost weekly brought into contact with one aspect or another of native administration. Therefore it was a preposterous proposal that the control of natives in this State should be handed over to the Commonwealth Parliament, and the soundness of that view has been conclusively proved by its inability to recognise the need for a different type of legislation in regard to funds such as child endowment available for native children from the policy put into operation, despite the representations made by responsible officers in this State.

The Commissioner, in his report, has dealt with a great many matters that are well worthy of our consideration. I take some exception, however, to an observation as follows:—

In this atmosphere (he was dealing with post-war housing) the evidence was submitted to the Commission, but in any event it is impossible to take action for the housing of natives unless the Commonwealth Government provides the wherewithal, as the State Treasury is already unable to spare the funds for the needs of the native question.

I could have understood it had he said that the State Treasurer or the Minister said that that was so, but for him to declare that the State Treasury is unable to spare funds, without mentioning the fact that he had been so advised by the Treasurer or one of his officers, seems to be going rather the wrong way about it. I suggest to the Commissioner, for whom I

have a high regard personally, that if the Commonwealth Government does not very shortly find the money to which he makes reference and in the application for which I gave him to the best of my poor ability some support a year ago, he had better turn attention to finding the money somewhere else, because, if he does not find it soon, a major difficulty in Western Australia will become a little too much, and I think that the public dissatisfaction will become very great. It is already mounting to some extent in various areas, but so far has been excused, as a great many other things have been in the last five or six years, because of the war.

The Commissioner deals with many aspects of the housing question. He says he wants houses as follows:—Beverley 5, Boddington 5, Brookton 3, Broomehill 2, Bunbury 6, Busselton 4, Carrolup Native Settlement 30, Collie 2, Cunderdin 3, Dalwallinu 3, Dumbleyung 2, Geraldton 6, Gnowangerup 26, Goomalling 4, Guildford 5, Kellerberrin 7, Leonora 7, Merredin 10, Mingenew 4, Moore River Native Settlement 30, Mt. Barker 5, Narrogin 7, Northam 4, Perenjori 4, Pingelly 6, Pinjarra 3, Quairading 50, Southern Cross 8, Tambellup 4, Three Springs 3, Toodyay 2, Wagin 4, Wickepin 2, Williams 5, and York 5. The total of houses required is 276, and he suggests a three-roomed type of prefabricated home.

For the time being I am unable to do anything but accept the proposals of the Commissioner, and I do accept them for the purposes of this argument, and I say to myself that they will cost a great deal of money. On the one hand, what request has been submitted to the Commonwealth Government in regard to the provision of money for this purpose? On the other hand, if a request has been submitted, what sort of reception did it get? Are we going to get any assistance, or do not we know or have not we asked? Those are a few questions on which the Minister might have given information when he introduced the Estimates.

The Premier: And if not, why not?

Mr. WATTS: There are matters in conjunction with education with which I will deal later on when I have read the report. We want to know something of the Carrolup Native Settlement where 30 houses are required. This settlement is in the district of the member for Wagin and is 24 miles

from Katanning. As I have told members before, I have been there, and that settlement is capable of great improvement. If it is left as it is at present, it is also capable of becoming a greater detriment than if it was not there to be used. So there is room for more precision in the statements by the Government as to what it intends to do for the natives. This is a complaint that ought to have been voiced rather more strongly in the Chamber than it has been in the past.

The Government does not tell us what its policy is in regard to the natives. One would gather that there is no policy, but knowing the Minister for the North-West as I do, I am inclined to believe that he has given consideration to a policy. However, it is high time that a policy was laid down and that the public was told what it is. If the Acting Minister has any information on it, I suggest that he should communicate it to the public forthwith and let it receive all possible consideration so that there will no longer be any misapprehension or misgiving as to whether there is a policy for the future. Are we to assume that the number of natives and half-castes is substantially going to increase? I think we must. If we assume that, is it the intention to go on as we have done in the past? I do not think we can. If we are not going on as in the past, what are we going to do? That is what I want to know. So, on that note, I will leave the matter, hoping that my questions will be answered in the near future.

MR. SEWARD (Pingelly) [11.9]: I wish briefly to share the regret already expressed that the Minister for the North-West is laid aside by illness and to voice the hope that he will shortly be restored to health. Like the Leader of the Opposition, I was rather struck when I read in the report of the Commissioner the figures dealing with the native population. The Leader of the Opposition has supplied the Committee with figures of the native population between Geraldton and Albany. At page 10 of the Commissioner's report for the year ended the 30th June, 1944, he gives particulars of the total native population. These are as follows:—

30th June, 1943.

Full bloods	..	..	..	..	11,449
All others	..	..	..	..	5,471
					<hr/> 16,920

The following year the total increased to 17,052. In the report made by Royal Commissioner Moseley in 1935, he stated the total native population at that time was 19,021. According to the Commissioner's report, our native population in 1944 was 17,052, so that it has declined by about 2,000 in the intervening 10 years. Anyone who knows anything at all about the native population of our State, particularly in the southern portion of it, will be utterly unable to credit that the native population has decreased by 2,000 in the last 10 years. The evidence before our eyes is much more conclusive; it has increased by considerably more than 2,000. I have no hesitation in saying that the native population of Pingelly alone has increased threefold during the past 10 years, and Pingelly is by no means a centre with a large native population. I think some better means should be devised to ascertain the native population than those adopted by the department, so that the figures may be regarded as reasonably accurate.

One comment in the report that struck me rather forcibly was a paragraph which is headed by the Commissioner, "Ware Criticism." What the Commissioner's department has to beware of in the way of criticism I have yet to learn. The Minister tonight gave us ample evidence that the department is taking notice of criticism. He told the Committee that the department was intending to establish a school of agriculture, or desired to establish such a school, at which natives—and particularly half-castes—could be trained in the methods of agriculture. We have been asking for the last 10 years that something be done to instruct these natives in methods of agriculture. Why the department should be looking round for a property to establish the school when Carrolup is available, I do not know. What is Carrolup for, I would ask the department? Surely to goodness, it should be possible to train natives there in agriculture in order that they may earn some revenue to make the place self-supporting. When I visited the property with the Leader of the Opposition, the manager told me that it was almost impossible to carry it on because the young natives were all hired out to various farmers. If that policy is being adopted what is the use of talking about establishing a school of agriculture or something of that description?

When speaking on these Estimates some years ago, I remember pointing out that New Zealand made provision for the Maoris, who were given properties the titles to which they could not transfer. According to the Commissioner's report, I see it is now intended to establish some of our half-castes on properties of their own outside townships. They will be given the freehold and will engage in vegetable growing and other branches of agriculture. That is all to the good. I am pleased that the department has arrived at that decision. I venture to say, however, that it was reached because of the criticism and the advice tendered during the last few years by members on this side of the House, particularly when we were reviewing these Estimates. If the scheme is proceeded with, it will certainly benefit the younger aborigines. The older aborigines we cannot do very much about; their habits of life are formed. I am certain the younger aborigines will turn out to be very desirable citizens once they become established in this way. Therefore, the Commissioner should not take exception to criticism, unless it is merely idle or destructive criticism.

In the past we have endeavoured to criticise constructively. It is interesting to learn the amount of money that has been paid to the native population by way of child endowment. The report states that at the 30th June, 1944, the amount was £29,484, as compared with the amount of £27,040 at the close of the previous year. These are large sums of money and I only hope that we are getting value for them. I have every reason to believe, however, that nothing like value is being obtained for this endowment money. When one notes how the natives in the Great Southern district are dressed, it is clear that value is not being obtained for the endowment money. Some better method should be devised of dealing with this matter than by paying the money direct to the natives. The Leader of the Opposition referred to the public dissatisfaction in the towns along the Great Southern railway over this matter. The residents there see how the natives are increasing and how they are living. They have been able to obtain work during the past few years owing to the dearth of white labour, but they certainly are not much improved by it. For that reason it will certainly be interesting

to ascertain whether they will improve in the next few years. That is all I desire to say on this Vote. I hope that the promise—if we may so term it—that the farms I mentioned will be made available to the younger generation of natives will be kept, so that they may be employed in suitable work and will be enabled to own the properties on which they will be living.

Progress reported.

*House adjourned at 11.19 p.m.*

## Legislative Council.

*Tuesday, 13th November, 1945.*

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

### MOTION—NURSING, HOSPITAL AND MEDICAL SERVICES.

*As to Inquiry by Royal Commission.*

**HON. J. G. HISLOP** (Metropolitan)  
[4.34]: I move—

That this House urges the Government to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate and report upon:—

- (i) Any re-organisation considered necessary to provide adequate nursing facilities (a) immediately, (b) for the future;
- (ii) The hospital policy of the State, and make recommendations thereon in regard to (a) administration and finance, (b) construction, (c) distribution;
- (iii) By what means the present system of medical practice can be increased in efficiency and availability.

I move this motion because it is imperative that steps be taken at once to prevent the disintegration of the nursing and hospital services of the State. During the war, the

staffs of hospitals were maintained at a minimum, but nevertheless maintained, by the exercise of powers under the manpower regulations. Since the restrictions on the movement of hospital workers have been removed, a critical position has been reached. The disorganisation is spreading so quickly that measures must be taken now—not next year—if we are to prevent a more serious situation arising, one in which many of our country centres will be without hospital facilities. It must also be apparent to all who are intimate with the practice of medicine that we have reached a new era.

In the lifetime of those practising now medicine has changed from an art to a science without any equal change in its method of distribution to the public. Barely one factor which I was taught to regard as established doctrine remains true or accepted today. Further, we must realise that the profession of nursing has lived through an era and is emerging into a new responsibility. There are those still living who, when training as a nurse, were regarded much as were the loose women of the town and granted the same diet of a pound of steak and a bottle of beer daily. Then followed what I might call the altruistic period, when girls were expected to train and yet look upon the monetary reward as being beneath their thoughts. And we all—the medical profession was no better than the remainder of the public—took it for granted that this state of affairs would continue for ever. But with the advance of medicine, it became necessary to call upon more and more to undertake nursing; thus it remained no longer a vocation of the girls with rich parents. Then, of course, payment for service resulted. We die hard, and grudge them every improvement in conditions and every increase in payment for service.

Too long have we looked to the altruism of the nurses of the past to staff our hospitals. Even today, when a nurse holds the certificate of general nursing training and enters a midwifery training school to gain the midwifery certificate, we reduce her pay—after deducting board and tax—from £2 13s. 11d. to 18s. 10d., and then insist that she remain at that institution at the same rate of pay until she finishes her infant health training. And this is where one of our present drifts takes place. I have