

in the event of the Bill I have introduced being agreed to, I do not think 30 per cent. of the producers would use their road vehicles for the cartage of wool.

If a man had five odd bales he might put them on a truck and cart them to the metropolitan area, but under existing conditions the railways are simply hiding behind the protection of the State Transport Co-ordination Act. Small increases in freights have applied in the metropolitan area, but I do not think any manufacturers have been compelled to use the railways for the cartage of their output to customers or of their requirements to the factories. They are allowed to use contract carriers or to employ their own vehicles.

Hon. J. M. A. Cunningham: The railways were not intended to develop the city.

Hon. L. A. Logan: It would be a pretty poor city without the railways.

HON. A. L. LOTON: Then I assume the railways are intended to run round in circles! There has been a slight increase in the fares on the suburban railways, but even then a section of the community was excluded on the ground that the individuals concerned could not carry the additional burden. The concession fares that apply during an hour or so in the morning were exempt from any increases. If producers have received concessions, then obviously the same principle has been applied to other sections of the community.

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

Ayes	10
Noes	12

Majority against 2

Ayes.

Hon. E. J. Boylen	Hon. A. L. Loton
Hon. W. R. Hall	Hon. H. C. Strickland
Hon. J. G. Hislop	Hon. J. M. Thomson
Hon. A. R. Jones	Hon. H. K. Watson
Hon. L. A. Logan	Hon. N. E. Baxter

(Teller.)

Noes.

Hon. L. Craig	Hon. E. M. Heenan
Hon. J. Cunningham	Hon. W. J. Mann
Hon. E. M. Davies	Hon. H. S. W. Parker
Hon. J. A. Dimmitt	Hon. C. H. Simpson
Hon. Sir Frank Gibson	Hon. H. Tuckey
Hon. E. H. Gray	Hon. G. Fraser

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes.
Hon. R. M. Forrest	Hon. F. R. Welsh
Hon. H. L. Roche	Hon. G. B. Wood

Question thus negatived; Bill defeated.

House adjourned at 8.28 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 18th October, 1950.

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

QUESTIONS.

EDUCATION.

As to Northam High School, Cycle Rack.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Minister for Education:

(1) Has a decision yet been made to install a cycle rack at the Northam High School?

(2) If not, when is a decision likely to be made?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) No.

(2) The Education Department awaits the recommendation of the Principal Architect in this matter.

SWIMMING POOLS, COUNTRY.

As to Government Assistance.

Hon. A. R. G. HAWKE asked the Premier:

What is the basis upon which the Government is prepared to assist local people in country towns to construct swimming pools?

The PREMIER replied:

Although the Government has adopted the principle of giving financial assistance to local authorities wishing to provide swimming pools in country centres, the exact details have not yet been worked out.

A preliminary suggestion was made for either a free of interest loan or a subsidy but a special committee was appointed to inquire into the best method of providing facilities and into any conditions which might be necessary.

In view of the great cost of such pools at present and the difficulty in obtaining materials and manpower, inquiries are being made as to a standard design which will enable local authorities to obtain the best possible pool at the lowest possible cost, and when these inquiries are completed and the probable cost of the pool and the degree of Government assistance necessary can be ascertained with certainty, a decision as to the details will be made.

CEMENT.

As to Government Plant, Portland Company's Works.

Mr. MARSHALL asked the Premier:

(1) In view of the answers given to questions asked by the Leader of the Opposition on the 2nd August, 1950, relative to the purchase and installation of a grinding plant at the Portland Cement Company's Works, involving a total expenditure of £20,787, is the House to understand that this was executed as a gift to the Portland Cement Company?

(2) If not, will he lay upon the Table of the House the document showing the arrangements made between the Portland Cement Company and the Government for a recoup of interest and sinking fund upon the amount involved?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) The grinding plant installed by the Government at the works of Swan Portland Cement Limited is not a gift to the company; this plant remains the property of the Government and will be disposed of when no longer required at these works.

(2) The arrangement made between the Government and Swan Portland Cement Limited on the recommendation of the Director of Industrial Development, does not involve any payment by the company for the use of this plant. The company will maintain and operate the plant only. The company is involved in very considerable permanent plant extensions and was not prepared to divert either funds or labour to temporary plant; the Government, therefore, undertook this installation with the object of obtaining earlier increased production and lessening importations. The honourable member is at liberty to inspect the file at my office at a time to be arranged.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

As to Referendum on Retention.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Premier:

(1) Did he notice the result of a public opinion poll as reported in the "Daily News" on the 14th instant, wherein only 27 per cent. of the people of Western Australia favour the retention of the Legislative Council?

(2) In view of this analysis, will he give favourable consideration to the holding of a referendum in order definitely to resolve the matter?

(3) If not, why not?

The PREMIER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) No.

(3) No good purpose would be served.

PRICES.

As to Suggested Reversion to Commonwealth Control.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Attorney General:

Will he define his attitude to the statement of Mr. Finnan, New South Wales Minister for Prices, as reported in "The West Australian" last Monday, "that he will urge this week's Prices Ministers' conference in Hobart to ask the Federal Government immediately to establish a central prices authority; and that the Federal Government was the only central authority which could control prices throughout Australia"?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

No.

SWAN RIVER.

As to Dredging Programme and Legislation.

Mr. SHEARN asked the Minister for Works:

(1) Was the A.B.C. State news item on the 6th October correct in stating that upon the completion of dredging work at

Turkey Point, Bunbury, the dredge "Governor Stirling" would return to Perth to undertake necessary channel dredging at the new Causeway?

(2) If the answer is in the affirmative, can he state the approximate date the dredge will return to Perth?

(3) In view of official advice given me on the 17th January, 1949, that a survey of the Swan River had been completed about one mile upstream from Guildford and a plan prepared, does his department now propose to utilise the "Governor Stirling" to deepen and widen the present upstream channel of the river, and deal with the silting of the banks, marine growth and ash deposit from the East Perth power station?

(4) If the Swan River Improvements Act, 1925, does not provide for such works being undertaken, will he introduce amending legislation this session for such purpose? If not, will he fully state the reason?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Yes.

(2) Approximately March-April, 1951.

(3) Dredging in vicinity of new Causeway will occupy approximately 12 months—i.e., to April, 1952. There is a lengthy programme of work in the Swan River ahead of the dredge, including dredging at Fremantle. It is not practicable at this stage to indicate where the dredge will operate after completion of the Causeway dredging.

(4) The Swan River Improvements Act, 1925, does not provide for works so far upstream. Consideration will be given to the introduction of amending legislation during next session of Parliament.

FREMANTLE HARBOUR.

As to Review of Tydeman Scheme.

Mr. SHEARN asked the Minister for Works:

As some weeks have elapsed since the Government announced the appointment of Mr. H. C. Meyer (Chief Engineer, Harbours and Rivers Department, South Australia) to investigate and report on all aspects of proposed Fremantle harbour extension schemes, can he now state when Mr. Meyer will commence his inquiries, and make public the terms of reference in regard thereto?

The MINISTER replied:

Mr. Meyer will arrive in Perth on Saturday, 21st instant. He will attend the conference of port authorities during next week, and will commence his inquiries the following week.

A statement as above, including the terms of reference, will be published in the local Press this week.

ELECTRICITY SUPPLIES.

As to South-West Power Scheme.

Mr. BOVELL asked the Minister for Works:

In view of the fact that the activities of the State Electricity Commission in relation to the South-West Power Scheme have resulted so far only to assume control of existing electricity services, will he, in reply, make a comprehensive statement concerning plans for supply of electric power to rural areas outside the radius of the present services?

The MINISTER replied:

The State Electricity Commission is now constructing high tension mains from Collie to the various South-West towns as provided for in the South-West Power Scheme.

When the Collie Power Station comes into operation next year the town's electricity supply systems will be changed over to alternating current. When this has made reasonable progress, attention will be given to rural supplies. Shortage of skilled men and materials will be the limiting factors.

TOWN PLANNING.

As to Schemes of Local Authorities.

Mr. NEEDHAM asked the Minister for Local Government:

(1) Have the Cities of Perth and Fremantle prepared any town planning scheme or schemes for their areas, and what steps can he take to compel the completion of town planning schemes for these important and key parts of the metropolitan area?

(2) How many local authorities are there in the metropolitan area and how many of these have taken steps to prepare town planning schemes or make bylaws to control their development?

(3) If and when the metropolitan plan is completed, is there power under the Town Planning Act to permit or enforce its adoption?

(4) With particular reference to level crossings, what steps, if any, has the Town Planning Board taken to give consideration to these in the metropolitan plan?

(5) If it is found that there is insufficient power under the Act to establish a metropolitan plan or he is unwilling to compel local authorities to complete town planning schemes within the framework of the metropolitan plan, will the Government consider amendments to establish the necessary powers?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The City of Fremantle has carried a resolution to prepare a town planning scheme and has received a report. The City of Perth has not carried a resolution under the Act to prepare a scheme,

although it was suggested so to do by the Minister for Works some ten or twelve years ago. The Minister has power under Section 18 of the Act to require and order a local authority to prepare and submit for approval of the Minister a town planning scheme.

(2) The number of metropolitan local authorities that have prepared and gazetted a town planning scheme is five; the number of local authorities that have promulgated bylaws establishing town planning controls is five; and four have taken steps to prepare town planning schemes. Fourteen of the 25 local authorities in the metropolitan region have taken steps to implement the Town Planning Act.

(3) There is no power to enforce its adoption unless or until a town planning scheme is prepared by a local authority and duly advertised.

(4) In the Metropolitan Regional Plan the Town Planning Board, after inspection, is providing for the elimination of as many level crossings as possible and improving existing subways and over bridges. There are 97 level crossings, 14 bridges and nine subways in the metropolitan area.

(5) The Crown Law Department has advised that there is no direct provision or power in the Act to impose the provisions in a metropolitan plan, except when a scheme is submitted to the Minister for consideration by local authorities. A large proportion of the provisions of the metropolitan plan is the concern of various Government departments and the Government, and if implemented, the provisions of such plan would be the concern of the Government departments.

When the Government has considered all the details of the plan, the Government might be prepared to consider any amendment to the Act deemed necessary.

METROPOLITAN MARKET.

As to Admittance of Prospective Buyers.

Mr. GRAHAM asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) Is he aware that by a decision of the Metropolitan Market Trust, prospective buyers, as from Monday next the 23rd October, are to be forbidden admittance to the market area until 7 a.m. at which time auctions commence?

(2) What are the reasons for this step?

(3) Is he aware that buyers are strongly opposed to this alteration?

(4) Does he not consider it in the best interests of grower, buyer and consumer, that buyers should be allowed to inspect produce before sales commence?

(5) For how long has the existing system of "preview" been in operation?

(6) Will he take steps to have the proposed new conditions reviewed?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) The decision made by the Trust is in accord with bylaw 14, which states the times between which the market shall be open for the sale of goods fixing the earliest hour as 7 a.m. Additionally on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays the gates shall be open at 4 a.m. for admission of vendors' carts and vehicles. No others being mentioned. Bylaw 15 makes it an offence to carry on business before 7 a.m. and bylaw 31 makes it an offence to sell or deliver before that hour.

(2) The Trust considers enforcement of those bylaws now necessary to stop practices which have gradually developed comprising selling and business carried on before 7 a.m. between traders and buyers, these practices being unfair to those traders and buyers who are prepared to comply with the by-laws. Although selling must not commence before 7 a.m., no time thereafter is fixed when selling shall commence so that traders can still allow thereafter time for buyers to inspect produce before selling actually commences.

(3) Buyers are at present opposed because they have not in all probability acquainted themselves with the full position.

(4) Yes.

(5) From the inauguration of the Market to the 23rd inst.—conditions and volume of trade are changing.

(6) The Market Trust operates under its Act and bylaws approved by Parliament and to it can be safely left the preservation of the interests of all users of the Market. The right to vary the hours of trading by amended bylaw was sought by the Trust but was disallowed by this House on the 10th September, 1947.

MINING.

(a) As to Gypsum Deposits and Quantities Mined.

Mr. KELLY asked the Honorary Minister for Mines:

(1) At what places in W.A. do known deposits of gypsum exist?

(2) Are these all in payable quantities and commercial grade?

(3) At what places are deposits being worked?

(4) What quantities have been taken from each locality during the years 1946, 1947, 1948, 1949, 1950?

(5) Who are the registered holders of each mineral reserve held for the purpose of mining gypsum?

(6) What annual revenue does the State derive from leases held for mining gypsum?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) Gypsum has a very wide distribution in W.A. There are literally hundreds of localities in which it is known to occur.

(2) No. Those known deposits of commercial grade and extent are at present held under the Mining Act.

(3) Lake Seabrook, Lake Cowan, Baandee, Lake Brown, Woolundra, Hines Hill, Lake Chandler.

(4) Gypsum production, Western Australia—

Lake Seabrook—1946, 4,012 tons; 1947, 8,953 tons; 1948, 15,870 tons; 1949, 15,962 tons; to June, 1950, 8,870 tons.

Lake Cowan—1946, 212 tons; 1947, 376 tons; 1948, —; 1949, 10 tons; to June, 1950, —.

Baandee—1946, 4,500 tons; 1947, 4,414 tons; 1948, 5,701 tons; 1949, 4,653 tons; to June, 1950, 2,071 tons.

Kellerberrin—1947, 7 tons.

Lake Brown—1946, 2,650 tons; 1947, 4,529 tons; 1948, 3,403 tons; 1949, 3,309 tons; to June, 1950, 2,042 tons.

Woolundra—1946, 3,976 tons; 1947, 2,002 tons; 1948, 547 tons; 1949, 618 tons; to June, 1950, 337 tons.

Hines Hill—1949, 1,355 tons; to June, 1950, 215 tons.

Totals—1946, 15,350 tons; 1947, 20,281 tons; 1948, 25,521 tons; 1949, 25,907 tons; to June, 1950, 13,535 tons.

(5)

Mineral Claim No., Locality, Holder.

31H; Baandee; Millars' Timber & Trading Co. Ltd.

33H; Cunderdin; Ajax Plaster Co. Ltd.

62H; Baandee; Millars' Timber & Trading Co. Ltd.

83H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

84H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

108H; Baandee; Millars' Timber & Trading Co. Ltd.

115H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

116H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

120H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

121H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

122H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

123H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

126H; Baandee; Perth Modelling Works.

127H; Baandee; Perth Modelling Works.

183H; Woolundra; Ajax Plaster Co.

274H; Baandee; Millars' Timber & Trading Co. Ltd.

275H; Baandee; Millars' Timber & Trading Co. Ltd.

276H; Baandee; Millars' Timber & Trading Co. Ltd.

280H; Lake Brown; Saunders, G. R. (Jnr.).

293H; Woolundra; Ripper, P. E. T.

308H; Baandee; Perth Modelling Works.

358H; Lake Brown; Saunders, G. R.

359H; Lake Brown; Ajax Plaster Co.

362H; Baandee; Perth Modelling Works.

372H; Baandee; Swadling, E. E.

395H; Lake Brown, Jose, A. H., Southwood, W. E.

396H; Lake Brown; Jose, A. H., Southwood, W. E.

Mineral Claim No., Locality, Holder.

399H; Lake Brown; Jose, A. H., Southwood, W. E.

401H; Lake Brown; H. B. Brady & Co. Ltd., Saunders, G. R.

402H; Hines Hill; Kay, C. J.

407H; Lake Brown; H. B. Brady & Co. Ltd., Saunders, G. R.

Temporary Reserves 1282H, 1283H; Don-gara; Building Industries Pty. Ltd.

408H; Lake Brown; Jose, A. H., Southwood, W. E.

410H; Woolundra; Ripper, P. E. T., Ripper, E.

426H; Lake Brown; H. P. Brady & Co.

427H; Lake Brown; H. P. Brady & Co.

430H; Chandler; Swadling, E. E.

8; Lake Cowan; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

9; Lake Cowan; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

9; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

22; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

23; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

24; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

25; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

26; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

27; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

28; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

29; Lake Seabrook; Perth Modelling Works Ltd.

30; Lake Seabrook; Ajax Plaster Co. Ltd.

31; Lake Seabrook; Ajax Plaster Co. Ltd.

32; Lake Seabrook; Ajax Plaster Co. Ltd.

37; Lake Seabrook Ajax Plaster Co. Ltd.

(6) £255 2s. 6d.

(b) As to Pyrites Deposits, Yilgarn District.

Mr. KELLY asked the Honorary Minister for Mines:

(1) According to departmental records, at what points do pyrites occur in the Yilgarn mining district?

(2) Are any of these deposits extensive, and of a suitable commercial grade?

(3) Has the Mines Department carried out a geological or geophysical survey of the Yilgarn in an effort to determine the extent of the pyrites deposits?

The HONORARY MINISTER replied:

(1) The pyrites occurs as an associated mineral with all known gold deposits in the Yilgarn Goldfield, but is not present in commercial quantities.

(2) No deposits of pyrites of commercial grade and extent have yet been located. Deposits of pyrrhotite and iron sulphides containing a considerably lower percentage of sulphur than pyrites are known to exist at Burbidge and Mt. Cawdan. These have been drilled by the department.

(3) No, because we do not know of any pyrites deposits justifying this expense.

As mentioned in (2) drilling was conducted on the two main known deposits of iron sulphide which proved to be pyrrhotite. To show comparative values, pure pyrites contains 53 per cent. sulphur and 43 per cent iron and pure pyrrhotite contains 40 per cent. sulphur and 60 per cent. iron.

RAILWAYS.

(a) As to Supply of Blankets, Kalgoorlie Express.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) What is the policy of the Railway Department in connection with the supply of adequate blankets to travellers who have booked sleepers on the Kalgoorlie express?

(2) Is there any fixed date for reverting from the wintertime supply of blankets to summer time requirements?

(3) Is he aware that many travellers have complained for some weeks of the scanty supply of blankets, and that near freezing weather conditions with summer-weight bed covering is not conducive to comfortable travelling, and certainly will not encourage rail travel by the general public?

(4) If there is an arbitrary fixed date for changing to summertime conditions, will he undertake a review of the average seasonal temperatures prevailing from the present fixed date, with a view to extending the wintertime issue of blankets?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) The number of rugs supplied is:—
Winter, first class: three rugs.
Winter, second class: two rugs.
Summer, first class: two rugs.
Summer, second class: two rugs.

(2) No.

(3) No.

(4) Answered by (2).

(b) As to Lighting, Kalgoorlie Express.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister representing the Minister for Railways:

(1) Is he aware that there are numerous complaints from travellers on the Kalgoorlie express regarding the continued poor lighting in some coaches?

(2) That, frequently, it is almost an impossibility to read newsprint by the coach lights?

(3) Is he aware that conductors have been instructed to refrain from switching on lights until it is almost too dark to see?

(4) Is this indifferent lighting due to faulty electric equipment, or worn-out batteries, or is it a fact that the margin paid to departmental electricians is too low?

(5) What rate, including the margin, is being paid to electricians?

(6) What rate, with margin, is being paid to wagon examiners?

(7) How many conductors have been served with Form 509 causing them to give reasons why coach lights were on at times unspecified in regulations?

The MINISTER FOR EDUCATION replied:

(1) Some complaints have been received.

(2) This would be the case when a fault developed which could be en route.

(3) Conductors have been instructed to use discretion in switching lights on.

(4) The lighting generally is quite satisfactory. Wages paid are in accordance with industrial awards.

(5) Electric fitter on train lighting £9 15s. 6d. in metropolitan area. Car electric light examiners are in three grades, viz., £8 15s. 6d., £8 11s., £8 3s. 6d.

(6) £9 5s. 6d.

(7) Two, whose explanations were accepted and no punishment inflicted.

GRASSHOPPERS.

As to Efficacy of Poison Bait.

Mr. KELLY asked the Minister for Lands:

(1) What road board districts have received supplies of bran and gammaxene for grasshopper-baiting this season?

(2) What quantities have been received by each?

(3) What has been the total cost to the Agricultural Department to date this season for above supplies?

(4) How many reports have been received disclosing unsatisfactory results from baited material distributed this season?

(5) From what areas have these reports originated?

(6) Has the department taken steps to have an analysis made of baiting material which has proved valueless in the destruction of grasshoppers, and if so, what did the analysis disclose?

(7) Does he fully realise the seriousness of issuing a form of so-called grasshopper poison which in use has proved almost totally ineffective, and if he does recognise that a vast voluntary effort by farmers and their families has been almost entirely wasted, will he consider compensating these settlers for time so lost, and loss from ruined crops and pastures brought about by failure to arrest the grasshopper menace?

The MINISTER replied:

(1) Mount Marshall, 20 tons of bait; Yilgarn, 110; Nungarin, 25; Westonia, 20; Mingenew, 5; Koorda, 5; Merredin, 22; Mukinbudin, 10; Morawa, 5; Mullewa, 5;

Narembeen, 5; Kununoppin-Trayning, 4; Kondinin, 2; Lake Grace, 6; W.A.G.R., Southern Cross, 1½.

(2) Answered by (1).

(3) Until all accounts have been received this cannot be computed.

(4) Three.

(5) Yilgarn, Westonia, Mukinbudin.

(6) Yes. A variation in concentration of benzene-hexachloride but not sufficient to cause the bait to be valueless.

(7) The evidence shows that in only isolated instances was the bait apparently ineffective. Experiments conducted at Yilgarn by the Assistant Entomologist with alleged weak poison gave kills in all cases but some were slower acting.

There is evidence that the method of mixing by road boards has not been satisfactory but that on our advice this has been improved.

In the circumstances no consideration will be given by the Government for compensation.

NORTH-WEST.

As to Aerial Freight Subsidy on Vegetables.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY (without notice) asked the Premier:

In view of the early approach of the wet season in the Kimberleys, will he make the subsidy for aerial freight on vegetables date from the 1st November, 1950?

The PREMIER replied:

I will have consideration given to this question, and will advise the hon. member of any decision made.

BILLS (2)—THIRD READING.

1, Railways Classification Board Act Amendment.

2, Plant Diseases Act Amendment.
Passed.

BILL—BUSH FIRES ACT AMENDMENT.

Report of Committee adopted.

BILL—ROADS AGREEMENTS BETWEEN THE STATE HOUSING COMMISSION AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

Recommittal.

On motion by Mr. J. Hegney, Bill recommitted for the further consideration of Clause 6.

In Committee.

Mr. Perkins in the Chair; the Honorary Minister for Housing in charge of the Bill.

Clause 6—Power to enter into agreements and supplementary agreements (partly considered):

Mr. J. HEGNEY: A number of the local authorities in my area have been in touch with me. Their concern about this clause is that it seeks to delete the provision in the Road Districts Act by which the local authorities at present have to pay all the general rate, in that particular district in which the Housing Commission has resumed land, for the redemption of money spent by the Commission in those areas. In districts where the Commission has carried on its building activities there is a demand for amenities such as lighting, footpaths, hydrants and so on, and it is pointed out that under the conditions as they apply in the Road Districts Act there is no provision for those purposes.

The Minister seeks to make provision to enter into an agreement, but there is no limitation as to what the agreement might be. Both the Bayswater and Belmont Road Boards pointed out that if the department is going to take more than 50 per cent. of the general rate existing in that area that is going to make it difficult for the boards to carry on and give amenities to people living in those houses. Some local authorities are in a better position than others to enter into an agreement, but there is an insistent demand by newcomers in those areas—particularly around the metropolitan area—for sufficient finance to carry on their activities and give the services asked for, and if the agreements entered into do not allow for this it will make the situation very difficult for them.

At present I understand that the general rate is used for the liquidation of the loan from the Housing Commission, and the interest on the loan is borne by the whole of the revenue, which makes an impost on the local authorities concerned. I was unable to find the Minister's speech as copies of "Hansard" have not arrived, and I do not know whether he gave an assurance that it was intended to make a reasonable and fair agreement with the local authorities. If that is so, then I am satisfied. I have raised the matter tonight to give the Minister the opportunity to assure the local authorities that it is the intention of the Housing Commission to deal fairly with them. In entering into these agreements, other local authorities are prepared to discuss variations of them.

I take it that the Housing Commission will give consideration to the financial stability of each local authority. The safeguard mentioned is that before they can enter into these agreements the matter has to be referred to the Minister for Local Government, who has to give his authority in writing. I do not know whether that is much of a safeguard. It will be interesting to see how it works. If there was provision that, say 50 per cent, was to be used to liquidate the debt to the State Housing Commission and the balance for amenities in these areas, then I would be satisfied.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR HOUSING: I am sorry the hon. member was not in the Chamber during the course of my second reading speech and also that he did not hear the member for Kalgoorlie. Prior to the introduction of this Bill, the provisions allowed 100 per cent. of the rate being paid back to the State Housing Commission. This Bill was introduced to make it easier for road boards. I am not going to say that it will be 40, 50 or 60 per cent, but I do suggest that when the State Housing Commission and the local authorities get together, the Commission may state, "If your general rate is 6d. we must leave you something for hydrants, etc., and therefore we only want you to pay 3d. or 4d." Furthermore, the member for Kalgoorlie successfully moved an amendment as he was not quite certain, when we debated this Bill previously, whether there would be fairness in determining agreements between the State Housing Commission and the instrumentalities.

Mr. J. Hegney: It would not affect the agreement very much after it had been made.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR HOUSING: That is quite correct, but there is the provision that before the agreement is made the Minister for Local Government will have to approve of the road district or municipal corporation entering into that agreement. Furthermore, the Minister will have to answer to the House. I think the Committee was quite correct when it approved clause 6 of this Bill.

Mr. STYANTS: I think the fears of the member for Middle Swan that this Bill will bring about harsh agreements and worsen conditions for the local authorities are not justified. The real reason for bringing down this measure is that both the State Housing Commission and the local authorities find that the conditions embodied in the present legislation are too rigid. As indicated in the Minister's second reading speech, the purpose of this Bill is to get something less than the whole of the general rate taken from the local authorities in a particular ward for the purpose of repaying money advanced by the State Housing Commission in providing these roads in particular areas.

From inquiries I made, I think the State Housing Commission is just as anxious as anyone to ensure that agreements made with the local authorities will provide less rigid conditions. Certainly there is no intention to attempt to make agreements containing conditions harsher than they are at present. The Commission is interested in getting a considerable number of dwellings erected and is as anxious to have roads provided as are the local authorities.

Mr. J. HEGNEY: I know that the position will not be worsened, but it was pointed out that, if too great a percentage of the general rate were taken from

the local authorities, they would not be in a position to provide amenities. In the event of a local authority's refusing to enter into an agreement, where would it stand? There would be no provision to take revenue from it, as can be done under the Road Districts Act at present. It is very difficult for local authorities to provide amenities, for which ratepayers are clamouring, if they have not the wherewithal to do so. I feel that the Commission will be reasonable in its attitude to local authorities, but these bodies have some misgivings about the agreements that might be entered into.

Clause put and passed.

Bill again reported without further amendment.

MOTION—MEAT SUPPLIES.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

MR. PERKINS (Roe) [5.5]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon ways and means of obtaining adequate meat supplies for the people of Western Australia.

Already there has been considerable discussion in the House this session on the question of meat supplies, particularly affecting the Kalgoorlie area. I do not wish to traverse a lot of the ground that has already been covered. Members doubtless have the facts fresh in mind, as well as the explanations offered by the Government to the criticism levelled at its policy. Members will recall that the Government explained that Mr. Kelly had been brought from South Australia to report on this difficult question, and the substance of his report was published in the Press and tabled in the House.

Some time has elapsed since then, and some of the predictions made in the report do not seem to be working out. For instance, Mr. Kelly recommended that price control should be maintained here in line with control in the Eastern States and that it could be expected that during the summer months there would be a considerable surplus of meat. I am referring particularly to beef, lamb and mutton though other sorts are also involved. He said it could be expected that there would be considerable surpluses during the summer, and that it would be possible to build up reserves of frozen meat during the summer months, either from local supplies or by obtaining some from the other States where there were considerable surpluses. He also anticipated that the butchers might be able to recoup some of the losses which they said they had been incurring during the period when supplies of meat were short and it was difficult to obtain supplies on the hoof to enable them to sell at the prices fixed by the Price Branch.

This does not appear to be working out as expected, and this year there seem to be fewer stock coming into the Midland yards compared with other years. After discussing the matter with people who are able to give a considered judgment, I believe we are likely to face a more difficult supply position in the new year and during next winter than any we have experienced in the past unless some alteration of policy or circumstances occurs. In view of this, I thought it necessary to move for the appointment of a Select Committee to permit of further inquiries being made, and also to afford opportunity for anyone who has ideas on this difficult question to put them forward. If there is any value in those ideas, let us have them considered as soon as possible and do what we can to right an extremely difficult position.

Perhaps it would be as well to trace the difficulties that have arisen over a number of years. Before the recent war, the position was that during the summer months a considerable glut occurred, particularly of mutton and lamb, and probably of beef to a lesser extent, in the metropolitan area and other sale yards. When Robb's Jetty export works were working to capacity, prices fell even below export parity, because it was impossible for the butchers to handle the stock as rapidly as it was entering the sale yards. In those years it was customary for wholesale butchers to make considerable profits in the summer months. I understand it was their practice to book a large amount of space in the killing works, and thus they were in a better position to have stock treated than were other owners of stock who, at short notice, decided to market surplus animals that were in a condition to be marketed as fats. Hence I believe that the wholesale butchers did make considerable profit in that pre-war period.

As the season advanced and we gradually worked through the autumn into the winter months, fat stock became scarcer and scarcer, and there is little doubt that, during part of the winter months butchers were not making a full margin. They may even have been incurring losses on some of the stock purchased on the hoof by selling at the then current prices to retail butchers for sale in the shops. At any rate, the over-all position must have been that the wholesale butchers were doing well when the prices were averaged. Wholesale butchers, like other members of the business community, are not philanthropists and they expect to make a reasonable living.

During the sittings of a previous Select Committee that inquired into the killing and handling of stock, a committee on which I served, the evidence was fairly clear that the wholesale butchers, taken by and large, did not come out too badly.

Since the war that position has gradually altered. With a state of disequilibrium developing between the prices of meat and other primary produce, a great many graziers, who customarily reserve special pastures or develop special methods of hand-feeding in order to cater for the winter market, found it more profitable to engage in other forms of primary production, especially the production of wool. Consequently, as the years have passed, we have found that the supply of meat during the winter months has become more and more difficult, until last winter very few stock were coming forward to the Midland market and the deficiency was met by the Government's supplying frozen meat, which it had bought mainly in the other States.

The situation deserves careful consideration because, obviously, unless we deal with the root causes that have brought about this trend, we shall be confronted by a more difficult situation in the coming winter, and eventually there will be periods when practically no stock at all will be coming forward to the metropolitan markets in particular and, to a lesser degree, to the other markets selling fat stock. I believe that this has been one of the effects of price control as it has been administered. It is only natural that graziers, who have to reserve special pastures or adopt expensive hand-feeding methods, expect considerably enhanced prices if they are going to engage in such practices in order to market stock during the difficult supply period. But that is a matter on which one does not like to express an opinion lightly. Obviously Mr. Kelly envisaged that that difficult supply period in the winter could be covered by storing meat during the easy period with the idea of carrying it over in the frozen form for public consumption during winter months.

If the public are satisfied to eat a very big proportion of frozen meat during winter, it is just as well we should know that that is the position, for then we can develop a policy accordingly. But at present there does not seem to be any very clear picture of what the policy will be next winter. I have been asked by various producers what the Government policy will be and to what extent prices will rise during next winter. We know that the Prices Commissioner has always refused to make any long-range statement in regard to future prices. If there is any uncertainty in the minds of the people who will have to fatten sheep for the winter markets next year then, with the very profitable price available for wool, there will be a further tendency for some of the graziers to change over to the production of wool.

Mr. W. Hegney: Do you not think this Government will abolish price control at any time?

Mr. PERKINS: I think that the very high prices for wool have been the greatest single factor in bringing about this disequilibrium between meat and wool, and I do not visualise that meat prices could be raised to such an extent that they would follow wool prices up to limitless levels. But I do think that, if there is some considered policy, there will be a much better chance of some of those people who are equipped, and who in the past have found it profitable to supply the fat stock markets with stock, carrying on in that particular vocation than there will be if we just drift along hoping that something will turn up, and leaving a feeling of uncertainty in the minds of such individuals.

Another factor to which sufficient attention has probably not been paid is the increasing population of the State. Our natural increase has its effect; and when one also considers the great numbers of migrants entering the country it is obvious that there are now many more people for whom we have to provide meat in a period when it is difficult to maintain the supplies which it has been customary to secure through the fat stock markets in the past. There are therefore many indications that an absolutely disastrous position could arise next winter unless some definite policy is worked out to cope with the position.

There are two ways of meeting the period of shortage. One is by indicating that there will be an upward adjustment of prices during the late autumn and winter months which will encourage producers to market stock in that period. It does involve graziers in a good deal of increased expenditure, and probably considerably more worry to produce supplies for the fat stock markets than to produce wool; but, if some policy is worked out at this stage, there is a much greater chance of a bigger proportion of the markets being met by graziers during that difficult supply period.

The other method is either to freeze some of the surplus meat available at present within our own State or to attempt to obtain frozen supplies outside the State. I understand that a Government buyer is already operating in Midland Junction attempting to obtain supplies for freezing, in order to build up a reserve which can be made available to butchers during the period of shortage next year. But I have doubts whether a sufficient reserve can be obtained within the State. The Premier may have some specific information on this point; but it is a position that is difficult to assess. I think an inquiry by a Select Committee would result in authentic information being obtained which would enable both the Government and members of this House to reach some definite conclusions.

The point I stress is that some action is necessary at once. It is not much good letting this position drift and leaving a

feeling of uncertainty in the minds of graziers who normally provide stock for the market during a difficult period. Now is the time when they can buy surplus sheep to put on special pastures and hold them for marketing later. If the graziers who have been accustomed to provide stock for the fat stock markets during the late autumn and early winter months do not obtain supplies during the next few weeks, it will probably be impossible to obtain them at all.

The Premier: I do not think there is any such thing as a surplus sheep these days.

Mr. PERKINS: Maybe there is not. But a considerable number of sheep are changing hands at present, if I may put it that way; and there is a better opportunity now for graziers to obtain them than there will be at a later stage when the sheep have more wool on them, and the incentive is increased for the people owning those sheep to carry them forward, if possible, to shearing. If wool prices remain high, it is unlikely that those sheep which remain unsold will go back on to the fat stock market before they are shorn next year.

Another point is that wool is worth more shorn than on sheepskins. There is some slight adjustment through the wool tax; but even then, I understand, it will be more profitable to shear the sheep and market the wool as wool than to market it as sheepskins. It is not a very big item; the other considerations of which I have been speaking are much more important, in my judgment.

The advantage of a Select Committee is that there are people who have very definite ideas on this question which they could advance. Probably opinions will differ in this House as to whether such ideas are well founded or otherwise. But when we are dealing with such a difficult situation as this, we should give an opportunity to any people who have ideas as to the best way to cope with the position to put them forward. That can best be done through a Select Committee or some other form of inquiry. I feel that if all the facts are marshalled the public, to whom we have a responsibility, will be acquainted with all the factors affecting this problem.

Probably out of the discussions before a Select Committee some fresh evidence will be forthcoming and some plan formulated which will be better than the policy being pursued by the Government. On the other hand, it may be found that no better plan can be evolved. But I do feel that we should give an opportunity to anyone who has any ideas on this subject to submit them at some form of inquiry, and I can think of no better method of achieving this than to have a Select Committee appointed to investigate the position.

If the House agrees to a Select Committee, the work should be done as quickly as possible; because, obviously, whatever action is to be taken must be taken fairly rapidly. I suggest to the Minister who deals with this matter that he allow the debate to proceed forthwith. If he is prepared to do that, a Select Committee could be appointed at once and start its deliberations immediately. It should be possible to submit a report within three weeks. Whatever report is presented, the House will have some time to consider it, and if other members have ideas which differ from those of the members of the Select Committee, there will be an opportunity to debate the matter before Parliament rises.

The other factor which I mentioned previously, about the time running short and the need for a policy to be decided as quickly as possible, so that everybody will know where he stands, is equally important. I commend the motion to the House and I hope that if it is carried we will have an inquiry which will throw more light on this difficult subject and perhaps be the means of improving the supply of meat available to the people of Western Australia. If we do nothing, I feel the position will be very much worse than in the past year.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS (Hon. L. Thorn—Toodyay) [5.30]: The Government is quite prepared to allow the debate to proceed, as it has a full realisation of its responsibilities in regard to the meat supply of this State and I feel sure that members on both sides of the House will do everything possible to facilitate the appointment of the Select Committee asked for by the member for Roe. It is true that the Government brought Mr. Kelly to this State because it was felt that he might be able to advise and assist in overcoming our difficulties. It was known that he had been employed by the Commonwealth Government, during the period of its control over meat, when difficulties similar to those with which we are now faced existed. Members know that Mr. Kelly furnished a report to the Government advising it in certain directions.

We are experiencing a good season in this State at present and there is an abundance of feed in the country districts. Naturally, when the farmer or grazier has an abundance of feed, his first desire is to stock his country as fully as possible, and he is therefore operating heavily on the stock markets today and is buying over the heads of the butchers, who are consequently not able to secure the supplies that would be available to them under normal circumstances.

Another factor is the high price of wool. The man on the land naturally watches the markets and goes in for that production which is most profitable, just as does

anyone else. Today he is going in for wool as hard as he can, and that is contributing to the problem. The Soldier Land Settlement Scheme is also absorbing stock that would otherwise be available to the market. Properties are being stocked and, though of course at a later date we will reap the full benefit of our present policy, there is consequently still less stock available to the butchers.

Like other members I realise that our meat supplies will remain a problem for the next year or so. The member for Roe mentioned the increase in our population and I will enlarge on that point. It is our job, as a Government, to build up the population of our country if we wish to hold it, and to see that our new citizens are fed. As has been indicated in this Chamber on other occasions, there has been a great increase in the population of the metropolitan and suburban areas, quite apart from the rest of the State, and we are feeling the effects of that increase in the shortages of potatoes, milk and other commodities, to say nothing of meat. The Minister for Health mentioned last night, in reply to a question asked by the member for Leederville, that some of the difficulty being experienced at the maternity hospital in Subiaco is due to the arrival of new settlers in this country. Many pregnant women are arriving in this State and require hospital accommodation and supplies of milk.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Some are arriving with T.B., also.

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: That is true, but the fault in that regard lies at the other end, and not at this end. It is the duty of the Government to face up to such difficulties, and that is what it is doing. The meat position is causing concern in all the States of the Commonwealth and, if we compare meat prices here with those in New South Wales, we will find that in that State the prices are much higher than they are in Western Australia. The Government is investigating every possible avenue in an endeavour to secure adequate supplies of meat for our people.

Mr. W. Hegney: Would not the floods in New South Wales have something to do with the high price of meat there?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: Yes, there are special circumstances that have contributed greatly to the shortage in that State. Apart from all the other factors that I have mentioned, the high price of wool has made the position much more difficult than it would otherwise have been. A few weeks ago the Leader of the Opposition raised the question of the slaughtering of heifers—

The Premier: Did not the member for Harvey raise it?

THE MINISTER FOR LANDS: The Leader of the Opposition asked several questions about the matter and the mem-

ber for Harvey also mentioned it. That question is causing grave concern, because if the practice is not minimised, it will in years to come interfere gravely with our herds and have an undesirable effect on our future meat supplies. I will not deal with the world shortage of meat, except to say that many countries, which prior to the recent war had not sufficient money to import much in the way of foodstuffs, are today on the market for meat. The islands to our north are buying far more meat today than they could ever afford in the past. Those are some of the difficulties with which the Government is faced. We will be bringing in an increased quantity of beef, both frozen and on the hoof, from the north next year. At times even the tides have been against us in this regard.

During the cattle season just passed the tides at Broome on at least two occasions prevented ships from lifting cargoes of meat from that port. It must be clear that, although we are most desirous of helping the Old Country in the matter of meat supplies, we are today taking some of the population from the Old Country and from Europe, and those migrants must be fed. Our own citizens are our first responsibility, and we cannot continue to bring more people into our country unless we are prepared to see that they are fed. The Government will be only too pleased to have any possible help and advice in the overcoming of this problem. The Government welcomes this inquiry and will do everything it can to meet the wishes of the member for Roe in this regard. I hope the debate will proceed and that we will be able to appoint this Select Committee today.

MR. STYANTS (Kalgoorlie) [5.40]: I have no objection to the appointment of a Select Committee but I doubt whether it will have any beneficial effect, as I do not think it will be able to obtain any greater amount of information than the Government already has at its disposal. The meat position on the Goldfields is much more acute than that in the metropolitan area, where there is actually no shortage at all. Members do not realise that the average kill per week at the Government abattoirs at Kalgoorlie was 98 bullocks, 700 or 800 sheep and lambs, about 18 pigs and eight or ten vealers, whereas the quantity of meat that Goldfields butchers have been able to secure through normal channels of supply over the last four months—most of it has been frozen meat—has been about 40 carcasses of beef per week instead of 98.

For months Goldfields butchers have not been able to secure any mutton at all through the usual channels. There has been about only one-fifth of the usual amount of pig-meat available, and no veal at all. The Government has supplied the master

butchers on the Goldfields with about 40 carcasses of frozen beef per week. For a period of about five weeks it supplied 700 carcasses of lamb and mutton to the Goldfields, but since then the people there have had no mutton or lamb at all except what has been railed to them from centres such as Merredin, Kellerberrin, Northam, Midland Junction and Perth. Between 700 and 1,000 parcels of meat have been arriving in Kalgoorlie every day by train, but that state of affairs will not be satisfactory during the summer months.

I believe that in the near future, unless something is done to remedy the position, it will become much worse. In the metropolitan area, it is true that people are paying 3d. and 4d. a lb. in excess of the fixed price, but on the Goldfields it is a question of obtaining meat at any price. Men who labour 2,000 or 3,000 ft. below the earth's surface work exceedingly hard, and require meat as part of their diet. Some months ago, it was anticipated that if we could get over the lean winter months we would then enter the usual flush season, during which there is plenty of mutton and lamb available. However, because of the high prices being received for wool, mutton and lamb are not procurable.

As far as the Government is concerned, I understand that the quantity of frozen meat from the North, or any other source, is extremely restricted and diminishing rapidly. The season during which bullocks are shipped from the North-West ports to the metropolitan area is over. What is the position going to be? It is going to be more acute in six weeks' time than it has been at any other period of the year! I am wondering where my constituents and other residents of the Eastern Goldfields are going to obtain meat. I appreciate the efforts the Government has made to get the meat that has been available, even although it is frozen, and people in those areas are now existing entirely on the frozen product. I noted the admission by the Minister for Lands this evening that it is the Government's job to provide this meat.

I recognise that it is an extension of the principle of socialisation as far as the supplying of meat to the Goldfields is concerned, because while there is plenty of meat available and ample profits to be made from it, there is no complaint by master butchers on the Goldfields. However, if any suggestion were made that the Government should enter the meat trade that, of course, would be resented. This is merely one of those instances when, if the position suits the business and commercial sections of the community, they have no hesitation in accepting socialisation or expecting that the Government should be responsible for supplying a commodity which they handle.

The Premier: It is the duty of any Government to ensure that the people are fed.

Mr. STYANTS: That is quite so, but it must be remembered that, when there is a surplus of meat in the trade, its members bitterly resent any interference or the supplying of meat by the Government. From inquiries which I have made from week to week, I understand there is a greater number of lambs and sheep being yarded at Midland Junction than is necessary to meet the requirements of the metropolitan area. The position mentioned by the Minister for Lands, and outlined by the member for Roe, is an actual fact. That is, the growers who have had a good season are competing against the master butchers, and are buying up much of the surplus mutton and lamb available at the saleyards to take to their properties to shear for wool. I understand that producers are even buying sucker lambs in the saleyards. Therefore, it does not appear as if we shall obtain any relief from that direction. If price control had been abolished four months ago it would have resulted in sufficient meat being made available, but I now believe that if price control were abolished tomorrow it would not produce the quantity of meat required. The reason I give for that is that the price of wool has risen to such heights that it would be impossible for people to obtain meat because of the higher returns that would be obtained by pastoralists for their wool than they would for the production of mutton and lamb.

It is only natural that a pastoralist will endeavour to keep sheep on his property for wool-raising as long as he has the pasture and water to do so. Even today, during what is usually regarded as the flush season for meat, there is not the meat available that there was during a similar period in previous years. As to the possibility of obtaining meat from South Australia, I know that master butchers on the Goldfields were endeavouring to obtain some, even from as far afield as Quorn, but the position seems to be just as bad in that State as it is in this. The last advice I received from the Kalgoorlie master butchers was that their investigations revealed that the price which would have to be paid for the meat in South Australia, plus freight and other charges to transport it to Kalgoorlie, would be in excess of the permitted price. I would advocate not a total abolition of price control of meat but the relaxing of it.

For months past the people have been deprived of at least 6s. in the basic wage because, when the prices which are used for the quarterly adjustment of the basic wage are sent to the Government Statistician, they are the maximum prices. Naturally, prices in excess of that permissible should not be charged, but we all know that the price of meat is being exceeded by 3d. or 4d. a lb. Some months

ago, when a question was asked of the Minister in charge of price control as to what would be the effect on the basic wage if meat were 5d. a lb. dearer than the permissible price, he said it would mean an increase of 5s. 11d. a week in the basic wage. Therefore, workers in this country, because they are paying increased prices and are receiving no compensation from the basic wage adjustment, are being defrauded to the extent of 6s. a week.

I hold out no hope whatever of fresh meat being made available for slaughter on the Goldfields for the next two or three years at least at the fixed maximum prices. I would not advocate the complete abandonment of price control because I fear that the sky would then be the limit, but if a proper investigation were made as to what it would cost to bring whatever meat was available to the Goldfields to have it slaughtered and distributed as fresh meat, I do not think the Goldfields people would have any objection to paying an increased amount. They are now paying at least 6d. or 7d. a lb. extra because the butchers are forced to obtain their meat from other portions of the State. Another feature, which must be of interest to the Government, is that it has spent some thousands of pounds on the Kalgoorlie Government abattoirs to modernise them and make them acceptable to the master butchers for the slaughtering of their stock, but I do not think they have slaughtered a beast there for months, and it does not look as if they will slaughter any there for a long time yet.

Mr. Perkins: The stock is not available.

Mr. STYANTS: I cannot see where the stock is to come from. It is certain that heavy calls are being made on stock supplies, apart from the fact that sheep and lambs are being purchased for the production of wool. I cannot see where we are going to get sufficient beef or pigmeats to supply the demand. I understand that there is quite a lot of cattle in the North-West which, in the appropriate season, would be available for shipment to the metropolitan area, but, because of the limited amount of shipping space, it is not possible to bring that beef down. I think the market in the metropolitan area would provide a much higher price for this beef from the North-West than would be obtained by exporting it overseas.

The Premier: You mean from the Kimberleys?

Mr. STYANTS: Yes, I think the metropolitan market would offer a greater price than would be obtained by exporting it overseas. The export of meat from Australia is one of the factors that is creating the shortage of meat. I believe the whole of the product of the Wyndham Meat Works has been sold to Great Britain under a 15-year contract, of which

I think only about two years have expired. I do not think there would be any doubt that if 50 per cent. of the meat from the Wyndham Meat Works were made available for consumption in this State it would alleviate the present shortage.

The Premier: Some of that meat comes down for small goods.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: But only that part of it that is not exportable as first and second-grade meat.

Mr. STYANTS: I should say that people who were game enough to eat smallgoods, with the present shortage of meat, would be game enough to eat anything. From Press reports it can be noted that certain persons are selling horseflesh, and there is a probability that such meat is put into smallgoods and like products. Even in normal circumstances, the majority of meat that is used to manufacture sausages is only second grade.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Slow race-horses!

Mr. STYANTS: Yes. If we can get some information as to where we are likely to obtain meat supplies, then the Select Committee will have performed an excellent job for consumers and meat-producers. The position in the metropolitan area is definitely unsatisfactory. There is a shortage of meat in the South-West, the Great Southern and in the Geraldton area, but it is most acute on the Goldfields. I do not know what we are going to do in, say, a month's time, for meat supplies on the Goldfields, when the price of lamb, which is not controlled, will not be available because of the lack of stock offering at the Midland Junction saleyards, and because of the lack of frozen meat which the Government has been providing from the North-West. I support the motion, although I do not think a Select Committee can effect a solution to the present problem, but its findings might suggest a solution to future problems.

MR. McCULLOCH (Hannans) [6.0]: I agree with the member for Roe that a Select Committee should be appointed to inquire into this difficult problem. Undoubtedly the position has gone from bad to worse from year to year. There has been an acute meat shortage on the Eastern Goldfields for years. I am sure that a Select Committee would be able to do something about it. I am certain it will do more than Mr. Kelly did, because the position on the Goldfields has not eased one iota since Mr. Kelly submitted his report. As to the talk about decontrolling the price of meat, I disagree with the idea that any thought at all should be given to that. I do not think any Select Committee should be allowed to inquire along the lines of decontrolling the price of meat. If that were done, it would spell the death knell of the goldmining industry. If the people

at Kalgoorlie and other goldmining centres are to be asked to pay an extra few shillings for meat, there will be no goldfields at all. The people there will not require any meat supplies, because there will not be any people there.

The position has been deteriorating for years and is worse now than it was during the war period. In those days the price of wool was not nearly as high as it is today, and yet even then there was a scarcity of meat on the Goldfields. In those days the master butchers went on strike and closed their shops. They would not sell any meat at all. I am positive that a Select Committee appointed to go into the whole question would do some good. During the months of June, July and August we have for some years accepted supplies of frozen meat. The position was not accepted through any wish of the people but because of the fact that if they did not take that class of meat, they would get none at all. There were no fish or smallgoods supplies available, so that frozen meat was the only alternative. If the meat were bought on the first day it came to hand, it was practically all right.

The butchers' shops at Kalgoorlie opened on two days in each week and people had to stand in queues to purchase their requirements. If the butcher should hand out a joint that was too big for the customer, it was futile for the man to say that he would like a smaller one because the butcher simply said, "You can take that or leave it. Someone else will buy it." That is how the people are treated. Why should the people on the Goldfields be required to accept frozen meat supplies any more than were the people of the metropolitan area or elsewhere? No other part of the State was treated similarly to the Goldfields. I have been around the State in recent months and have noted nowhere else any shortage of meat. At the same time on the Goldfields we were forced to eat black meat. It was frozen meat but it turned black and looked as though it had been in store for years.

Mr. Styants: It may have been bad Clydesdale!

Mr. McCULLOCH: As the member for Roe pointed out, people are migrating to this country and some are going to the Eastern Goldfields. Not many of them will remain there unless they can be adequately fed. We must do something about it. It is terrible to think that in a country like this, at a time when we cannot feed our own people we are sending meat supplies to Great Britain and other countries. I have heard it said that the graziers attend the Midland Junction markets and purchase sheep which they truck back to their properties for stocking purposes. That is because they can get more for the wool than for meat and therefore it is a better proposition to keep sheep. That is merely

obeying a natural instinct, and it is because of that that they will at all times outbid the master butchers.

The Minister for Lands said that the Government has been investigating the position, but it has been doing so for the last four years, despite which the situation is becoming worse. If the Government is to be allowed to continue investigating the position without any inquiry being set on foot, then on the Goldfields, instead of being without meat for five months of the year, we shall probably be deprived of supplies for about nine months. I support the motion and hope the House will appoint a Select Committee.

MR. W. HEGNEY (Mt. Hawthorn) 16.61: I would like the member for Roe to inform me whether he consulted the Attorney General before he submitted his motion. The Attorney General is also the Minister in charge of price control. I have a vivid recollection of asking him last year whether he would consider the appointment of a Royal Commission to investigate the price of meat and, presumably on behalf of the Government, he definitely indicated that no such step was necessary. He said he was satisfied that the Prices Commissioner would fix an equitable price for meat and an adequate ceiling price for the wholesale market. On reading the motion I was not sure whether it would prove sufficiently elastic to warrant an inquiry concerning the effect of the present position of the consumer. There are two phases to be submitted for investigation. The first concerns prices. In the event of the Prices Ministers at the impending conference in Hobart deciding to discontinue price-fixing generally—

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: The Government will be very relieved.

MR. W. HEGNEY:—the position of consumers in this and every other State will be worse than it is now.

The Minister for Lands: We will still want meat.

MR. W. HEGNEY: I do not know what credence can be given to the report that appeared in this morning's issue of "The West Australian" which set out that Mr. Finnan, the chairman of the Prices Ministers' Conference clearly indicated that the forthcoming gathering would be the last conference of State Prices Ministers.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: It might just as well be.

MR. W. HEGNEY: Yes, because the State administration of price-fixing legislation has been anything but effective. In Western Australia it has been absolutely scandalous, apart from the standpoint of inefficiency and indifference on the part of the Government. Certainly its administration has been absolutely ineffective from the viewpoint of the consumers. I said

previously, and I reiterate my challenge to the Attorney General and the Government generally to disprove my statement, that the workers of this State have been deprived of from 5s. to 7s. of their weekly basic wage as a result of the inaction of the Government in neglecting to fix the price of meat chargeable to the consumers. I know on what is unimpeachable authority that a man paid 5d. or more above the fixed price for the meat he required. One retailer said he was prepared to show that he had had to pay £432 on the black market to get his meat supplies. I want to know from the member for Roe whether we shall be able to have members of the Meat Retailers' Federation before the Select Committee.

The Premier: Why not?

MR. W. HEGNEY: I am pleased with that interjection. The point is that if the Prices Ministers at their forthcoming conference decide to abolish price-fixing altogether or to decontrol the price of meat, the work of any Select Committee will be ineffective from the standpoint of the consumer.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: We have the State law that could be operated.

MR. W. HEGNEY: Whether the Government that administers the State law will apply it, remains to be seen. For my part, I cannot place any confidence in it. We know that there is competition between the graziers and wholesale butchers. They are supposed to work to a ceiling price at which the wholesalers supply meat to the retailers. This is not my statement; it is evidence of the Commissioner, Mr. Kelly, who was appointed by the Government. In the course of his report he pointed out that blackmarketing in meat was rampant in Western Australia.

The president of the Meat Allied Federation, Mr. Pethick, indicated at different times that there was a black market in connection with the supply of meat. All that time the consumers have been robbed, just as they are being robbed today. Of course, I realise that the retailers are doing this to recoup themselves for the money they have had to pay out on the black market. That is a strong statement to make, but I challenge contradiction. If a motion such as that proposed by the member for Roe had been moved by a member of the Opposition, I doubt whether it would have been agreed to by the Government because in the past when it was suggested that a Royal Commission should be appointed we were told that it was not considered necessary. The circumstances confronting us today are substantially the same as they were last year.

The Minister for Works: They are worse.

Mr. W. HEGNEY: At any rate, they are just as bad. Now we find a member sitting on the Government side of the House moving for the appointment of a Select Committee. If I get an assurance that the Select Committee will be empowered to inquire into the whole of the ramifications of the meat industry from producer to consumer, I shall be prepared to support the motion. If it simply means an inquiry into the inadequacy of supplies, I shall not be very happy about it at all.

MR. PERKINS (Roe—in reply) [6.13]: Dealing first of all with the remarks of the member for Mt. Hawthorn, I think the terms of the motion are wide indeed.

The Premier: They are.

Mr. PERKINS: I visualise that every section of the trade will be inquired into and representatives of each section will be required to give evidence. They will be asked to provide any information they can give as to the effect of the position on the public. I would also expect representatives of the consumers to give evidence and I think the information they could supply should be available to the committee. Obviously when we refer to ways and means of obtaining adequate meat supplies for the people of Western Australia, that embraces all aspects of the problem. I cannot think of any terms that could provide the Select Committee with greater opportunities to make the requisite inquiry.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

Mr. PERKINS: Before tea I was assuring the member for Mt. Hawthorn that the terms of reference would be sufficiently wide to enable all aspects, including the consumer angle, of the supply of meat to be discussed. He also asked me whether I had consulted the Attorney General about the price factor. I have not done so, but that is no reason why the Select Committee should not discuss the question of the price of meat so far as it is pertinent to supply. The Minister raised no serious objections to the motion, but made one or two observations on the cause of the difficulties confronting us. He said that the very good season in many parts of the State was causing stock to be retained in the rural areas rather than be marketed as meat. That may be the immediate effect, but the long range effect is that the stock will be kept in the agricultural areas in good condition, and will be available for meat as fat stock if proper inducement can be offered for it to come into the market.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do you think legislation might help to prevent the unnecessary slaughter of calves?

Mr. PERKINS: That is an aspect I have not considered. There are probably other members who could answer that question better than I can. There is no

reason why a matter such as that should not be considered by the committee. The member for Kalgoorlie is obviously as concerned, as I am, about the immediate prospects of adequate supplies of meat for the people, but he was somewhat pessimistic as to the good that could be achieved by any inquiry. I think he is unduly pessimistic in this regard because in the course of his speech he made one suggestion which could have a good effect on the number of stock coming forward to the market. He suggested that, without price control being entirely removed, there might be some easing of prices—that is a rising of ceiling prices—to bring them more into line with the real value. That is an aspect the Select Committee could seriously consider. From the producer's point of view the position is not serious because he is already obtaining that price on what might be called a black market, but the consumer is being forced into paying all sorts of uneconomic prices, particularly the Kalgoorlie people, by obtaining their requirements from butchers a long way afield.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Do not stonewall too long or we shall vote against the motion.

Mr. PERKINS: The inquiry could have a beneficial effect, and I am hoping that it will be the means of giving any people with ideas on the subject the opportunity to put them forward.

Question put and passed; the motion agreed to.

Select Committee Appointed.

On motion by Mr. Perkins, Select Committee appointed consisting of Messrs. W. Hegney, Styants, Hutchinson, Hearman and the mover, with power to call for persons and papers, to sit on days over which the House stands adjourned, and to report on the 8th November.

MOTION—CHANDLER ALUNITE WORKS.

To Inquire by Select Committee.

HON. J. T. TONKIN (Melville) [7.36]: I move—

That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into and report upon—

- (1) the proposal to use the State Alunite Works at Chandler for the production by the State of plaster of paris and to supply Joseph Harris Collett, and the circumstances surrounding the abandonment of that proposal;
- (2) the extent to which the Government was subjected to pressure by the W.A. Plaster Manufacturers' Association and the Chamber of Manufactures to dissuade it from proceeding with the proposal to use the State Alunite Works for the pro-

- duction of plaster of paris, and whether such action was prejudicial to the public interest;
- (3) whether the Government's decision not to produce plaster affected to any appreciable extent the house-building rates of this and other States;
 - (4) the financial effect on this State resulting from the Government's decision to lease the Chandler Works to Australian Plaster Industries instead of proceeding with the original proposal under which the State would have engaged in the production of plaster of paris for sale;
 - (5) the production and distribution of plaster and plasterboard by members of the W.A. Plaster Manufacturers' Association.

Pursuant to a vote of this House some little time ago, the relevant papers in connection with the proposal to use the State Alunite Works at Chandler for the production of plaster were made available, but unfortunately they are far from complete. I early noticed that two important letters were missing, a fact which I brought to the attention of the Minister for Industrial Development who undertook to look for them. He subsequently supplied me with, not the originals, but copies of them which he said he had obtained from the Plaster Manufacturers' Association. There are other relevant documents which should be on the file but are not. I have no doubt that the Minister—at least I would expect him to—will offer some explanation when he later has an opportunity to speak. The missing documents are of the greatest relevancy to the complaints I made, and as I come to them I shall refer to them.

The papers tabled, in my view, fully support the conclusions to which I came when I asked that I be allowed to see them. Those papers, and my subsequent inquiries reveal a state of affairs in Western Australia which I did not think it possible could exist in a country like this, and which I felt could only be found in Chicago. It seems that in Western Australia there is a commercial group which has proved to be too powerful for Mr. Fernie, the Director of Industrial Development, more powerful than the Minister for Industrial Development, and too powerful for the Government. I ascertained some astonishing things about this organisation—so much so that I feel an inquiry into the existing circumstances is absolutely necessary in the interests not only of Western Australia, but the Commonwealth as a whole.

The organisation known as the Plaster Manufacturers' Association is a very close preserve, and a complete monopoly. Up to a short time ago it controlled not only the manufacture and the distribution of plaster, but also the men who worked in the industry. If a man employed by one of the

firms in the association desired to change his employment and work for another member of the association, he could not do so unless the second manufacturer, to whom he made application, ascertained from the first that it would be all right for him to be employed. If it was not, then there was no job available for the employee, and he had no option but to return to the employer whom he had left, or go out of the industry. I am told that quite a number of employees left the industry as a consequence. In addition extreme difficulty is experienced by young men, with a knowledge of the trade, who desire to set up in business on their own.

I have talked with some of these people—ex-servicemen—who worked with plaster manufacturers before the war, then joined the Forces and subsequently, with deferred pay available to them, sought to establish themselves in industry as manufacturers of plasterboard. When they endeavoured to obtain supplies of plaster, they met in almost every case with complete refusal. It was not possible for them to buy from any member of the manufacturers' association. Their only chance—and this is what they have been doing—was to get supplies of plaster surreptitiously from agents. That is a costly method. I have been told of instances of plaster costing more than £11 a ton because it was being obtained in this manner. But that is the only way in which these young men can get plaster if they desire to manufacture plasterboard.

One of the men told me that he has been endeavouring for four and a half years to establish a plasterboard manufacturing industry under his own control. He applied to Millars, to the Perth Modelling Works and to the Ajax Plaster Company, but was refused in every instance. They told him it was too silly for him to expect to get supplies of plaster. He then decided that he would endeavour to join the association, so he made inquiries of the secretary. He ascertained that he would have to pay a fee of 20 guineas, and was shown a copy of the rules, which he agreed to abide by. He submitted his cheque for 20 guineas with his application. In due course he was told that his application had been before a general meeting, but had not been accepted. That was the end of it, and of his chance of getting a supply of plaster. He still has to get his plaster through an agent who is running a risk every time he serves him. If the agent is found out, his supplies will be curtailed.

This manufacturer has to pay more than the recognised price in order to get his supplies, so his return for the work he is doing is less than it ought to be, and the price being charged is more than it should be. I am informed, that one of the rules of this association, if one can get into it, is that one pays 3s. a ton on each ton of plaster that one buys, in addition to the ordinary cost. Of that 3s., sixpence is a subscription to the Australian Associa-

tion and 2s. 6d. is a sort of fine paid in advance. One keeps on subscribing 2s. 6d. a ton until one has built up a credit of £100 with the Association and the Association holds that in case one does something which will bring about a fine.

When a person is fined the amount of the fine is taken from the £100 that has been subscribed. I do not know whether that is true or not, but I have been told by a man who said he saw the rules and tried to join, that that is incorporated in the rules.

I will give some examples of how this system works. If a member of the Plaster Manufacturers' Association tenders for a job of fixing plasterboard, he is obliged to notify the association of the price that he has tendered. Before he tenders he has to ascertain whether anybody else has already done so and, if so, at what price. The rule is that if nobody else has tendered then the tenderer is at liberty to quote the price which he desires, but if somebody else has already tendered then the second person must quote the same figure or something more. He is not allowed to tender less even though he may be satisfied to do the job for that lower figure.

Mr. Marshall: No wonder we are paying such a terrific price for homes.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Members can see therefore, what little chance we have of reducing the cost of housing when we permit that rule to continue in operation. So that members of the association will abide by the rule, they are under a penalty of a fine up to £100 for any breach. I submit that that is a matter which is crying out for investigation by somebody in the State so that we can put an end to it. There are many men in Western Australia—many tradesmen—who are anxious to produce plasterboard and fix it, but they are not allowed to do so because they cannot get supplies of plaster or plasterboard.

[Resolved: That motions be continued.]

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: A man who is not a tradesman has a far better chance of getting a supply of plaster than a man who is a tradesman because immediately a tradesman applies for a supply of plaster the association gets suspicious and thinks of competition. So it will not assist in any way anybody who makes up his mind to manufacture plasterboard. But, if an individual wants a little plaster, or some plasterboard for his own use, it is possible that he will get it; the other man has no chance whatever. A man who is known in the trade as a tradesman and a fixer, and is outside the association, has no chance whatever of getting a supply of plaster through the legitimate channels. As we are told that we are out to encourage initiative and assist young men from the Forces to rehabilitate themselves, how can we sit idly by and allow

this complete control to continue? For some time I have been told that there is undoubtedly a shortage of plasterboard in Western Australia. The manufacturers say that there is not; I have seen their letters on the file. The Government says there is not.

Mr. Marshall: They are lying.

Mr. Totterdell: They are sending it to the Eastern States.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I asked a question in this House as to whether there is any shortage of plasterboard in Western Australia. The Minister informed me that an official of the Housing Commission had assured him that supplies of plasterboard in Western Australia were satisfactory. I suggest that the Minister carpet the official who gave him that information. I have been assured in a number of cases that if one lodges an application for plasterboard one is told that it will be anything from six to nine months before it is possible to get what one wants. I am further told that the manufacturers are at least six months behind with their contract with the Housing Commission. That is a matter which can be easily verified. There is no gainsaying the fact that it is impossible to get immediate delivery of plasterboard and, unless a person is a prominent builder, well in the running, he is told that he has a considerable wait of anything up to nine months. So that situation requires inquiry.

I am further told, too, that there is a gentleman's agreement between the Housing Commission and the Plaster Manufacturers' Association under which no tradesman, who is not a member of the association, will be employed by the Commission in fixing plasterboard. As the association controls who shall enter it, and seems to keep a very strict control upon the personnel, and as the Government has this gentleman's agreement with the association, what chance has a man, who is not in the trade, of getting into it? A nice opportunity for the people we are bringing into this country! The thousands of migrants who are coming here have little chance of getting into industry if what is practised with regard to plaster is allowed to spread to other callings. So I say that this matter is one which is absolutely crying out for inquiry.

Mr. Marshall: Crying out for correction.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It seems, without a doubt, that the proposal to use the State works at Chandler for the purpose of producing plaster would have gone on had it not been for the pressure exerted by the Plaster Manufacturers' Association. I think the file proves it beyond a shadow of a doubt. As we are in the position that this strong commercial group is able to control the Government, it bodes ill for the State if those circumstances are allowed to continue. I abso-

lutely refuse to accept the view that the community exists simply to provide a field in which the individual, aided by the Government, can pursue his own self interests. But that is the situation in regard to the manufacture of plaster.

I shall let the file tell the story. Members will recall that it was on the 16th November of last year when the Director of Industrial Development advised a meeting of the Industrial Council that it was not intended to proceed any further with the production of alunite because of the difficulty about manufacturing costs, and it was proposed to produce plaster from the extensive gypsum deposits. The works went ahead getting things ready so that production could be commenced and much-needed plaster supplied. On the file, under the date the 21st November, 1949, there appears this telegram from F. Hurst, fibrous plaster manufacturer, 351 Elizabeth-street, Melbourne. It was addressed to Mr. Fernie, the Director of Industrial Development, Barrack-street, Perth, and stated—

J. H. Collett & Son, of Perth, have offered large quantities of plaster of paris to fibrous plaster manufacturers in this State. Have given your department for reference purposes. Please advise position as to availability of supplies.

The reply sent was as follows:—

F. Hurst, Fibrous Plaster Manufacturer, 351 Elizabeth-street, Melbourne. Anticipate Collett & Son can supply large quantities in the new year. Fernie.

That was sent under date the 22nd November, 1949. Next there was the necessity on the part of the board of management to oppose an application being made by Brady and somebody else for certain gypsum leases which they had pegged adjacent to the Chandler works. The file sets out the reasons which were to be urged by the representatives of the board of management in opposing Brady's application for the leases. I quote from page five of the file—

Object for the following reasons viz.:—

Work has been proceeding for some months on sampling the deposits, the subject of this application. Calcining experiments and analytical work have also been carried out at the Government chemical laboratories. The possibilities of overseas markets have been explored. The parties making market inquiries were advised not to peg leases as the deposits were required to maintain employment at the State (W.A.) Alunite Industry's works at Chandler pending the completion of research on new processes for the production of potash and other chemicals. They were also informed that

the State (W.A.) Alunite Industry would be prepared to supply any over-sea or local orders they could obtain for either seed or processed gypsum. Retention of control over these deposits is essential in order that employment may be maintained at the State (W.A.) Alunite Industry's plant during the research period above referred to.

At page six of the file there is a letter from Mr. Fernie, director, to Mr. Fitzgerald, manager, and it reads as follows:—

In reference to the application by H. B. Brady & Co. Pty. Ltd. and George Richard Saunders, jnr., for mineral claim at Chandler, the subject of an advertisement in "The West Australian" on Saturday last, I forward herewith in triplicate forms of objection which should be signed by you and forwarded to the Warden's Office, Yilgarn Goldfield before the 8th December. The form should be accompanied by a fee of 2s. 6d.

Mr. Fernie then advised his Minister what was happening. This minute is to the Minister for Industrial Development, signed "N. Fernie, Director," and dated the 22nd November. It is as follows:—

1. On the 31st October, 1949, H. B. Brady & Co. Pty. Ltd. and George Richard Saunders pegged a gypsum lease within a mile of the Chandler Potash Works.

2. I understand that the application is to come before the Warden at Merredin on the 8th December. I recommend that the claim be not heard on the following grounds.

3. Since the State Government acquired and developed the Chandler Potash Works, it has been understood that no minerals, including alunite, salt, lime and gypsum, within several miles of the plant, would be alienated, without first obtaining the approval of the board of management.

4. During the last three months, considerable sampling of the gypsum and new calcining experiments have been carried out with a view to utilising the gypsum to maintain employment at Chandler pending the completion of research work to determine the future of the industry.

5. Messrs. O'Connor and Collett, gypsum exporters, advised me on the 19th September . . .

I think that should be October. The minute continues—

. . . that they had prospects for large export orders for both seed and processed gypsum. They asked if the board would have any objection to the pegging of a lease one mile east of the works. I advised them against this course in view of the fact that

the deposit was required to maintain employment at Chandler, and I would have to oppose the granting of leases.

6. However, I advised them that the industry would be pleased to quote them for the supply of both seed and calcined gypsum to fulfil any orders they might obtain.

7. Pending a Government decision to reserve the minerals within, say, three miles of the works for the Chandler Industry, a form of objection to the lease to H. B. Brady & Co. Pty. Ltd. has been lodged.

The Minister for Industrial Development sent this on to the Minister for Mines, marked "specially urgent," with this note: "I trust you can agree to paragraphs (2) and (7). If not, please refer to Cabinet, Tuesday next. (Sgd.) A.F.W." The Minister did not raise any objection as to the legality of using the Chandler works to process gypsum produced from these leases. He did not call Mr. Fernle in and say, "What is this all about?" But he sent this on to the Minister for Mines, marked "specially urgent," hoping he could agree to paragraphs (2) and (7), that is, to oppose this application of Brady's so that the leases could be reserved for the board of management. The Under Secretary for Mines, on page 9 of the file, wrote to his Minister as follows:—

As will be noted on plan at page 1, the 24 acres applied for by Brady's is well outside the area held by the Chandler Industry for production of alunite.

Brady's application has been listed for the Yilgarn Warden's Court in December, and must come before the court, unless the applicant withdraws.

After the case is heard, the Warden's recommendation will be forwarded to this office for decision by you, and your decision is final and not subject to any appeal.

Under Section 276 of the Mining Act, 1904, you as Minister may reserve any Crown land from occupation. Such reserve must be confirmed by the Governor within 12 months or it lapses.

Immediately it started to examine this gypsum deposit, the Chandler industry should have taken steps to protect same by approaching this department to reserve the area affected. Gypsum, the source of plaster of paris, is a commodity which has always been in great demand, and the various plaster companies have always been very observant of new discoveries and of operations of trade rivals and have never hesitated to compete bitterly with one another in obtaining the right to mine.

As warden, Perth, I have myself had many hotly contested Warden's Court gypsum cases before me.

(Sgd.) A.H.T.

Under Secretary for Mines.

The next is a minute from the Deputy Premier, dated the 29th November, to the Minister for Mines, which is as follows:—

Cabinet desires the Minister to exercise rights under Section 276 of the Mining Act by reserving Crown land within a radius of three miles of the Chandler works.

What for? Was it for the recreation of the employees of Chandler, or was it to use the works so that gypsum could be produced for the manufacture of plaster? Having gone so far the plaster manufacturers heard a rumour, so they said, and being gentlemen who were very wide awake, they did not let the grass grow under their feet. On page 10 of the file there appears a letter with the heading "W.A. Fibrous Plaster Association, Withnell Chambers, Howard-street, Perth," which reads—

The manufacturers of plaster of paris who are members of this association would like to meet you in conference at as early a date as you could find it convenient to make an appointment.

The chief point to be raised with you is that members have heard a rumour that it is the intention of the Government to commence the manufacture of plaster of paris at Lake Chandler.

Members naturally are vitally interested in having the State Government as a competitor and would like to know the position.

A couple of days' notice of the appointment would be greatly appreciated.

This meeting did not take place until the 12th January. The Minister said in the House that he thought it took place on the 11th January, but his memory played him false. The Minister also said that he did not think this meeting was of such importance as to warrant any written record of it being made. It is strange, therefore, that a written record of it does appear on the file. It is true that it appears in the wrong place on the file but nevertheless a written record of this meeting does appear, and to refresh the Minister's memory, I propose to read it—

Notes of Deputation from Plaster Manufacturers' Association which waited on the Minister for Industrial Development (Hon. A. F. Watts, M.L.A.) on Thursday, 12th January, 1950, at 11 a.m.

Present: Messrs. Shaw, Preston, Meecham, Banfield and Whyte.

Mr. Shaw stated that the Association's concern in asking for a deputation was in connection with the manufacture of plaster in this State. The Association had heard that the State Alunite Works are to change over to the manufacture of plaster, and members are very concerned because there is quite a surplus of plaster in the State at the present time, although there is a demand in the Eastern States. He asked if the change-over had been decided upon, and Mr. Watts replied that recommendations only had been made.

Mr. Whyte, the Secretary, then submitted a summary of many meetings and discussions of the Association—a copy is attached.

Unfortunately for me the copy is not attached.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: Where is it?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I do not know, but according to this, it ought to be attached to the minutes and it should be on the file. It would be very interesting for me to see the nature of these discussions which took place—these many meetings and discussions of the Plaster Manufacturers' Association. Parliament decided that we were to have all the relevant papers and here is an important one that we have not got. The minute continues—

Discussion then followed concerning the Mr. Collett mentioned in the summary.

It can be seen now why this summary will be important to us, because it refers to Collett and the supposed agreement. We then have the following:—

Mr. Watts explained that Mr. Collett was not acting on behalf of the Department of Industrial Development but that he was acting in his own interests and was merely making some inquiries on behalf of the department.

Mr. Watts went on to say that there has been no decision to use the Chandler Works for the manufacture of plaster. There is also some doubt at present as to whether they will be closed for the manufacture of potash. Both these questions will be determined in the course of a few days. He said, however, that under no circumstances would plaster be sold in this State. Whether it is possible to dispose of it, supposing it is produced, overseas, is something that must be inquired into. These proposals were only distributed at Cabinet on Tuesday and, in consequence, nothing further had been done. In the opinion of Mr. Watts, Chandler is a difficult proposition: his personal impression would be to close down the works, except for one reason, which was that should hostilities break out again a

supply of potash would then be available. In addition, the houses and amenities and the people employed there must be considered.

I would like to interpolate: "I should say so"—

He considered that, had it not been for the war, Chandler would not have come into existence, but it was at the request of the Commonwealth Government that this business had been started in order to get some supply of potash during the war; in addition, the Commonwealth had paid a subsidy on imported potash. There are other alternatives: it could be converted into a place for the production of alumina. However, to convert it from potash is a very vexed question. All inquiries have been made with a view to drawing up a complete appreciation of the possibility of coming to a conclusion as to what will be done with the works; but, if it does produce plaster, it will not be sold in this State, unless at the Association's request.

Mr. Marshall: It is hot.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is an indication of the strength of the Plaster Manufacturers' Association. The Government would do whatever the association wanted it to do. It proposed to sell the plaster outside this State and would not sell it within the State unless the plaster manufacturers so requested.

It will mostly be on an overseas basis. We do not want to close it up because we may find ourselves without the necessary requirement. Mr. Watts said that the figures supplied would be carefully gone into. The question of whether there is an overseas market to purchase the supplies in Australia would also be considered.

Mr. Whyte said that the matter was much clearer. He admitted that potash is most necessary in the event of another war, and asked that the association be informed when a decision is arrived at. In the matter of export, he said that sufficient quantities could not be sent to the Eastern States because sufficient shipping space was not available.

Mr. Watts said that there are a number of locomotives coming into this State. When these arrive the railway position will be very substantially increased. He had no doubt whatever that the railways will then be handling everything that they are required to carry. Mr. Watts concluded by saying that the export matters will be inquired into and that he would advise the association of the decision arrived at in regard to the Chandler works.

That concludes the minutes, and my only other reference is to say I regret that I cannot examine the figures, as the Minis-

ter was able to do, because they do not appear on the file. That was the first shot, so far as the plaster manufacturers were concerned, but they were unaware that, prior to their seeing the Minister, somebody had been to the Premier. It seems that, until the other night, the Minister was unaware of it, also.

The Minister for Industrial Development: And I do not yet know of it apart from your assertion.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Fortunately, the papers prove it, and I shall be careful to draw his attention to it when I reach that point. The file does not state whether it was the 22nd, 21st or 20th when those two gentlemen saw the Premier, and I have to guess. I think the date was the 22nd. Perhaps the Premier will be good enough to say whether my guess is right.

Mr. Marshall: Not he!

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The two gentlemen who saw him were the president of the Chamber of Manufactures and Mr. Meecham.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Did they leave a donation for the Liberal funds?

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: After they had seen him, things happened, because Collett and Co. received a letter to say that they could drop everything, or words to that effect. The matter was off for the time being. Mr. Fernie was called in to see the Minister, and had a discussion, or someone in Mr. Fernie's place did so. That is not quite clear. Perhaps the Minister will say who it was. The manager at Chandler was told that the industry would have to put up a very strong case if plaster was to be manufactured there, because something had happened. But more of that anon. I wish to keep the events in sequence. At page 14 of the file, under date the 28th November, Fitzgerald, manager of the State Alunite Works, wrote to Mr. Fernie, chairman of the Board of Management, as follows:—

In view of the proposed production of plaster from gypsum at Chandler, we have been in touch with the Railway Department at Merredin, to ascertain freight rates to Fremantle.

For finished plaster, the rates from Nungarin, Burracoppin and Weira, respectively, are 37s. 4d., 38s. 1d. and 41s. 2d. per ton, plus 3s. 6d. per sheet used. This is the "A" rate.

For seed gypsum the rates are one third less than the "M" rate being 15s. 5d., 15s. 11d. and 18s., respectively.

This is quite a shock to us, and would place this industry under a decided disadvantage as against processors at the coast. It would also appear to be out of line with the State's policy of decentralisation. I would suggest that an approach on a Ministerial level be made to have this anomaly rectified.

I quote this to show that, at the 28th November, nothing had happened to cause the manager of the works to believe that he would not be able to proceed to produce plaster and rail it away. On the 7th December, Fitzgerald sent a telegram to Child, care of the Department of Industrial Development, Perth, as follows:—

Please contact Collett and advise completion of large sample of plaster. Forwarding one bag passenger train tomorrow. Ask Collett to ring.

So everything was all right on the 7th December. At page 19 of the file, the Director of Industrial Development, who has since resigned that position, sent a minute to the Minister as follows:—

Proposed production of plaster of paris at the State Alunite Works at Chandler.

1. It is understood that the Plaster Manufacturers' Association is raising certain objections to our tentative proposals to produce plaster of paris at Chandler, and the following information is submitted to enable you to deal with any objections.

2. As you know, the Chandler works is faced with closing down at the end of March, 1950, and although it is proposed to undertake a further programme of research, we would welcome the opportunity of producing some simple commodity such as plaster of paris as a means of maintaining at least a nucleus of the present organisation until a final decision regarding the possibilities of alunite is reached. At Chandler there is at present a population of about 400 people, and we have more than 40 houses occupied by married men and their families. If we could undertake the production of gypsum and plaster of paris, we could probably keep a number of these in employment to avoid the complete disruption of both town and plant.

3. The idea of producing the plaster of paris was inspired by a Mr. J. H. Collett, who, on recent visits to the Eastern States, found this commodity to be in very short supply, and was given tentative orders for as much as 170,000 tons per annum. The inquiries indicated a market as follows:—

	Tons per annum.
New South Wales	75,000
Victoria	55,000
Tasmania	6,500
New Zealand (probably)	35,000

In addition Mr. Collett has advised that the Commonwealth Department of Works and Housing will require 6½ million square yards of plasterboard for the inner lining of prefabricated houses to be constructed for the Snowy River scheme.

4. Mr Collett discussed this potential business with Mr. Fernie and stated that he was about to peg leases for the mining of gypsum in the Chandler area. However, in discussion, it was decided that as the Chandler plant could produce large quantities quite economically, it would be preferable for Mr. Collett to secure the orders and for our works to supply him at a quoted figure. He would then arrange delivery.

5. It is proposed that the entire production from Chandler will be exported either to the Eastern States or overseas. We would not, I think, supply anything like the quantities mentioned in the paragraph above, due to physical difficulties, such as the ability of our railways to export to the coast. It is an indication of the demand for this commodity in the Eastern States that Victoria recently imported 2,000 tons of plaster from Cyprus. Our existing manufacturers are quite unable to handle the business offering: Exports from this State in 1914-18 were below 3,500 tons.

6. A company to be known as Gypsum Plaster Exporters Ltd. with a nominal capital of £25,000 is in process of formation to handle this business, and I feel confident that the operations of this company in exporting plaster supplied from our works at Chandler will in no way react against any existing business in Western Australia, but will be of very considerable benefit to the alunite industry and to the State as a whole.

One would have thought such a minute would be sufficient for the Government, but the plaster manufacturers were too strong. On the 15th December, page 31 of the file, Mr. Fernie wrote to the Deputy Director, Division Industrial Development, Phillip House, Phillip-street, Sydney, as follows:—

During your visit to Western Australia, we discussed with you very briefly reports of an exceedingly large demand for plaster of paris from the Eastern States of Australia.

We have been advised that Victoria at least has had to import from as far afield as Cyprus, and that the following orders could probably be secured:—

New South Wales—75,000 tons per annum.

Victoria—55,000 tons per annum.

Tasmania—6,500 tons per annum.

We have quite extensive deposits of gypsum in W.A. but are particularly interested in this market at present for the following reason:—Our potash works at Chandler will possibly have to cease production within a few months because of rising costs and in-

creasing overseas competition. There are ample deposits of gypsum within a few miles of this plant, and portion of the plant itself could be economically used to produce plaster of paris. We are, therefore, considering the possibility of producing plaster of paris there against orders secured by firms or agents, for export either to the Eastern States or overseas. It would not be desired to interfere with our existing industry, but this at present could not cope with anything like the business which we are told is offering. Our exports to the Eastern States for 1948-49 were only about three and a half thousand tons.

The proposal we have in mind might only be temporary pending a final decision on the future of the potash industry, but it would assist us in arriving at a decision if you could give us some indication of the likely market in New South Wales.

It should be added that if the market is as extensive as we are led to believe, we could not hope to cater for all of it due to the physical difficulties of transporting large tonnages from our Chandler works to the port.

On the 22nd December—the fateful day when I think members of the Chamber of Manufactures went to see the Premier—Mr. Fernie, or somebody using his signature, sent a letter to the manager of the State Alunite Works, as follows:—

Interviewed our Hon. Minister this morning regarding the proposed production at Chandler of gypsum and plaster of paris. Unfortunately, we are not yet authorised to proceed. Apparently there is quite a strong feeling in the Government that the State should "cut its losses" and not undertake any new production.

The matter will be decided by Cabinet about the 9th or 10th January—

I may here interpolate that it was not decided until the middle of May—

—but I may have the opportunity of discussing it again with our Hon. Minister towards the end of next week. We will need to present a strong case if the manufacture of plaster of paris is to be approved. Will you, therefore, prepare a case in support of our proposals, including estimates of production costs and profits, as well as the plant (existing and additional) involved, and the desirability of maintaining a nucleus of township, etc., and let me have this before the 29th inst. if possible.

Mr. Collett has been advised to delay any further negotiations for supplies to the Eastern States pending final decision as to whether we are to proceed. He is, however, writing to you

asking for up to 15 tons of plaster for a large-scale sample to be supplied to Australian Gypsum Industries in Melbourne. These people are apparently satisfied with their small sample and wish to proceed with larger orders. If this can be manufactured without inconvenience, using your small kiln, it would probably serve to give you additional experience and could be supplied.

The letter referred to as having been sent to Collett had to be despatched with such urgency that it was delivered by hand. It was signed "Ferne," but I understand that Mr. Fernie was out of town at the time. At pages 50 and 51 of the file there is a minute to the Minister for Industrial Development from Mr. Fernie dated the 10th January. I will read extracts from it. Here is one at page 50—

Manufacture of Plaster from Gypsum.

In recent months, when it appeared that the production of potash might have to cease, consideration was given to alternatives which might efficiently utilise the existing plant, thus recovering at least part of the accumulated losses, and also providing employment for those people living in the small township of 45 houses owned by the industry. It was found that the most attractive alternative would be the exploitation of the extensive deposits of gypsum occurring in the immediate vicinity of the plant. The existence in the Eastern States of a ready market for plaster of paris on a scale in line with the capacity of the Chandler plant has been indicated as the result of extensive inquiries made by a private individual. There are also strong indications of an oversea market particularly in Malaya. Plaster is in such short supply in the Eastern States that recently it has been imported from Cyprus.

Estimates were then prepared showing the cost of production of plaster at the rate of 25,000 tons per annum, utilising portion of the Chandler plant, plus necessary modifications. The Railways Department advise that they could handle this tonnage. These estimates allowed for depreciation of usable plant over a period of 10 years, and also for the amortization of the cost of modifications over a period of two years. On prices ruling for plaster these estimates show that a net profit of 10s. per ton or £12,500 a year would be made.

It is estimated that a period of two to three months would be required to convert the plant.

A small sample of three tons of plaster has already been made at Chandler and this compares more than favourably with the plaster pro-

duced in this State. A survey of the deposits shows that there is sufficient gypsum to ensure production for 10 years on the scale proposed in the estimate.

I come now to one of the letters which was missing from the file and which the Minister for Industrial Development subsequently supplied to me when I drew his attention to the fact that it was missing. This is a letter signed "J. D. Whyte, secretary of the Plaster Manufacturers' Association," and is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Development. It reads—

Dear Sir,—Members of this association have been advised that alterations are taking place at the State Alunite Works at Chandler in the way of erecting bins for storage purposes. You might let this association know if these alterations mean that you propose to go on with the manufacture of plaster of paris. At the conference held at your office on the 12th January, members gained the impression that it was not your intention to do anything with regard to the manufacture of plaster until you had made extensive inquiries, and that it would be at least three months before any more was made. Therefore, the information we have received rather perturbs my members. You will also remember that at the interview you mentioned that you would be putting the matter before a meeting of Cabinet within a few days, probably before the end of January, and would write and let me know what the intentions of the Government were. Since our conference, I have not heard from you and would be greatly obliged if you could let me have a definite statement on the position at your very earliest convenience.

That letter showed that the plaster manufacturers were carefully watching developments at Chandler. On the 20th February, the Minister for Industrial Development wrote to the plaster manufacturers as follows:—

Dear Sir,—I acknowledge your letter of the 7th February. I undertook to advise you if any decision were arrived at for the manufacture of plaster at Chandler. No such decision was reached by Cabinet.

On the contrary, it was decided to continue the manufacture of potash for three months. Meanwhile, the Prime Minister was to be written to this has been done by the Premier's Department), seeking the Commonwealth Government's views—putting each question very shortly:—

(a) As to financial assistance for continued manufacture of potash as a national matter.

(b) As to their opinion concerning production of alumina for like reasons.

(c) On the point of whether the production of plaster for export was in their opinion justified, and if so to what degree.

The Prime Minister was asked to send to Western Australia his responsible Minister to discuss the matter with all concerned.

To that letter the secretary of the Plaster Manufacturers' Association replied, under date the 21st February—the letter appears at page 61 of the file—as follows:—

Dear Sir,

State Alunite Works . . . Lake Chandler.

Your letter of the 20th instant received and I thank you for the information set out therein.

The matter will be placed on the agenda for next meeting and I shall reply as instructed in due course.

You did not actually reply to the first paragraph of my letter of the 7th instant in regard to the storage bins being erected at the works.

In the absence of a reply to that query it is presumed the information we received is not correct.

After your discussion with the Commonwealth Government representative I shall be glad to hear from you further.

Under date the 15th March, Mr. Whyte wrote a further letter to the Minister, which appears at page 78 of the file, and reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,

State Alunite Works . . . Lake Campion, Chandler.

Your letter of the 13th inst. received and as a matter of fact Mr. Reid, your Under Treasurer, and Mr. Fernie, your Director of Industrial Development, met members of this association in conference at the association's office yesterday morning.

In view of the paramount importance of this matter to our industry and owing to the temporary absence from the State of two of the principal members, we find it is necessary to defer the matter until a later meeting.

I regret I am not able to give you a more definite reply at the moment.

The letter of the 13th March referred to in that communication is addressed to Mr. Whyte from the Minister for Industrial Development, and appears at page 79 of the file. It is as follows:—

Dear Sir,

I acknowledge your letter of 10th March, received on my arrival here this morning.

In my absence during the whole of last week, the matter of plaster manufacture at Chandler was the subject of discussion between the Hon. Premier, the Under Treasurer, and the Director of Industrial Development. On inquiry of the last-named today, I was informed that, as a consequence of the discussion mentioned, a meeting has been arranged tomorrow between members of your association, Mr. Fernie and the Under Treasurer, at which the position will be explained to you. I am advised that you were incorrectly informed by the "certain person" you mentioned.

One would think it would have been possible for the Premier, the Under Secretary and the chairman of the Board of Management to solve the problems in connection with this matter, and make up their minds about what was to be done. But they decided to go down and have a pow-wow with the manufacturers to see whether they could get them to remove their opposition, for if they could succeed in doing so the way would be clear for the Government to proceed. But if they could not succeed in doing that—and they did not—then the way would not be clear. Now, do we want any more proof than that, that it is not the Government that is governing the country, but the plaster manufacturers, who are so strong that the Government could not proceed unless the association gave its O.K.? That undoubtedly was the position, as the papers show.

The matter with regard to that "certain person" is interesting. The letter which referred to the certain person is one of those which was missing from the file and which the Minister subsequently supplied to me, and which I now appear to have mislaid. However, it was a letter of the 10th March, and it referred to the fact that a certain person had been at Chandler and had seen that plaster was actually being manufactured there. The Minister referred to the fact that the certain person had been misinformed. In order to prove to the Minister that he had not been misinformed, I wish to say that Mr. Brady went to Chandler and helped himself to a bag of plaster which, I have no doubt, he was going to bring back and show the Minister.

Hon. J. B. Sleeman: He was only souveniring it.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Look at the dates! The plaster manufacturers wrote to the Minister on the 10th March. The Minister replied on the 13th March, acknowledging their letter and saying that their "certain person" had been incorrectly informed. According to the Minister's answer to a question of mine in the House, it was on the 16th March that Mr. Brady was apprehended at Merredin on his way back from Chandler with a bag of plaster.

The Minister for Industrial Development: At a place called Red Lake, according to Mr. Fitzgerald.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I thank the Minister for further enlightenment.

The Minister for Industrial Development: He did not get as far as Merredin. That is what I am pointing out.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: He was on his way back with the plaster in order, I have no doubt, to prove to the Minister that either he did not know what he was talking about with regard to what was happening at Chandler, or he was not telling the truth. Mr. Brady did not get to the Minister with the plaster because Mr. Fitzgerald took it back. At page 81 of the file there is this minute from the Under Treasurer and Mr. Pernie, two of the three members of the board of management of the industry—

In connection with the proposal to manufacture and export plaster from the Campion alunite works, and more particularly in reference to the objection to this proposal which was presented to you by the President of the Chamber of Manufactures and Mr. Meecham, we wish to report as follows:—

Earlier this afternoon the Minister suggested, by interjection, that what I said about a visit which had been paid to the Premier by a certain gentleman, had not been proved, but was only my belief.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That is the 22nd December.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I am not saying they never saw the Premier, but that I have no knowledge that they saw him on that date.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The Minister previously said in the House that he had no knowledge that anyone had seen the Premier at all.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Prior to the deputation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes.

The Minister for Industrial Development: This was long subsequent to the deputation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: This visit of the President of the Chamber of Manufactures and Mr. Meecham was definitely prior to the 12th January. The minute proceeds—

From inquiries made by an officer of the State Housing Commission, it appears that the production of plaster in this State is more than sufficient to meet the local demand for it.

That is a remarkable statement in view of the experience of the people who are trying to get plaster and plasterboard—

There are times when small quantities are available for export. The local manufacturers of plaster have found difficulty in arranging shipping space

for these small quantities, but we are informed that this difficulty arises from the fact that the quantities available are too small for the shipping companies' convenience. It would appear that if regular and large quantities of plaster are available, no difficulty would be experienced in finding shipping space.

We attended a meeting of the plaster manufacturers on the morning of Tuesday the 14th, at which the President of the Chamber of Manufactures was also present. It appeared that the representatives present were not aware of the fact that a deputation had waited on you to voice an objection to plaster being manufactured at Campion. The whole position was outlined to the representatives and they were told that if at the end of three years, or when the stage had been reached when the Eastern States no longer required our plaster, and no decision had been reached as to the continuance of the works at Campion for the production of potash, no further plaster would be manufactured. The representatives were also assured that the plaster manufactured at Campion would not be used in competition with the locally produced plaster. They were promised, too, that if they had difficulty in exporting small quantities of plaster, the Campion works would do their best to arrange shipping space for them when Campion plaster was being exported.

After much discussion it became clear that the only fear in the minds of the plaster manufacturers is that they could be deprived of railway trucks for the transport of gypsum if the demands of Campion on railway trucks means that additional railway trucks are required to transport the plaster from Campion to Fremantle. They were assured that road transport could be arranged for the transport of Campion plaster, and that, as far as possible, no inroads would be made into the available supply of trucks for the transport of their gypsum.

The representatives then agreed to discuss the matter and to advise us by letter of their decision. Unfortunately the letter received indicates that they have postponed making a decision because two of their members are out of the State. Obviously the Government's decision cannot be postponed until the plaster manufacturers can give their views.

That is what Pernie and Reid thought, but they were wrong because the Government's decision was postponed. It continues—

If the order from the Eastern States is not now accepted, we will lose it and either Campion will have to be

closed down or continued at a fairly substantial loss in the hope that the Commonwealth Government will ultimately be induced to come to our assistance. We are convinced that if Campion is authorised to produce plaster no injury will be done to the local manufacturers of plaster. We therefore strongly recommend that authority be given to produce the plaster and that the order for 25,000 tons be accepted. In order to allay any fears of the local manufacturers we further recommend that we send a letter to the secretary of the Plaster Manufacturers' Association undertaking not to continue the production of plaster when orders from the Eastern States cease and that no plaster will be sold locally in competition with local manufacturers.

In pursuance of that advice somebody put up a draft letter for the Premier's signature, but he refused to sign it and it was not forwarded. Nevertheless, that letter is useful as an indication of the lines along which both Mr. Fernie and Mr. Reid were thinking. It appears at pages 82 and 83 of the file and reads—

The Secretary, Plaster Manufacturers' Association, Perth. Dear Sir,—I have given careful consideration to the objections raised by your association to the manufacture of plaster at Chandler. The Lake Chandler industry is now being requested to accept an immediate order for 25,000 tons for 1950 followed by similar orders for 1951 and 1952. If I comply with your request and refuse to permit Chandler to accept this order I am advised that A.P.I. will proceed immediately with the erection of a plaster plant at Fishermen's Bend, Melbourne. If and when this plant is completed W.A. manufacturers will receive no orders for plaster for the Eastern States or New Zealand. From information supplied to me by my officers it is evident that no good could result to either established plaster manufacturers or the Lake Chandler industry by complying with your request. In fact, with the provisions I propose to impose, manufacture of plaster at Chandler could be of advantage to your members. As further delay will result in loss of the order I propose to approve the acceptance of the order for 25,000 tons of plaster by the board of management of the Chandler industry with the following provisos:—

(a) The Government to give the association an assurance that plaster from Chandler will not be supplied to the local W.A. market.

(b) The Government to agree to cease production of plaster at Chandler at the end of three years.

(c) The Government to agree not to allocate railway trucks for the transport of plaster from Chandler to Fremantle if such allocation is detrimental to the transport of gypsum for local manufacturers.

(d) The Government to undertake to give every assistance to your association's members to export plaster to the Eastern States.

As I have already said, the Premier did not sign that letter and it was not forwarded. The next minute, which appears at pages 84 to 86 of the file, refers to a letter of the Minister for Industrial Development, which does not appear on the file. I think it was an important letter but we can only guess at its contents. Perhaps the Minister can explain why it is not on the file. Here is a minute signed by Mr. Fernie and dated the 17th March. It reads—

Mr. Reid and myself attended a meeting of the Plaster Manufacturers' Association at 10.30 a.m. on Tuesday, the 14th March, in Mr. Whyte's office. Members of the association put forward their objections to the Board of Management's proposal to manufacture plaster at Chandler. The objections raised were as follows:—

(a) Members were concerned at the possibility of having to withstand competition from a State enterprise for both local and export trade. We countered this by assuring members that Chandler would not sell plaster on the local market and also that we would be in a position to assist them to export their small surplus of plaster by providing shipping space. The main difficulty in securing shipping space has been due to the small consignments which they have been able to offer.

(b) Members indicated that as they were unable to secure sufficient railway trucks to transport gypsum, the proposed Chandler project would aggravate the position. This was countered by an assurance that railway trucks would not be allocated to Chandler if such allocation was detrimental to the transport of gypsum for local manufacturers. The freight rate on gypsum from Weira to Fremantle is 21s. while that on plaster is 35s. per ton. When road transport from works to rail and double-handling is taken into account it is easy to realise that road transport can compete with rail at the plaster rate. Needless to say, the rail freight on gypsum is a losing proposition for the railways and it is probable that the State loses 10s. per ton on every ton of gypsum railed to local manufacturers.

(c) Members expressed concern regarding possible competition from Chandler at the end of three years when the A.P.I. plant in South Australia is completed and of sufficient capacity to supply the whole of Australia and New Zealand. This was countered by an assurance that the Chandler plant would cease production of plaster as soon as the export market disappeared. It was pointed out to members that if the Chandler plant was sold or leased, the new owner or lessee would be able to compete in the local market, a procedure that would have the effect of reducing the cost of plaster in Western Australia and also building costs. Despite the assurances given, the association has informed you that owing to the absence of Messrs. Banfield and Meecham they are unable to give a decision for some time. We have been requested to accept their immediate offer for 25,000 tons for 1950 to be followed by similar orders for 1951 and 1952. Apart from refusal to accept, further delay in arriving at a decision is likely to result in the cancellation of the order. If this happens, A.P.I. will proceed with the erection of their £90,000 plant at Fishermen's Bend, with the result that no importation from Western Australia will be required and the loss of business to the State will approximate £600,000. The opportunity of making profits at Chandler of £50,000 over three years will be lost. Also the opportunity to maintain the Chandler township and the personnel until a definite policy is determined in respect of the future of potash production.

I ask members to pay close attention to the final paragraph, which reads—

I wish to place on record my view that the pressure now being exerted on the Government by the Plaster Manufacturers' Association is totally unjustified, in view of the assurances given, and if successful will result in a loss to the State and no benefit whatever to the association.

That was the opinion of Mr. Fernie, who subsequently resigned his job. He wished to place on record his view that the pressure being exerted on the Government by the Plaster Manufacturers' Association was totally unjustified. Who was in a better position to know whether pressure was being exerted on the Government than the man who had been asked by the Premier to go down and talk this matter over with the plaster manufacturers? This visit by Mr. Fernie and Mr. Reid was made as a result of a conference between the Premier and Mr. Reid and Mr. Fernie, and those two members of the Board of Man-

agement went down to see the plaster manufacturers. They were on the defensive the whole time. The minute says, "Countering this argument and countering that argument" trying to overcome the resistance of the plaster manufacturers so that the Government could do what it wanted and use the works to supply much-needed plaster. But the manufacturers held tight; they would not budge at all and so the Government could not proceed. Mr. Fernie shows his disgust at the situation by recording his views in that manner. No wonder he subsequently resigned! The Minister for Industrial Development, following that minute of the 17th March, sent this minute to the Premier on even date—

The Board of Management recommended cessation of potash production for reasons well known. Cabinet preferred to continue production of potash temporarily pending national views on the need for potash if imported supplies again ceased. The Board of Management recommended production of plaster on an export basis only. As to objection (a) of the local plaster people, set out above, they already have my letter on behalf of the Government declaring no plaster will be sold locally.

No copy of the Minister's letter appears on the file.

The Minister for Industrial Development: It was an assurance given at that deputation. I think it was an error of mine at the time.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: But the Minister referred to a letter here.

The Minister for Industrial Development: I think that was an error of mine at the time.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: It continues—

To require anything further from you, or any other Minister, is in my view most improper, unless it be for me to incorporate the same assurance in some agreement dealing with the matter generally. Objection (c) is only a continuation of objection (a). If we have agreed to sell no plaster in Western Australia it applies now and hereafter.

The railway truck business is simple. An obvious alternative would be to lease to private enterprise. This would place the existing producers at the mercy of the biggest producer as you could not bind him not to sell locally.

Therefore, the State enterprise is the safer as far as these objections are concerned.

I have no desire to maintain Chandler as a State enterprise. We must, however, consider ways and means of ensuring the best possible other alternatives. We must consider how—

- (a) to maintain employment and make use of housing and other facilities at Chandler;
- (b) provide the Eastern States with the plaster required;
- (c) cut our State losses on Chandler and maintain it as fit to produce potash if required by the nation later. The position should be clear within three years.

I suggest you reiterate my undertaking as to non-sale of plaster in Western Australia. Whoever handles the plaster making, railway trucks must be available. You might authorise appropriate arrangements. I understand next Cabinet is 23rd. Our original arrangement was for Mondays during election campaign and I made arrangements accordingly. I therefore cannot be present. I certainly think we should try to reach a decision then. C.D.L. may have to be consulted however. Signed A.F.W.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That should be C.L.D.—the Crown Law Department.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I thought it was C.D.L. It makes a difference, does it not?

The Minister for Industrial Development: Yes, it should be C.L.D.—the Crown Law Department.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: I should hope the C.D.L. was consulted beforehand.

The Minister for Industrial Development: They were not consulted at all. It was the Crown Law Department and I want you to be clear on that point.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: They were kept in ignorance as they were on the Mt. Barker water supply scheme.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: At page 90 appears a letter from the Chamber of Manufacturers to the Premier under date the 14th April—

Dear Mr. Premier,

Consequent on a protracted discussion at a special meeting of my Executive Council held yesterday regarding a possibility of a further expansion of State Trading concerns, by the conversion of the former alunite plant at Lake Chandler to a plaster manufacturing undertaking, I was requested to respectfully submit for your earnest consideration the following resolution:—

"That the Hon. Premier be informed of the apprehension and grave concern of this Chamber in the proposed establishment by his Government of a plaster works at Lake Chandler. Strong criticism of the apparent reversal of the Government's expressed policy for the encouragement and development of private enterprise and the gradual

contraction of the Government enterprises from the trading industrial field, is expressed by the Executive Council of the West Australian Chamber of Manufacturers."

I was also requested by my Executive to tender the enclosed criticism of the arguments put forward by Mr. N. Fernie at a meeting of the West Australian Plaster Manufacturers' Association held on the 14th March last, supporting the project. It is emphasised that these comments are offered in a constructive nature only and are founded on the practical experience of my members engaged in this industry. It is strongly urged that before any final decision is made by your Cabinet, in regard to the future of the Lake Chandler undertaking, a close examination of the project be made on the lines indicated in this enclosure.

At page 95 there is a letter from the Secretary of the Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers and Master Plasterers of Queensland, under date the 21st April. It is addressed to Mr. Fernie and reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,

Attention Mr. Fernie. At the Federal Executive meeting of the Associated Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers of Australia, held in Mildura on the 13th and 14th March, 1950, advice was received of a mill at Chandler, which was owned by the West Australian Government, and had recently terminated the manufacture of potash and the mill has now been leased to a Mr. Collett, who, we understand, is going to manufacture plaster of paris, and as distribution of the product was being made through the Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd., Queensland was to receive 12,000 tons of this plaster per annum. This was most welcome news to the fibrous plaster manufacturers of Queensland, as for the past 2½ years, the shortage of plaster has been most acute, and on a good number of occasions, our manufacturers had to cease manufacturing their products for periods up to two months at a time, thus causing dislocation of employment for those engaged in the industry and also retarding the building of new homes throughout the State. I might add that Queensland manufacturers can consume at least 1,000 tons of plaster per month, and when building restrictions are lifted, increased tonnages will be required. At the time this information was received, my association had received quotations for the importation of plaster from overseas and in view of the above information, the matter was not proceeded with. It is now learnt that there is a delay in the commencement of operations at the

mill and on behalf of the fibrous plaster manufacturers of Queensland we sincerely trust that any delays that there may be, may be satisfactorily overcome, and this would materially assist our State with supplies and further our home building programme.

That was written in April, 1950, and they are still waiting for plaster. We could have been in production and produced some 20,000 or 30,000 tons to date had the Government been able to resist the pressure from the plaster manufacturers in this State. Then follow letters from persons in other States emphasising the shortage of plaster which exists there. Here is a telegram from the secretary of the Queensland Plasterers' Union, Brisbane, to Mr. Fernie, which appears at page 101 of the file—

Many members of Queensland Plasterers' Union facing threat of unemployment through lack of plaster. Imperative supplies of plaster believed already ordered for fibrous plaster manufacturers be sent here with all speed.

Mr. Fernie sent that on to the Premier for his information, but it did not make any difference. At page 117 appears a letter from Mr. Innes, the managing director of Australian Plaster Industries. I might explain that this is the same Mr. Innes who has now negotiated an agreement with the Government to lease the Chandler works. He wrote to Mr. Fernie, under date the 21st April, as follows:—

I refer to our 'phone conversation of this morning when you advised that you have not commenced production of plaster at Chandler and that before doing so it may be necessary to obtain Cabinet approval. This information has come as a shock to us, as we have already arranged the distribution of the full 25,000 tons and feel committed to the manufacturers with whom we have been negotiating, they too will be disappointed, as there is a serious shortage of plaster existing in the Eastern States. We have advised the secretaries of the Fibrous Plasterers' Associations in Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane who, I understand, will be writing to you advising of the plaster supply position. At a recent Federal Fibrous Plasterers conference held in Mildura, the representatives present expressed their satisfaction at the action that has been taken by our company in purchasing this plaster on behalf of the industry. I am enclosing herewith an article which appeared in the Queensland "Building and Manufacturing Journal," in which Mr. Jim Barker, president of the Queensland Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers' Association and representatives at the Mildura Conference reported to the Association at a recent Queensland

meeting. This article expressed the feeling of the Queensland manufacturers in their desire to receive at an early date a quantity of Western Australian plaster. We have not yet received the airmail letter to which you refer, but immediately on receipt of same shall reply.

I regard this as one of the very important letters on the file. It is from Mr. Dunn, secretary of the Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers and Master Plasterers' Association of Queensland, to Mr. Innes, the managing director of Australian Plaster Industries, and reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,—I enclose herewith a copy of letter dated 1st May, 1950, from Mr. B. W. Hartnell, Director, Division of Industrial Development, Melbourne, in reference to a recent discussion by an officer of the Division with our President, Mr. F. Vass and the writer, and at the discussion it was pointed out that the shortage of plaster in Queensland was caused by insufficient shipping, etc.

In the third paragraph of the letter, it is stated that Queensland has not availed themselves of available plaster from Western Australia. This statement is incorrect, as I wrote to the Perth Modelling Works Pty. Ltd. on 13th April, 1949, advising them at that time, improved shipping facilities existed between Fremantle and Brisbane and our Association would be prepared to place an order for plaster if supplies were available. Their reply dated 19th April, 1949, was received advising that their company had committed all their surplus plaster to New South Wales and the matter would be taken up by Mr. Banfield on his return from Melbourne.

The secretary of the Victorian Fibrous Plasterers and Plaster Workers' Union wrote to Mr. Fernie on the 5th May. The letter appears at page 135 of the file and reads—

Dear Sir,—It has been brought to my notice that fibrous plaster manufacturers in this State are negotiating for the purchase of plaster from manufacturers in Western Australia.

Victoria during the past three years has suffered an acute shortage, of plaster, resulting in the loss of very many valuable man-hours in the manufacture of fibrous plaster sheeting. This has unfortunately prevented many people from getting into their new homes for from five to eight months.

If your department could in any way expedite the negotiations for the purchase and shipment of this commodity to this State, it would be greatly appreciated by all connected with the trade in Victoria and would

have the gratitude of many home owners who are only prevented from moving into their new homes through lack of interior lining.

In conclusion, I would like to point out to you that the training of ex-Servicemen for the fibrous plaster trade in this State has had to be curtailed because of the fact that there is insufficient plaster to keep at full production those already in the trade.

I am informed that, because of the acute shortage of plaster in Victoria, a black market sprang up for interior linings of buildings, and that those men who could get a supply of plasterboard obtained substantial sums of money to grant priority to persons who had their houses completed with the exception of the interior lining, and that the only solution for overcoming that black market was an adequate supply of plaster to the State so that plasterboard could be made by the manufacturers there and, further, that advance supplies be made available for the purpose. The irony of it all is that we were in a position to supply this plaster if the Government had had the backbone to stand up to the manufacturers and go ahead with the proposition. Twelve months have elapsed since consideration was given to Collett's proposition, and up to a few days ago the works were still not in production. I cannot say whether they are now, but I know that up to a few days ago they were not actually producing plaster.

So we have lost 12 months' production of between 40,000 and 60,000 tons of plaster which would have materially helped all of the Eastern States. From time to time we see statements by Ministers, and by the Prime Minister, urging the necessity for increased production. They say, "Produce more! Get on with production!" Yet the Government of this State could have got on with production to supply this much-needed commodity in order to complete homes for the people from one end of the continent to the other, but, because of the pressure of the plaster manufacturers in this State, the Chandler works remained idle. That is what the Government has to answer. The matter that requires investigation is: What hold these manufacturers had on the Government and to what extent it prejudiced the State. At page 149 of the file appears a letter from the Under Secretary of the Premiers' Department, Queensland, to the Director of Industrial Development, under date the 11th May:—

Dear Sir.—Representations have been made by the Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd., Brisbane, drawing attention to the serious shortage of plaster for sheet-making and pointing out that it was anticipated that relief supplies would be available from Western Australia to the extent of

12,000 tons per annum, as a result of the conversion of a wartime potash factory to a factory producing plaster.

However, latest advice received by the Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd is to the effect that there is a possibility of this factory being closed down and dismantled, owing to the fact that other factories in Western Australia are producing adequate quantities for your State's requirements.

Having regard to the importance of the fibrous plaster industry in relation to the home building programme, every assistance has been given with a view to stimulating the expansion of the industry within the State. However, the main difficulty as regards expansion has been the shortage of plaster. Queensland's requirements are in the vicinity of 18-20,000 tons per annum, and only spasmodic deliveries are being received from South Australia.

In view of the acute shortage of plaster and the inability of South Australia to supply all Queensland's requirements, it would be appreciated if action could be taken to avoid the closure of the factory in question. I am given to understand that the Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd., Brisbane, is prepared to take the total output from this factory, pending the erection of the calcining plant in Brisbane by this company in approximately two to three years' time.

Your early advices in connection with this matter would be appreciated.

That was followed up by a further letter from the same source and written by the Premier of Queensland himself. It did not have the effect of putting the works into production. At page 153 of the file there appears this minute from Mr. Fernie to the Minister for Industrial Development—

Please see attached letter from Hughes and Prickett in reference to the supply of plaster from Chandler, and as Minister controlling the Act, I would be pleased to receive your advice as to what action the Board is to take.

I wish to point out that on the 16th November, 1949, I advised the Council for the Development of Industries that the Board intended to develop the production of plaster to maintain the plant in production and also retain the personnel, pending further investigation of potash production.

It is now over ten weeks since, following the receipt and verification of definite orders, that a recommendation was made to you to proceed with plaster production.

To date no decision has been made as to whether plaster production is to proceed or not, with the result that it is almost impossible to administer the affairs of the industry satisfactorily.

I wish to draw your attention to the fact that men at the works are no longer usefully employed and to avoid waste of money and manpower if plaster production is not to proceed, immediate consideration should be given to serving notice on the employees.

I propose to call a Board meeting early tomorrow morning to consider the position, and would appreciate a direction from you as to whether employees not required for potash research should be given notice or retained pending further consideration by Cabinet.

The Manager of the Works has requested my advice regarding an attractive offer he has received in regard to employment in another State. He feels he is under an obligation to give his services to this State following his recent visit to America, but in view of the lack of decision in respect to both the Resources Research Bureau and the Chandler project, I cannot conscientiously request him to refuse the offer.

One can read into that minute Mr. Fernie's exasperation and almost desperation at the Government's indecision in regard to this matter which had been crying out for decision for months. We talk about Nero fiddling while Rome burned: Here were people going without houses in the Eastern States because the Government could not overcome the strength of the plaster manufacturers in Western Australia.

Hon. A. R. G. Hawke: The Minister for Industrial Development would make a good Nero!

Mr. May: It is a long way from Rome.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Here is the letter from the Premier of Queensland to which I referred earlier dated the 1st June—

My Dear Acting Premier,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 26th May, 1950—

I have searched the file and I cannot find that letter.

The Minister for Industrial Development: It was the same letter that was sent to several people.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN:

... regarding the request made by my Government for assistance in ensuring that the factory which had been converted from a war-time potash factory to a factory producing plaster continue to produce this material in view of the fact that the Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd.,

Brisbane, is prepared to take the total output from that factory pending the erection of a calcining plant in Brisbane by that company in approximately two to three years' time.

I note that you state steps are being taken which should enable plaster to be exported from Western Australia, and I desire to thank you very much for your assistance in this regard.

I also note that as soon as certain negotiations which are now taking place have been completed, you will again communicate with me.

I assume that that arrangement refers to the Government's decision ultimately to call tenders for the leasing of the Chandler works and to lease those works to the Australian plaster industry.

The Minister for Industrial Development: That is so.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: The plaster manufacturers in the Eastern States were becoming very restive and concerned at what was happening so they decided that they should do something themselves. Accordingly Mr. F. Hurst, secretary of the Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers' Association of Victoria wrote to the Minister for Industrial Development on the 9th June as follows:—

Dear Sir,

I have been requested by Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers in this State to inform you of the dismay caused by your Government's recent decision to refuse to allow plaster of paris to be manufactured at the State (W.A.) Alunite Works at Chandler.

Manufacturers in the Eastern States, particularly Tasmania, Queensland, New South Wales, and to a less degree, Victoria, have been struggling for years to secure sufficient plaster to enable them to cope with the housing programme, and when the agreement between J. H. Collett & Son and Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd. was discussed at an executive meeting of our Federal organisation on the 13th and 14th March, 1950, it was felt that at last we would be in a position to catch up on a substantial portion of the lag in lining homes, and help to relieve the distress of numerous families who were still living in tents, one room, and under the worst possible conditions for rearing a family and making them good Australian citizens of the future.

Discussions were held with representatives of the union in this State, and plans were considered for the admittance of more labour into the industry. The news that your Government was not prepared to carry on and manufacture the plaster came as a bombshell to members of the industry over here.

Even your action in calling tenders to lease the works is not very helpful, because the plant may be used for another purpose altogether by the successful tenderer.

To add to our worries, we have just received word that so far as we are concerned in Victoria our plaster quotas for the next fortnight will be cut by 50 per cent. The reason being that at least two boats, which were to bring gypsum from South Australia to Victoria for treatment and manufacture into plaster, are short of their full crews and the shipowners have now paid off the remaining members of the crew.

At the end of the fortnight, we are hopeful that a boat will arrive with gypsum; if it does not, then most of the firms will have to close down until more plaster is available.

Another angle which is of great importance in placing the facts before you, is that plaster millers in the Eastern States will not be in a position to meet all demands for plaster for a period of two years.

I, on behalf of manufacturers in the Eastern States and Tasmania, appeal to you, Sir, to again bring the matter before your Government, with a request that they reconsider their original decision, even if the term is reduced to two years. By doing this, you will greatly assist the building programme in the Eastern States, and enable us to do our share in housing the people of this great Commonwealth of ours.

It ought to be very clear that from a number of sources information was coming through to the Government that there was a very acute shortage of plaster board and plaster in the Eastern States. It should have been clear, too, that the plaster manufacturers in those States—the master men—had set aside their fears regarding possible competition, because they were influenced by the very great need for plaster and the necessity for getting it quickly to enable the house building programme to proceed. Furthermore, it appeared that Collett certainly had a case against the Government, because he had been encouraged to go ahead and make arrangements to place orders. He had refrained from pegging the leases as a result of an undertaking given by Mr. Fernie that the industry would oppose his application for leases on the ground that the industry itself needed the leases, but that the industry would supply the plaster to him so that he could meet the orders which he could obtain.

I understand that Collett and his partners were led to expend something like £2,000 on their inquiries and preparations, and the only answer the Minister gave to that was that they could have recourse

to the courts. When a man is dealing with the Government and with Government officials properly appointed under statutory authority, he is entitled to assume that he will not be left high and dry after he has expended his money, but that he may rely upon the assurances given to him. After all, we are not dealing with confidence men and so find it necessary to suspect trickery. He was dealing with established Government officers and responsible men.

Yet the Government reached the stage where, because of pressure from the local manufacturers of plaster, it had to drop Collett completely. Then it negotiated with one of the clients with whom Collett had got into touch during the course of his inquiries. When Collett was told that he would have to furnish evidence of having genuine orders, he went to the Eastern States and got into touch with Australian Plaster Industries and secured an order from Mr. Innes. A draft agreement was drawn up, providing for an agreement between the Government, Australian Plaster Industries and Mr. Collett.

Subsequently the Government contacted Innes, left Collett out altogether, and finished up by concluding an agreement with Innes for taking over the works. So far as the Government was concerned, Collett could look after himself and whistle for the money he had expended. Is that the sort of conduct we stand for on the part of Government departments? I do not think it is. When Mr. Fernie resigned he made a statement—I am quoting from the Department of Industrial Development file 3758/50—as follows:—

The Government saw fit to cancel commercial arrangements made by the Board of Management at a time when negotiations were practically finalised and at least a moral contract entered into.

That is what Fernie thought of the negotiations that had taken place up to the time the Government cancelled them—that a moral contract existed, if nothing else. One would expect that the Government, with the knowledge of what was proceeding, would not be satisfied to remain in the position of having actually repudiated something that had been done in all good faith.

Apparently what was going on was brought to the notice of the two Independent members of this Chamber and, at page 176 of the file, there appears a letter from H. V. Shearn dated the 10th June as follows:—

Hon. A. F. Watts, M.L.A.,
Acting Premier, Treasury Bldgs.,
Perth.

Dear Mr. Watts,

I refer to interview Mr. Ray Read and I had with your good self on the 31st ult., regarding proposed produc-

tion of plaster of paris at the Lake Chandler alunite works, when we submitted certain facts given to us by Mr. T. J. Hughes and his principals in this connection.

Although I appreciate your subsequent kindly reply and statements therein, further developments which I need not dilate upon cause me much concern as a parliamentary representative and which in the existing political circumstances might at a later stage involve me personally in an unusually heavy personal responsibility, which I would not desire, as I believe, you readily appreciate.

I, therefore, with great reluctance and respect, now earnestly counsel your Government to reconsider its decision in this matter (especially since a doubt is raised as to the legal right to lease the works and your tender advertisements indicate that no tender need necessarily be accepted) and complete the proposition originally submitted by Mr. Hughes and his principals.

If, however, you decide against this well-intentioned suggestion, I then respectfully ask for the immediate appointment of a Judge to investigate the publicised political reflections upon the whole matter in the vital interest of the public and to clarify the attitude of the department concerned and your Government therein.

Thanking you in anticipation and awaiting your early reply.

Yours faithfully,

(Sgd.) H. V. SHEARN.

Whether the Minister replied, I cannot say, but no reply appears on the file. Seemingly the member for Maylands thought then, as I think now and have thought for some time, that some inquiry was necessary, more especially as the Government keeps on saying that it has nothing to hide. An examination of the papers indicates that there is a good deal hidden that requires to be exposed. The next letter I propose to read was sent by J. D. Whyte, secretary of the Fibrous Plaster Association, under date the 30th May, page 182 of the file. I have already explained that many of the letters on the file are out of sequence, which is strange. However, I have to accept the file as I find it. This letter is addressed to C. T. Jarman, Federal Secretary, Associated Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers of New South Wales, Sydney—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 22nd instant enclosing copy of a letter from the Victorian Association on the subject of plaster. As you are aware, three of our largest members are also plaster millers, and it was decided to ask them to outline their views on the matter, and their letter

is quoted hereunder. We may mention that we are in accord with them on the matters.

"At the executive meeting in Mildura last, when the Chandler plaster project was discussed, the Federal President mentioned that there was considerable opposition in Western Australia to this project which was only one more State enterprise. Upon Mr. Banfield's return from the Eastern States—

I may mention that Mr. Banfield is the Federal President and is one of the big manufacturers in this State.

"Upon Mr. Banfield's return from the Eastern States after this conference it was found that very considerable opposition had been raised and was being pushed by the Liberal Party, the Chamber of Manufactures and others. A special meeting of the Plaster Millers' Association of W.A. was called immediately and reports quite contrary to the glowing account given by Collett and others to Mr. Jack Innes were brought forward.

"Several of the facts had a great effect upon our views on the matter and when it became apparent that there was a lot of shilly shallying going on by public servants, who appeared to wish to take the stand against private enterprise we had then no alternative than to make a decision, the same, we are sure, that any of your members would also have done had they have been in our position. As keen supporters of the Liberal Party and also the Chamber of Manufactures and of private enterprise as against State enterprise or socialism, even had we wished to have gone against their advice our efforts we now find would have been quite futile in this matter."

The members of your association and all members of the Associated Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers' Association of Australia, we are sure, appreciate that the success of Mr. Menzies' party at the last election was due to the unsuccessful efforts of Mr. Chifley for socialisation.

That is a fine red herring. The letter continues—

It is apparent that the objection to Government competition with private enterprise in business, etc., is still very fresh in the minds of people desirous of living a democratic life.

Mr. Hurst's feelings even ran in this direction when he moved that motion at Mildura with the words: "views with concern the Government's action in operating a plaster mill in competition with plaster mills already established in W.A."

His motion now that we have had cause to consider it certainly was such as to satisfy the minds of those unfortunate members battling so strenuously for plaster supplies. However, when it is all boiled down, that part of the motion reading—

"and it respectfully requests that at the moment the position is reached when private enterprise could cope with all requirements that the Government mill at Chandler should be withdrawn from production immediately."

—does not give much assistance and comfort to the W.A. plaster millers, seeing that it is only a recorded fact in the association's records.

That letter was in reply to one which required the calling of a special meeting of plaster manufacturers to discuss the situation. The letter appears on page 183 of the file, and is addressed to C. T. Jarman, Esq., Association Fibrous Plaster Manufacturers of Australia, 24 Bondstreet, Sydney. It reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,—At a combined meeting of the committees of the metropolitan and country associations, held on Wednesday, 17th inst., I gave a report on the plaster position in Western Australia, and in view of our discussions at the executive meeting in March, the members present were seriously perturbed to think that there was a likelihood of the proposed contract between Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd. and Collett & Sons failing to eventuate.

You will recall that at the executive meeting we passed the following motion:—

"That this Conference, whilst it appreciates the Government's action in attempting to make plaster available for the fibrous plaster industry, views with concern the Government's action in operating a plaster mill in competition with plaster mills already established in Western Australia and it respectfully requests that the moment the position is reached when private enterprise can cope with all requirements, that the Government mill at Chandler should be withdrawn from production immediately."

I think you will agree that this was done in an attempt to help the West Australian plaster millers to keep control of the industry in their State, but my interpretation of the discussions was that as a body of fibrous plaster manufacturers, we were sadly in need of the plaster, and therefore we supported the proposed agreement between Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd and Collett & Sons.

Our Federal President seemed satisfied, particularly as he informed us that Mr. Fernie was prepared to give an undertaking in writing that the plant at Chandler would only manufacture plaster for three (3) years, and Australian Plaster Industries Pty. Ltd. were prepared to undertake to export the whole 25,000 tons of plaster contracted for.

I reported this to the combined Committees, and a lengthy discussion took place, and I give below the opinion expressed at the meeting.

This combined Committee considers that the action of the plaster millers in Western Australia in opposing the approval by the Government of the proposed contract between Australian Plaster Industries Pty Ltd. and Collett & Sons is contrary to the interests of the fibrous plaster industry throughout the Eastern States and the housing programme generally. It appears that the shortage of plaster and the resultant lag in completing homes has been completely overlooked, and instead of securing almost immediate relief by the shipment of Chandler plaster, the industry is now faced with an indefinite promise of 20,000 tons of plaster, provided railway trucks, possibly more men, and shipping space are available.

If any men were in a position to know what attitude the Western Australian plaster manufacturers were adopting, it would be these men—other members of the Australian association; master plaster manufacturers, the same as those in Western Australia; men who had been in the industry for years, and who had been in association with the Western Australian manufacturers. They had heard the arguments brought forward at the Mildura conference. They had heard Mr. Banfield explain the situation. So I say that this establishes beyond doubt that the plaster manufacturers in Western Australia were holding a gun at the head of the Government and were preventing the Government from using the Chandler works to produce plaster. There are a number of very important documents on the file with a bearing on this question. But the hour is getting late, and I realise that I should not proceed to read them all. However, there is one here from Mr. Innes, the man who declined to tender and instead put in a letter to the Government; and as Mr. Innes now has control of the State asset at a very low rental and at a considerable loss to the State, I propose to quote his letter, which is very informative. It appears at page 240 of the file and is dated the 7th July. It is addressed to the Minister for Industrial Development and is signed "J. D. Innes, Managing Director, Australian Plaster Industries." It reads as follows:—

Dear Sir,

We refer to the verbal discussions between the writer and yourself in connection with the leasing of the portion of building and plant at Chandler under the control of the State (West Australian) Alunite Industries Board of Management.

As advised in our letter of 19th June, addressed to the Under Secretary for Lands, the conditions under which tenders were called for, were such that it was not possible for my company to lodge a tender.

We have now been advised that the plant at Chandler would still be available for leasing, and it was suggested that Australian Plaster Industries submit an offer, details of which should be lodged with the Western Australian Government before Tuesday, the 11th July.

The fibrous plaster manufacturers in the Eastern States have been advised of the position. A conference was held in Melbourne this week, representatives of the fibrous plaster industry from Queensland, New South Wales, Tasmania and Victoria being present.

At this conference the matter of requirements and plaster supplies was discussed and it was again confirmed that the Eastern States could absorb at least 25,000 tons of additional plaster per annum, which could be supplied only if the works at Chandler were put into operation; and it was agreed that Australian Plaster Industries should submit an offer to your Government for the leasing of the works.

Owing to the greater cost of Western Australian plaster over the local product, it was necessary for us to be assured of sales for Western Australian plaster. Draft contracts have, therefore, been prepared between the fibrous plaster manufacturers of each of the Eastern States and Australian Plaster Industries; the fibrous plaster industry undertaking to take up to 24,000 tons of Chandler plaster per annum.

The fibrous plaster manufacturers have been quoted a price for the supply of Chandler plaster on a c.i.f. basis, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane ports. The price which they were quoted was on the basis of Australian Plaster Industries paying to the Western Australian authorities a rental calculated by multiplying the number of tons of plaster produced in each year of the term of the said lease by 7s. 6d.

In making this offer, we would suggest that the works be taken over under the following conditions:—

Mr. Innes succeeding in getting the works at a rental of 7s. 6d. per ton. According to the letters on the file, that sum will barely pay interest and sinking fund on the capital involved in the assets being used. Mr. Innes was prepared to give the Government 5s. a ton more than the price already agreed upon between the Board of Management, Collett and himself if the original proposals were adhered to. Had the Government accepted that offer it would have made a profit, on the figures shown in the file, of 17s. per ton over and above interest and sinking fund. Now it will not make any profit at all.

I am told that Mr. Innes expects to produce considerably more than 50,000 tons in the first 12 months, so on a simple calculation that looks like costing the State approximately £40,000 in the first year because of the arrangement that the Government has made with Mr. Innes instead of using the works for the purpose of production. That is a serious matter. I will say that the Minister for Industrial Development made a last-minute bid to the Government to get it to use the Chandler works for the production of plaster, because he actually recommended to Cabinet that of three suggestions put up by Mr. Fernle and Mr. Reid, the first one should be adopted as being the most suitable, and that was that the State works at Chandler should be used for the production of plaster, and that those requiring it should be supplied, but that no plaster should be supplied locally.

The Minister for Industrial Development: Give the rest of it—subject to legislation.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: Yes, and that the necessary legislation should be subsequently brought down.

The Minister for Industrial Development: To validate the position.

Hon. J. T. TONKIN: That is so. The Government declined to accept that recommendation. Although the Minister demonstrated his views, he has to accept full responsibility, along with other members of the Cabinet, for what was done. The decision made, in my opinion, was definitely wrong and against the interests of the State. It is not right that we should have existent in a State like Western Australia a set of conditions such as I have outlined, and I think it would be in the best interests of the State for us to inquire into the matters mentioned in my motion namely, what goes on with regard to the production of plaster and its distribution; to see that our citizens have a fair chance of using their initiative in production; to see whether the housebuilding rate in this and other States has been retarded and is being retarded because of the action of the plaster manufacturers and because of what the Government has done; and to probe what takes place between the plaster

manufacturers and the Government to see how it is that a group of commercial men can be so strongly entrenched. All of these matters, which examination of the file shows require further looking into, ought to be inquired into by a committee of this Parliament, and that is why I have moved my motion.

On motion by the Minister for Industrial Development, debate adjourned.

BILL—NATIVES (CITIZENSHIP RIGHTS) ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 13th September.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS (Hon. V. Doney—Narrogin) [9.56]: Speaking generally, I am afraid I do not feel any enthusiasm for the Bill, which has a twofold purpose. Firstly it aims to shorten by one month the amount of time statutorily allowed for the securing of information bearing on a court case involving a native or natives. Under the Act, a period of two months is allowed, whilst under the regulations a further period of two months is permitted, making four in all. The second two months are allowed to the Commissioner should he happen to be in court when the case is being heard; and, of course, if he is not there, the second two months, to which I have referred, would not apply. I would raise no great objection to the four months being reduced to three as the additional month is seldom used, although every now and again it does become necessary. As a general rule, however, the fourth month is seldom used, and in any case its existence in the Bill does no harm, so I do not see why it should not be permitted to remain.

Members will agree that a small and unnecessary change such as the one I am referring to does not of itself warrant legislative action. There is nothing wrong with the proposal, but in a sense there is nothing right with it. The present provision in the Act does no harm, so why not permit it to stay there? The other provision is for an enactment that when a native is given a citizenship rights certificate, his or her children shall receive the same rights, their names, of course, appearing upon the same certificate form.

Mr. Oliver: Is that not a sound proposal?

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: It may be a little more acceptable ten years hence, but I do not think it is acceptable at present. It is generally known that the aim of the department is to be much more particular in future as to whom it admits to citizenship rights than has been the case in the past.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: It is not the department, but the magistrate who has the say.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: In the past, citizenship rights have been too lightly granted, and there has been too much illicit trading in wine and beer between newly admitted citizens and natives. The mass granting of citizenship rights suggested under the Bill would undeniably be a step in the wrong direction. What opportunity would a busy magistrate have of ascertaining details of the home life and natural tendencies of a family in the raw, as it were?

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: Do you not know that each application is submitted to the local road board and police officers for investigation? Do you not understand that?

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: The hon. member has the same right to think in his way as I have to think in mine. How can a magistrate foresee precisely how boys and girls are going to develop between the time when they are admitted to citizenship rights and when they reach the age of 21 years or more? The proposal could result in a great deal of trouble, a large amount of which might arise through family drinking carousals, which I think would be common if the proposals were agreed to. I believe it would be better to allow natives exemption certificates from the ages of 19 to 21 years, and allow them to obtain their full certificates at 21 years, if their behaviour in the meantime has been good.

Hon. A. H. Panton: It is always "for the time being." It is never opportune for some people to do anything for the aborigines.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: I do not see what the hon. member is driving at.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Mind you, I did not think you would.

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: If there is anything obviously worth while in the proposal, it should have been equally as obvious years ago as it is today. It must be remembered that if young natives are given citizenship rights, they will lose the valuable loco parentis relationship of the Commissioner. The member for Kimberley should be the first to recognise the benefit of that relationship to young natives.

Hon. A. H. Panton: Do you think that is more important to them than their relationship with their parents?

THE MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: That question does not arise, except in cases where the father or mother, to whom the hon. member has referred, has shown insufficient responsibility towards the children.

Hon. A. H. Panton: The mother or father in this case will already have a certificate.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: No, the hon. member has not read the Bill.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: You have not read it.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: The proposal here is that when the father or mother is given citizenship rights, the children of the age of 21 years or less shall also receive those rights, assuming that the magistrate is satisfied. Another point the hon. member may have overlooked is that at some later date the father may not be in a position suitably to clothe and feed his children, and in that case would no longer have the right to fall back on the department, the right to go to the reserves or that of calling on the assistance afforded by the various missions. In those circumstances, he would have to fall back on the Child Welfare Department.

Hon. A. A. M. Coverley: That is wrong.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: That department is not nearly as well qualified as is the Department of Native Affairs to give the specialised advice and assistance to natives that they now receive. If the Treasurer were present, I think he would indicate that instead of its costing the Government 4s. per week—as it does now—the cost would be raised to 18s. 3d. per week, but the assistance given would not be nearly so valuable to the natives—strange though it may seem—as that which they are now given.

Hon. A. H. Panton: That is a good argument against the home at Mt. Lawley.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: There is no need for the hon. member to be foolish. If he wishes to explain why he thinks what I have just said implies that there is anything wrong with the interest of the department in the home at Mt. Lawley, I shall be glad to hear him.

Hon. A. H. Panton: All your argument is against the uplift of these people.

The MINISTER FOR NATIVE AFFAIRS: The hon. member is being foolish. The fact that I happen on rare occasions to disagree with him does not prove that I am necessarily wrong. I am not raising any objection to proposal No. 1, though I do not see that it would do much good, and cannot see how any benefits could ensue from it. I hope the House will vote against the Bill.

Mr. OLIVER: I move—

That the debate be adjourned.

Motion put and negatived.

MR. HOAR (Warren) [10.10]: I do not think any member, who has studied the original Act and all that it means to the native population of this State, should have any objection to this Bill. I am not

dealing so much with the minor amendment suggested, as with the references to the second and third amendments just made by the Minister. The Act sets out certain conditions with which natives must comply before they can obtain the full citizenship rights of this country. We have been fairly severe in the conditions that we have laid down, and properly so in order to make certain that those who did apply for citizenship should be of the right standard and quality before we gave it to them.

Since 1944, when the Act was first passed, the position has arisen where we have established in this State good class families of aborigines. In fact, there are some hundreds of them who have received citizenship rights and yet we as a Christian people deny this right of citizenship to their children. I do not see how anyone can compromise on this matter. The Act has been in operation long enough for us to determine once and for all whether it is of any value to the aborigines of this State. If it is then the proposed amendment is quite in order.

How would we feel if we were granted citizenship rights in a country only to find them denied to our own offspring? We have such things as education to consider. When these boys and girls are growing up we like to think that they still have the influence of their parents running through their lives—particularly in regard to education. There are known instances today where natives, who are now full citizens of Australia and entitled to all the privileges, are wishing to send their children away to certain schools and are unable to do so simply because the lives of these children are the sole prerogative of a certain Government official—the Commissioner—and not the parents.

So I think the time has come, seeing that this Act has been in operation for six years, for us to extend to their children the privileges that we have gladly granted to certain good types of natives. The Minister says this is a step in the wrong direction but if our object is what I believe it to be, and if it is to develop these natives, as far as possible, into good living Australians so that they can take their rightful place amongst us—which many can do from an educational point of view even today—then surely it is not a step in the wrong direction to educate their children in such a manner that in the course of time they might become good citizens as have their fathers and mothers.

Unless we are prepared to do that we are taking a tremendous risk because whilst we accept a father and mother as citizens of this State we are denying that right, for 21 years, to their children. If we continue to do that all sorts of influences other than parental can intrude into the lives of these boys and girls. They can break away from home at about 17 or 18 years of age and obtain employment elsewhere. They can meet all sorts of outside in-

fluences that are most likely contrary to that of their own families. But, if we give the families the added prestige which this amendment would afford then I think we will continue the development of our native population, and they will become the good citizens we all desire.

If we are honest with ourselves, and honest with the opinions we expressed in 1944 when the parent Act was passed, we should in no circumstances deny to a mother and father—natives of this State—the right to have a final say in the lives of their children. It is something we would not tolerate ourselves and I do not believe that we should inflict this injustice on the young native population. I support the Bill.

HON. A. A. M. COVERLEY (Kimberley—in reply) [10.16]: I was somewhat astounded to think that the Minister for Native Affairs in this State should oppose this simple Bill. I would like to ask him whether he acted on the advice of his department? He smiles and gives no answer. I am particularly interested to know whether it was the opinion of the department or whether it is the policy of the Government. Can the Minister answer that question?

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: Of course he will not.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Will the Minister admit that it is merely his own opinion? I am afraid I will not make much headway at this rate, but if I thought that it was merely the advice of his department I might have something to say on that subject, and if I thought it was the policy of the Government I would have quite a lot to say and I would keep the Government here for a long while. But, as it is getting late I will not inflict that upon members if it is unnecessary. I want to explain to members who may have been misled by some of the statements of the Minister, that the legislation, as introduced in 1944, did not make the provision that I desire. Section 8 of the Native Administration Act states—

The Commissioner shall be the legal guardian of every native child notwithstanding that the child has a parent or other relative living, until such child attains the age of 21 years.

So that a native and his wife, even though they may have applied to the court and been granted full citizenship rights, are not masters of their own children. This has been brought to my notice, on more than one occasion, by half-caste residents in the Kimberleys when they have desired to send their children south for higher education. They have been told by the local inspector of natives that they are not permitted to do so because the department will not give its permission. That is the reason why I have introduced this Bill. Is there anything wrong with that?

The Minister for Native Affairs: Have they stated the reasons on those occasions?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: They did not state a reason. They simply told the natives that they could not get permission to send their children south.

The Minister for Native Affairs: Owing to the customary leprosy reason?

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: That has nothing to do with it once they become citizens of this State and they do not get citizenship rights handed out like a pack of cards as was suggested by the Minister. To my way of thinking, the Minister made a peculiar speech. He said that he could feel no enthusiasm about the Bill. He said that it was not quite right and it was not quite wrong, but he did not tell us why it was wrong. He said that he had no objection to the first portion of the Bill—that which related to the time limit being reduced by one month—but he was against the principle of giving half-castes control over their own children. What is the use of an extension of time of one month if the Bill is not going to be passed, and the Minister did not give us any sound reason as to why it should not be passed? He gave us a lot of other information. He said this business of citizenship rights had been loosely regarded and the department was going to be more strict. I want to inform him that it is not the department's business.

The department can raise all the objections it likes but the final decision rests with the magistrate. For the information of the Minister and other members, I point out that when a half-caste or other native makes application for citizenship he lodges an application with the local clerk of courts. That fact is notified to the local road board and local police officer. Who is the more competent to judge the character of a person living and working for many years in a town, the department or the local road board? Of course, it must be the local road board! The Commissioner of Native Affairs would know nothing whatever about him except from that information which he has obtained from the local inspector. So the position is that if a coloured person can satisfy a local road board and the court magistrate, then I think he has obtained the right to decide where his children should be educated without obtaining the permission of an imported Poo Bah who does not think that approval is justified.

The Premier: That is not a very fair observation.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes, it is.

The Premier: No, it is not.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes, it is. He has been misleading the Government and the public of Western Australia by

Press statements which I can produce. If the Minister wants that information I can produce it now. I made a statement that the Government and the public were being misled.

The Premier: From a number of people interested in the welfare of natives I heard many expressions of appreciation of the work of the present Commissioner.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: We will see what they have to say if this Bill is defeated. Their interest will follow along the same lines as expressed by the Minister in regard to how the Premier would view the passing of this Bill. He gave as a reason that it was a step in the wrong direction because the children would lose touch with the officials of the department. I tell the Premier now that these people have approached me on many occasions and, in fact, every time I go North. When I say to them, "Why do you not go to the Inspector of Native Affairs?" they say, "Mr. Coverley, he another kind." That is what they think of the help they are getting. Before the certificate is granted the Minister wants to know how these people have been brought up. They can only judge the character of a person by his surroundings and the conditions of his home life. The parents themselves would not obtain citizenship rights if their home was not all that it should be. The Minister was greatly afraid that something might happen in that the children might have to go back on to the State. He said that once the parents received their citizenship the control of the children would be lost by the department, and if anything happened to the parents the children would have to return to its care. That would mean a difference as between 4s. and 18s. a week and he was sure the Treasurer would object to that.

The Minister for Native Affairs: That is not what I said. I said that if the Treasurer were present he would be interested.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: Yes, he would be interested.

Hon. F. J. S. Wise: What the Minister says is the reason.

The Minister for Native Affairs: The member for Kimberley is making the speech at the moment.

Hon. A. A. M. COVERLEY: The Minister did make the statement that the Treasurer would be interested if these children fell back on to the care of the Child Welfare Department, which would mean an increase to 18s. a week. I am satisfied that that is all that was at the back of the Government's mind when it opposed this Bill. A native person has to submit himself for examination by the local governing body, by the Native Affairs Department, by the local policeman and then finally satisfy the magistrate of the local court that he understands English and that he is a fit person to become a citizen

of Western Australia. I think it is his duty, from then onwards, to train his own children and not to have to submit them to the control of the Native Affairs Department. I want to quote this newspaper extract to show that I am not the only one who holds the opinion that there are many natives of this State who are worthy of citizenship rights. This is a cutting from "The West Australian" and is a report of a statement by the Commissioner of Native Affairs after a return from a visit to the North in July—

The example set at Derby was unique among West Australian towns, Mr. Middleton said. Many natives were well established in the business life of the town and enjoyed without hint of colour bias all the amenities the town had to offer.

These are the people for whom I am pleading. They have been told that they cannot send their children south for higher education. I will leave the Bill to the decision of the House and sincerely hope it will be agreed to.

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

Ayes	23
Noes	22

Majority for	1
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Ayes.

Mr. Coverley	Mr. Oliver
Mr. Graham	Mr. Panton
Mr. Guthrie	Mr. Read
Mr. Hawke	Mr. Rodoreda
Mr. J. Hegney	Mr. Sewell
Mr. W. Hegney	Mr. Shearn
Mr. Hoar	Mr. Sleeman
Mr. Marshall	Mr. Styants
Mr. May	Mr. Tonkin
Mr. McCulloch	Mr. Wise
Mr. Needham	Mr. Kelly
Mr. Nulsen	

(Teller.)

Noes.

Mr. Ackland	Mr. Manning
Mr. Brand	Mr. McLarty
Mrs. Cardell-Oliver	Mr. Nalder
Mr. Cornell	Mr. Nimmo
Mr. Doney	Mr. Owen
Mr. Grayden	Mr. Perkins
Mr. Griffith	Mr. Thorn
Mr. Hearman	Mr. Totterdell
Mr. Hill	Mr. Watts
Mr. Hutchinson	Mr. Wild
Mr. Mann	Mr. Bovell

(Teller.)

Pairs.

Ayes.	Noes
Mr. Fox	Mr. Abbott
Mr. Brady	Mr. Yates

Question thus passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—ACTS AMENDMENT (INCREASE IN NUMBER OF MINISTERS OF THE CROWN).

Returned from the Council without amendment.

House adjourned at 10.34 p.m.