Hon. F. J. S. WISE: The Premier, as a sort of gesture, issued warnings, but I wonder whether he is taking heed of those warnings himself?

The Premier: I am taking heed of them.

Hon F. J. S. WISE: I am very happy to hear that, because I think the Government should speedily reduce some of the expenditures of that type which certainly warrant drastic reductions.

The Premier: That is one. Have you any others?

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: There will be others when I am discussing the items.

The Premier: I would like to hear them all.

Hon. F. J. S. WISE: I am not halfway through yet. I am interested in the figure in the item under "Treasury Miscellaneous" which affects the basic wage and I hope some of my colleagues will have a close look at that figure. A number of people, certainly those on the Government side of the House, popularly but very erroneously believe that the increases in the basic wage are the cause of the tremendous expenditure of Government. Some people would have us believe that that is the sole cause. The method of governmental bookkeeping does not show the impact of basic wage increases on each department but under "Treasury Miscellaneous" there will be found an item of £400,000 for last year. The anticipation for this year is £700,000 and apparently £400,000 was spent last year. If we take the proportion that £400,000 is to the total budget of £26,000,000 we will get the impact in part of the basic wage on the State Budget last year. To that must be added the costs of commodities purchased by the Government which have reflection on the basic wage.

It would be safe to say that not more than 2½ per cent.—and that would be a generous figure—of the additional expenditure of government is caused by basic wage increases. It is well to draw attention to that fact. The anticipation this year is that £700,000, on a £26,000,000 budget, will cover basic wage increases. So, it is important that people do not adopt fallacious ideas in connection with the impact of basic wage costs on the State Budget. There are many other matters on which I would like to speak but in the circumstances I will await the items and make some comment upon many figures which are contained in the Budget.

Before resuming my seat I would like to mention once more the necessity for early attention by the Government to matters which are urgent in the lives of the people in the North-West of this State. Unless something is done, and done quickly, to arrest the decline, in production as well as in population, which is threatening, we are going to have a very serious position within the next 10 years. Many people put forward the idea that the North can be populated if we have an area which will give freedom from taxation, provided that a percentage of such income is reinvested in the North, that no salary or wages of residents of the North be taxed at all. There is a committee of people of the North which is anxious for the Premier to be presented with its point of view and I hope to bring such committee before him in the near future, because unless something is done to attract population to that area, as I said in an earlier speech this year, it may be too late in another decade to give any consideration to the problem whatsoever.

I wish to have a last say as to the Indian Ocean air route. I hope the Premier will personally interest himself with the possibilities of bringing to Western Australia, with Perth as its first landing point in Australia, the projected air route via Cocos Island, the Seychelles, San Diego, across to East Africa; a route which obviates the need to cover any war-infested country; keeps out of the zones of Southern Europe and Asia; would be important in peace as well as in war and to which an extremely active committee in the city of Perth has given much consideration. I again stress the hope that the Premier will give his personal attention to this question because I am certain there is much merit in it to warrant the attention of the Government and civil authorities.

Progress reported.

House adjourned at 10.52 p.m.

Legislative Council.

Wednesday, 11th October, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Bills: Mining Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1130
Public Service Appeal Board Act Amendment, 2r.	1131
Acts Amendment (Increase in Number of Ministers of the Crown), 1r.	1132
Western Australian Government Tramways and Ferries Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1132
Inspection of Scaffolding Act Amendment, 2r.	1132
State Transport Co-Ordination Act Amendment, 2r.	1133
Water Supply, Sewerage and Drainage Act Amendment, 2r., Com., report	1136
Reserve Funds (Local Authorities), 2r.	1136
Fauna Protection, 2r.	1138
State Housing Act Amendment, 2r.	1142

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

BILL—MINING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. W. R. HALL (North-East) [4.36]: After listening to the speeches made by various members last night, I intended to oppose this Bill. However, after making inquiries regarding various aspects, I have decided to change my mind, because I feel no harm will be done by granting the Western Mining Corporation the concessions contemplated.

You are well aware, Mr. President, of the repercussions one other big company had in years gone by on the goldmining industry of Western Australia. Everything was done on the surface and nothing was done underground. For that reason, I took the attitude that it would be well to make inquiries before casting a vote on this Bill. After reviewing the situation, I feel that the granting of the vast territory desired by this company—ten miles by ten miles square is, in view of the anticipated expenditure of approximately £1,000,000, quite justified. This corporation is entitled to some consideration in view of the money it intends to spend.

I have been given to understand, and I think it is only right that it should be so, that the rights of prospectors will be protected in connection with the area where the company desires to carry out its activities. Over a period of years, the Western Mining Corporation has had a pretty good name so far as Western Australia is concerned. I think I mentioned, when speaking on the Address-in-reply, that the corporation has conducted various operations, including prospecting by air; and I believe it has proved itself an acquisition to the State. Therefore, some protection can be given to it on those grounds. At the same time, consideration must be given to those men who go out and prospect for alluvial gold. As I have been given to understand that these men are to be protected wherever they may be on this lease, it is quite satisfactory to me.

The other point in the Bill is the exemption respecting the labour conditions applying to the various leases, I can readily understand that although the territory the corporation wants to take over is vast, it will not make any difference with regard to the number of men employed to man the leases. The point is that the company may wish to employ all the men on one particular lease, in which event the other leases would not be manned at the time. I can appreciate that this is vastly different from the arrangement in connection with goldmining leases and prospecting areas. After due consideration, however, and in view of the assurances I have been given that the interests of prospectors will be safeguarded. I have pleasure in supporting the second reading.

THE MINISTER FOR MINES (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland—in reply) [4.41]: I am pleased with the reception accorded to the Bill by the several speakers. I promised Mr. Fraser that I would inquire regarding some points raised by him. I felt certain in my own mind that there was no foundation for the fear he entertained but, to be on safe ground, I checked up with the Department of Mines on the points he raised. I should like to read from notes I have obtained for the information of the House in order that any lingering doubt in the minds of members may be resolved.

First of all, Mr. Fraser feared that the Bill might permit of the re-introduction of dummying. This would not be possible under the amendment as the full labour required under the manning conditions of the Act must be employed. For example, if a company held 10 leases and desired to take advantage of this amendment, it must still continue to employ the labour required for 10 leases, which would be 40 men. The only difference is that the company could use the 40 men on any of the 10 leases instead of using four men on each of the 10 leases. The concentration would not reduce the labour to be employed; it would only permit of its being concentrated at any one spot. Therefore, a person merely desirous of holding ground for speculative purposes would not be advantaged, as he would still have to engage and pay full labour as for all his leases.

In regard to the other amendment, Mr. Fraser asked whether prospectors would be debarred from operating on alkali reserves. I assure the hon. member that it is specifically provided that prospectors may operate on alkali reserves and obtain titles thereon for any mineral including alluvial gold but excepting alkali and alkaline earths.

As has been pointed out, the two companies that have asked for these special concessions have a very good reputation for their operations in this State. They have invested a large amount of capital in the industry and are definitely a great asset to the State. The action of the Australian Mining & Smelting Company in making a search for alkaline earths may easily prove to be of great value if it is successful in discovering an acid that will aid in solving the fertiliser problem. For these reasons I hope members will support the Bill.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee

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

BILL—PUBLIC SERVICE APPEAL BOARD ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the previous day.

HON. E. H. GRAY (West) [4.46]: I have studied this small Bill and intend to support it, largely because it has been agreed to by the Civil Service Association and by the Public Service Commissioner. The measure is designed to overcome anomalies and will do justice to a fairly large number of men who have served for many years on the temporary staff. The existing legislation gives the Public Service Commissioner the right to appoint members of the temporary staff to the permanent staff. Many of the temporary employees do not possess the educational qualifications required for the service but, in their restricted grades, they have rendered good service to the State.

Under the existing system they could be appointed to the permanent staff, could occupy positions, have the right of appeal to the Appeal Board, have the positions reclassified, and then would be entitled to the higher rate of salary attached to those positions. This would mean that these men were holding positions for which they did not possess the requisite educational qualifications, and the result has been that a very small number of such men have been appointed to the permanent staff. Under this measure, the anomaly will be swept away. These men will have a right to become permanent members of the service and will still have the right of appeal to the Appeal Board. The positions they are holding may be reclassified into a higher grade and, if that happened, they would not receive the higher rate of pay, but the new classified position would be advertised and would be open to application by every man in the service.

The main point is that these men will have an opportunity under the automatic grade of becoming permanent members of the Civil Service, but to hold higher positions, they will need to study and acquire the necessary educational qualifications. This restriction applies to all members of the service. To become a member of the State Civil Service, one must hold the University junior certificate showing a pass in five subjects, including English, and before permanent members of the staff may apply for positions in the higher grades, they must pass the leaving examination in three subjects, including English, or some examination similar to it. So I think the Bill will be of immense benefit to the large number of people who during the war years had to be appointed to the Civil Service, and who rendered good service thereto.

The other part of the Bill is an echo of the Civil Service strike of a long time ago—1920. Many members will recall that occasion. As a result, the majority of those on the automatic range come under the State Arbitration Court, so that it is not necessary for Section 15 to be retained. In fact, it will be better out because it gives an unpleasant taste to the members of the Civil Service. While supporting the Bill, I would like to refer to something that is necessary for the future. If the recruiting campaign is successful, the State Civil Service, the Federal Public Service and industry generally will suffer by being hard pushed for competent labour.

I am hopeful that the time will come when women will be given a greater opportunity to occupy administrative positions in the service. The big drawback today, of course, is the female basic wage. I believe, and know by experience from watching the work of these women, that once a young woman gets past the age of 30 her opportunity of marriage, if that is what she desires, is limited, so she should be given some encouragement to hold the bigger jobs in the service. Her handicap at present is that she is bound by the female basic wage.

For my part, I hope the case now before the Federal Arbitration Court will be successful. I would like to see a sliding scale inaugurated which would give these highly competent women the chance to take the big jobs in the service. We have a number of them who have done wonderful work for the State. They are highly competent both from educational and administrative standpoints, and they very often do a far better job than the civil servant under whom they are working. A sliding scale for the female basic wage would give these women the chance to hold down the bigger jobs, which I am satisfied they could do. I think the Bill will be a great benefit to the large number of temporary men and women in the State Civil Service, and I have much pleasure in supporting it.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [4.54]: I have not had time to check the amending Bill with the Act. The measure was introduced only last night and I have not yet been able to get hold of a copy of the statute to find out just what it means. If members will listen to me for a moment they will learn just how complicated the Bill is and how necessary it is to have the Act to know what is intended. The Bill states—

> Section six of the principal Act is amended by—
>
> (a) adding after the word, "placed" in line two of subparagraph (ii) of paragraph (a)—

That is as plain as daylight. It takes a while to work out from just where the Bill starts. As it stands, it appears to me that when a position in the service has been raised to a higher grade, it shall then be treated as a temporary office, and the person occupying that position will occupy it not as an appointee to it, but merely as an acting officer until a permanent appointment is made. I would like the Minister to tell me whether that interpretation

is correct. It seems that it is to cover the position that arises when an office has been raised to a higher standard by requiring that the person occupying the office shall remain there in a temporary capacity until a fresh appointment is made.

The Minister for Transport: It is to limit the appointment to a permanent position.

Hon. G. FRASER: Now I am beginning to see a bit of daylight. I cannot see it by the amendment. I am assuming the interpretation I have given is the correct one. Another point is as to whether there is a time limit with respect to the period during which such person can occupy the position before a permanent appointment is made. I would like the Minister to tell the House whether there is a time limit. I served in the Commonwealth Public Service, and I am a bit cautious about these matters because many appointments are long delayed. In some instances when the person merely occupies the office in a temporary capacity he has not received the salary for the grade to which the position was lifted.

I want a little clarification on that point. I would like to know whether the person occupying the office temporarily, is to receive the higher grade salary. If I receive the information I have asked for, I shall be in a better position to know what the Bill sets out to do. The Minister, by way of interjection, said it is to give the officers permanent appointments. Well, the Bill does not give that impression. The measure later provides that where an office—

> —is declared in a class above that automatic range, the office shall be deemed so held in a temporary capacity only, and shall be deemed to have become vacant upon the date of the earliest operation of the Board's decision or upon the date of the appointment of the officer to the office, whichever date is the later.

That certainly sets out that a permanent appointment will be made, but not that the person occupying the position in a temporary capacity shall be the one to be appointed to the office in the higher grade.

The Minister for Transport: That is the object of the Bill.

Hon. G. FRASER: If that is so, it is a good object, and I have no opposition to offer to it. Without an explanation, I certainly could not put that construction on the clause. If the Minister will give the necessary assurances, firstly, regarding the period for which the office shall be a temporary one, and, secondly, that the higher rate of pay shall apply to the temporary occupant, I shall have no objection to supporting the second reading.

The Minister for Transport: I shall check on the points you have mentioned.

On motion by Hon. L. A. Logan, debate adjourned.

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

Received from the Assembly and read a first time.

BILL—WESTERN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TRAMWAYS AND FERRIES ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th September.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.0]: I secured the adjournment of the debate so that I could peruse the Bill. After looking through it, I am sorry that I did, because I think it is one of those measures that should have been hurried through.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: I wondered why you did.

Hon. G. FRASER: The measure sets out to rectify something that was overlooked when the principal Act was first introduced. It is an important aspect, particularly from the point of view of the employees, because it deals with goods left in trams. I understand the present position is that goods left in trams must be handed over to the police so that the goods may be disposed of under the Police Act, because the tramway authorities have not power under their own Act to do so.

I do not know whether the provisions of this Act will read the same as those in the Police Act, but this measure will certainly give to the tramways power that is long overdue. I can imagine what would happen if some person left a parcel of fish in a tram. The Tramways Department would certainly want permission to destroy such goods without contacting the owners. There are many similar types of commodities that would come in the same category.

These are powers that every transport body should have—the power to destroy and the power to sell. Where an article left in a tram becomes offensive the authorities should have the power to destroy it. They should also have power to sell as prescribed in the Bill. Therefore, I have no objection to the measure and I support the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—INSPECTION OF SCAFFOLDING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th September.

HON. J. A. DIMMITT (Suburban) [5.5]: From inquiries I have made among builders, there appears to be no very favourable impression about the proposed amendments contained in this Bill. In fact, there seems to be no enthusiasm at all and I cannot wonder. If I were earning my living as a builder I think I would view this measure with a good deal of concern because it seeks to give power, under regulations, to scaffolding inspectors. Those powers are very wide in their scope and to my mind they could be abused a good deal.

Fortunately, the building trade has a group of inspectors who are able, capable and competent men and very just in their findings and actions. While that pertains I suppose master builders are not very worried, but I can see a great deal of danger in handing to scaffolding inspectors the powers granted under this measure. However, as there is no organised opposition from the builders I have contacted, I feel that I shall vote for the Bill and support it at the second reading.

On motion by Hon. J. M. Thomson, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE TRANSPORT CO-ORDINATION ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 21st September.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [5.7]: I hope that the House will not agree to this amending legislation and I propose to advance reasons why we should oppose it. Mr. Loton's proposal is to amend the First Schedule to the Act so that "wool or goods which need to be transported" can be carried by road without the necessity of a license from the W.A. Transport Board. At the present time the Act permits the carriage of livestock, poultry, fruit, vegetables, dairy produce and other perishable commodities, wheat and oats from where they are produced to any other place, in a vehicle owned by the producer. On the return journey the producer is permitted to carry any of his domestic requirements and any articles used in the production of the commodities I have mentioned.

There are also many other exemptions in the Act, such as the carriage of farm, station and forests produce and requisites to the most accessible railway station or town; the carriage of bees and bee produce and requisites in the producer's own vehicle; the carriage of grain to the mill, and flour, etc., from the mill to the farm; the carriage of ore and mining requisites within a prescribed mining district; and the carriage of milk and cream to the nearest factory and the transport of livestock to shows and exhibitions. In addition the board is authorised, at its discretion, to grant other specific or general exemptions for special purposes.

During his speech Mr. Loton said that at present farmers can cart wool from their properties to the nearest siding, but cannot transport it further unless application is made to the Transport Board. He went on to say that the board cannot grant permits because it is not allowed to do so. This is quite wrong. The Transport Board has the power under paragraph 12 of the First Schedule to the Act to grant permits for the road transport of wool and it has not hesitated to exercise that power when circumstances have indicated the need.

Hon. H. L. Roche: When has that been?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I will give an instance later on where this actually occurred. So, if the hon. member will be content until I reach that point, I will explain it to him. If any producer can show that he would suffer hardship by being required to rail his wool, he can obtain authority to use road transport, either by means of his own or a carrier's vehicle. For that reason alone there is no need for Mr. Loton's amendment. Some two years ago 91 southern line farmers were granted the right to use the road for the transport of their wool to the ports, if railway trucks were not available. The Transport Board at all times is willing to treat every case on its merits and grant permits wherever justified.

Through the generosity of the Minister in charge of the Act when it was introduced in 1933, farmers were allowed numerous concessions, and even in its present state the Act may truthfully be described as "sectional" legislation. If wool is to be exempted from its provisions it means that for all practical purposes the transport regulating powers conferred by the Act are directed solely against the non-farming community. In a predominantly primary producing State, the exemptions from the provisions of the Act have limited to a considerable degree the regulating and co-ordinating powers of the Transport Board, and further limitations of the nature contemplated will so hamper the board's powers as to eventually cause the whole of the legislation to collapse. The board certainly cannot function as Parliament intended without being left in control of transport and given an opportunity to exercise its discretionary powers.

While speaking, Mr. Loton attempted to justify his proposal by stating that when the Act was introduced in 1933 it was not visualised that road transport of superphosphate and wheat would become so extensive, but now that this has come about, if wool producers were allowed to use their own motor vehicles to transport wool from farms and sheep stations to the ports, they probably would back load

with superphosphate, thus affording relief to the Railway Department and lessening the heavy subsidy paid by the Government.

The principal Act which sought to improve and co-ordinate transport within the State, was the result primarily of unfair and uneconomic road transport and it was designed, amongst other things, to afford the railways a measure of protection against such unfair competition. In 1938, four years later, the department met working expenses and interest within £20,000—despite increased operating costs and the lack of opportunity to increase its charges to the public. Without the Transport Act, there would, no doubt, have been a different story.

The statement made by Mr. Loton that the war is used as an excuse for the shortage of engines and rollingstock is not warranted. It is common knowledge that for many years prior to the war, the Railway Department, through lack of funds, was unable to obtain equipment, it being denied the right to increase freight charges, and being kept on the breadline so far as Government financial assistance was concerned. It is also a fact that during the war, the department, in common with every other business, met with manifold difficulties.

Apart from the lack of new equipment, maintenance became more difficult and its troubles were accentuated by the heavier war-caused transport problems. The difficulties continued to be experienced after the end of the war. Mr. Loton stated also that despite improvement in the rollingstock position during the last two years, heavy road transport has been necessary. Funds have been made available to the Railway Department and great efforts have been made to improve the position, but planning takes time; labour and material difficulties have been tremendous, and it is only now that necessary equipment is becoming available.

Another important matter affecting the position in the last two years has been that of water supplies. As members know, the situation was almost disastrous, and for a lengthy period it was necessary to haul 2,500,000 gallons of water per week. Obviously, the diverting of so much engine power to this purpose made the position correspondingly worse, so far as the haulage of wheat and superphosphate was concerned. Mr. Loton quoted from the 1949 annual report of the Transport Board which mentioned that abnormal assistance was required from road haulage. I might remark that the board, when making this report, was fully cognisant of the extra burdens thrust upon the railways in the form of water haulage, etc.

With reference to freight rates, the figures quoted by Mr. Loton for 150 miles were correct. It may be seen from these that railway receipts per ton mile for superphosphate prior to 1948 were .41d. per ton. The increase in freight rates on the 1st September, 1948, raised this figure to .73d., including the surcharge. On the 1st August, 1949, a further increase brought the ton mile rate to 1.1d., including surcharge.

During his speech in introducing the Bill, Mr. Loton stated he had not been able to ascertain why the surcharge was still applied. Surcharge at the rate of 6d. per ton was imposed during the war period owing to the excessive damage to tarpaulins from rock phosphate and superphosphate. This charge has not been lost sight of as suggested by Mr. Loton, and the reason why it still exists is that tarpaulins are now costing about £22 instead of £5 each. Hire charges have been advanced from 2s. 6d. to 3s. 6d. only. In view of this and also the uneconomic rate for hauling superphosphate, and the generally bad financial position of the railways, there is no present justification for a withdrawal of the charge.

With regard to wool, the freight rate was reduced in 1932 by 20 per cent. to 44s. 6d. per ton, this being, to quote the then Premier, Sir James Mitchell, a railway contribution to assist the producer owing to the unprecedented low price for wool.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: That rate was for 150 miles, was it not?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Yes. When wool prices improved, the reduced railway rate was not altered until the general increases were approved in 1948 and 1949, although there was ample justification for it being done earlier.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What was the percentage increase as between 1949 and 1932?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I have not those details, but I can supply them later. It is incontestable that, at its present high value, wool can well afford to bear a relatively high railway rating. There is no doubt that the rural community has received signal assistance from the railways. Farm produce and requirements have been carried, and are still being carried, at unprofitable rates. Wool is one of the few types of loading from which the railways earn more than the operating cost, and if the railways are to continue transporting all types of primary produce, such as wheat and other grains, hay, firewood, ores and minerals at low rates, in addition to superphosphate, machinery and water, it is essential that payable traffic be retained.

Then again, Mr. Loton referred to the increases in the freight on wheat and stated this had been done to assist the railways to meet haulage costs and other commitments. Nevertheless, wheat is still carried at an uneconomic rate, this being 1.75d. per ton mile. There is no evidence that the railways are unable to handle

transport of wool and, despite inferences to the contrary, the rates charged are identical, irrespective of the weight of the consignment. The alleged difficulties or hardships confronting a farmer who desires to transport urgently only portion of his clip, do not exist.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Had that been so up to two years ago?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: I am coming to that. If railway trucks are not available, the Transport Board, as I have already said, is only too willing to permit transport by road if that course is justified. As I mentioned, 91 farmers on the southern line were granted that permission when circumstances justified the course. When he was Minister for Railways, Mr. Seward dealt with this matter and in those days there were those who pressed for a withdrawal of the concession when the railways were able to provide the requisite trucks. During the last two years trucks were provided, and there was no delay in getting wool to the port. The road cartage of superphosphate and wheat is a temporary measure and the necessity for it will continue to lessen and will eventually disappear.

Hon. A. L. Loton: There will not be increased production without superphosphate.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: That is a problem we shall have to deal with when we are confronted with it.

Hon. A. L. Loton: The problem is there today.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: Possibly that is so. There is no justification for singling out wool on behalf of the farmer. This, if allowed, would establish, without doubt, a precedent and would be followed by other requests. I must reiterate that it is necessary to allow the railways to keep some profitable freights, and, as I have said, wool is well able to pay a relatively high rating. The open carriage of wool by road would add to the burden of financial losses borne by the Government rather than assist it as predicted by Mr. Loton. Mr. Loton's suggestion that farmers carrying wool would backload with superphosphate, thus saving the Government haulage subsidy, is impracticable. Such a course would lead inevitably to other traffic being conveyed to the country and add further to railway losses.

I trust, for the reasons I have mentioned, that the railways will not be deprived of one of their few payable freight rates. As I have emphasised, there is no difficulty, where necessary, in obtaining a license to carry wool by road. In referring to rail freights, I might say that New South Wales has introduced amended rates that will bring in an annual sum of £13,000,000 and South Australia has imposed an all-round increase of 25 per cent.

Of course, I quite agree that many persons find restrictions of any kind irksome, but the State Transport Co-ordination Act has provided valuable protection for the railway system and has enabled it to survive. It needs continued protection to ensure its survival. That has been the universal experience in all countries served by railways since motor competition has developed. Even in America, where there is the freest of free competition, experience has shown that if the railways were to retain and continue to charge, in many instances, low freights to meet special needs and at the same time to meet competition by motor transport, there was the necessity to introduce some system of control and restriction that would guarantee sufficient traffic to the railways to enable them to survive.

It may be of interest to members to know that according to the latest Australian Transport Authority's statistics, road vehicles transported about 30 per cent. of Australia's heavy traffic at 26 per cent. of the total cost, whereas rail vehicles transported about the same proportion of heavy traffic at 16 per cent. of the total cost. It may also interest members to know that the total budget for Australian transport represents one-third of the total national budget.

The railway systems perform services that no other form of transport can offer. They represent largely a national capital investment and from that standpoint alone must be preserved, especially in the interests of the primary producers, to whom Mr. Loton seeks by his Bill to extend special privileges. I hope the House will give earnest consideration to the points I have raised and will not agree to the Bill embodying the amendments that Mr. Loton proposes.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.25]: I support the Bill and shall submit to the House reasons why I think it should be agreed to. In the first place, my belief is that in seeking legislative approval for the amendments embodied in the Bill we urge something of which undue advantage will not be taken. Not many farmers who live more than 20 miles from a port would bother about carting their wool if railway trucks were readily available. Because those trucks are not always available, some inconvenience is caused to farmers and woolgrowers, in consequence of which this amending legislation is brought forward.

From my own experience this year, I can say that had railway trucks been available at my siding, I could have had my wool submitted at No. 3 sale. It is just speculation to say that the returns from No. 3 sale would have been better than those from No. 4 sale, but possibly that might

have been the position. What applies to me applies to others whose clips are such that they could not be despatched in one loading from a siding. Few farmers have sufficient shed room to deal with more than 30 bales. The normal load on a 10-ton truck is about 30 bales and if the farmer has 60 or 90 bales it means that the shed will have to be cleaned out in three moves. It is not always possible to get trucks when required.

Hon. H. L. Roche: How long does it take to get trucks?

Hon. A. R. JONES: At least a week. The fact that the siding is unattended may have some bearing on that phase. Farmers should have the right sought under the Bill, irrespective of whether trucks are, or are not, available. There would be no abuse because wool is such heavy loading that it tends to be top-heavy, in consequence of which not many farmers would try to take full loads over a distance of 20 miles to the port. It would be a big truck that would take more than 30 bales.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: We take 150 bales in the North.

Hon. A. R. JONES: It would not be profitable to truck so many to Fremantle.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: They are doing it now.

Hon. A. R. JONES: The Minister raised the question of unfair competition against the railways. I am in accord with every other member of this House in agreeing that everything possible should be done to make the railways a paying concern. When it is a matter of penalising some producer, the Minister says the man can get a permit on application to the Transport Board. We know what expense and loss of time is involved in that course. It would mean a trip to Perth to make a personal application.

The Minister for Transport: The man could make application by wire.

Hon. A. R. JONES: Possibly that is so, but if I know the Transport Board aright, that body would want to be informed of all the circumstances. One might spend £1 on a telephone conversation but I think it would be necessary to come to Perth to obtain the permit, otherwise there would be so much delay that by the time the permit was obtained the trucks might be at the siding.

I ask members to consider those points. I feel sure that if the Act were amended, it would not be abused, because nobody wants to bring a truck of wool from a distance to a sale when railway transport is available. This is to cater only for those people who are within a short distance of a port, to which, in order to save double handling of wool, they could run their product. It will assist those who find they cannot obtain the use of railway trucks when necessary, enabling them to place all their wool in the one sale. If those two points are considered in fairness to woolgrowers, the amendments will be of benefit.

Hon. G. Bennetts: It is not stated what distance they want to cart the wool.

Hon. A. R. JONES: No. A limitation could be imposed if station owners as far as 600 miles from Perth proposed to take advantage of the Act.

Hon. R. M. Forrest: Why not?

Hon. A. R. JONES: I submit those remarks for consideration, and support the Bill, trusting that what I have said will help other members who are not conversant with the position to form an opinion.

On motion by Hon. L. A. Logan, debate adjourned.

BILL—WATER SUPPLY, SEWERAGE AND DRAINAGE ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

Debate resumed from the 28th September.

HON. G. FRASER (West) [5.32]: There is nothing much in this Bill. It provides for an amendment of the schedule to the Act, which is very desirable. It proposes to remove reference to Acts which have been repealed, and to include reference to other Acts which are now administered by the Minister. The Bill is warranted, and I have no objection to the second reading.

Question put and passed.

Bill read a second time.

In Committee.

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

BILL—RESERVE FUNDS (LOCAL AUTHORITIES).

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.35] in moving the second reading said: As most members are aware, there is in existence at present a Local Authorities (Reserve Funds) Act of 1942-1945. That measure was passed in 1942 and amended in 1945. It was an emergency Act passed during the last war, but this measure is to provide for a permanent Act enabling local authorities to establish reserve funds.

Hon. G. Fraser: Does that relate to reserves for playing on, or financial reserves?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Financial reserves. I used the word "funds."

Hon. A. R. Jones: We thought you said "fun."

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The provisions of the emergency measure on the statute book at present were exercisable only during the war between His Majesty the King and Germany, Italy and Japan, which was in progress at the date of the commencement of the Act. Section 13 provided that the Act should continue in force and have effect only until the Governor General declared that the war had ended. Requests that permanent legislation be introduced to enable the setting up and maintenance of reserve funds, both for specific and general purposes, have been received from local authorities. As a member of a local authority, I know how very desirable that is, and there are others here who are members of local governing bodies and who will agree with that point of view.

As a result of the acquisition by the State Electricity Commission of the undertakings of some municipal councils and road boards, the authorities concerned have received substantial sums of money, but they possess no power to reserve those funds for any specific purpose. To avoid taking such money into the general revenue of the authorities concerned, the provisions of the existing Act have been availed of, but this is not a satisfactory method, as money set aside under that Act can be regarded only as a general reserve and cannot be applied to any specific purpose.

Section 5 of the existing Act enables the Governor, on the recommendation of the Minister, to direct a local authority to close and wind up its reserve fund. Some authorities are most anxious to set aside money received from the sale of capital assets for a specific purpose, it being understood that some of these purposes are—

(a) The provision of funds for the construction of a town hall.

(b) The construction of a greater sports ground.

(c) An up-to-date camping area, with proper beach houses and facilities.

(d) The payment of gratuities and long-service leave.

(e) A general reserve to be used in cases of emergency.

Apart from the emergency wartime Act, the only provision for a reserve fund is in the Road Districts Act, which authorises the establishment and maintenance of a reserve for the provision of funds for the replacement of plant. To avoid amending the Municipal Corporations Act, the Road Districts Act and the Health Act, it was decided to provide everything necessary in this one Bill.

The measure proposes to authorise any local authority to set up a general reserve fund and a reserve fund for particular undertakings. Money in a general undertakings fund could be used for general purposes, including items of emergency, such as repairing a bridge or a road after flood damage. A reserve fund for particular undertakings could be used only on such undertakings, unless authority is obtained to transfer the money to some other undertaking or purpose. A local authority might establish a fund for the construction of an aerodrome and subsequently the area concerned might be resumed and, as a result, that work could not be carried out. In such a case it would be competent for the money to be utilised for some other approved particular purpose.

It is proposed by the Bill that a local authority may appropriate 5 per cent. of its ordinary revenue annually and place the money in a general reserve or a special reserve fund without any authority. Sums to be placed to the credit of the reserve fund by annual appropriation in excess of 5 per cent. of ordinary revenue must be authorised. It is proposed that moneys received from the sale of capital assets, if placed to a reserve account, must be for a particular work or undertaking. Consequently, the local authority has the option of placing any such receipts to the credit of its ordinary revenue or of building up a particular reserve fund. No authority is required other than that the particular reserve fund must be for some undertaking authorised by its local government Act.

The only authorisation required is when appropriations of general revenue in excess of 5 per cent. are desired, or when it is proposed to alter the purpose for which the reserve fund was created. The authorisation required is by a resolution of the board confirmed by either the ratepayers of the district or the Minister. That is to say that if there is a meeting of ratepayers and not more than 20 are present, the Minister can make the authorisation. But if there are over 20 at the meeting, the authorisation can be made by the ratepayers themselves. Once an authorisation is rejected by over 20 ratepayers, no appeal can be made to the Minister. The Bill requires that separate accounts must be kept for each reserve created, and that the interest on investments must be credited to the fund concerned.

As I have explained, the present Act was a wartime emergency measure, and the funds established under it are nearly all exhausted. As the Act ceases to operate once the Commonwealth is no longer in a state of war with Germany, Italy and Japan, several local authorities have indicated their desire for permanent legislation. This Bill has been requested and, as a member of a local governing authority, I can assure the House that it is very desirable and will serve a good purpose. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. A. R. JONES (Midland) [5.44]: I support the Bill because, like the Honorary Minister, I know how important it is to local governing bodies. Two years ago I was responsible for approaching the Deputy Premier, when he was on a visit to the country, with a view to finding out whether we could not establish some sort of fund because at Miling, the place in which I live, there is a hall 20 years old. It does not serve the purposes of the district now, because of the growth of population and the inadequacy of the structure and the conveniences. No doubt farmers in other districts, like those in mine, have expressed a desire to build a new hall or to put money into a fund for the creation of a reserve, and there have been no means of their doing so.

We called a meeting some time ago and it was very well attended. Those present expressed their willingness to pay 1½d. in the £, or sufficient to raise £800 per annum, in the ward of the road board that I represent. When we made an approach to the authorities we found that we could not go on with that project as the Act would not allow us to do so, but we finally overcame the difficulty under the wartime legislation that was passed. We knew the money would have to be expended straightaway as soon as the war was declared over, as the Honorary Minister has said, and if there was not sufficient in the fund it would not be worth while going on with the project. However, we made so many approaches that this legislation has now come into being. I think Mr. Ackland introduced it in another place.

Hon. G. Fraser: You think he introduced the Bill?

Hon. A. R. JONES: No, I am referring to the amendments. In supporting this measure I can only give members our experience as a local governing authority. As the Honorary Minister has said, it would be necessary before reserves or any undertaking by a local governing authority could come under this scheme, for the matter to be first referred to the ratepayers. It may be thought a drastic move and it could be said that the people would not have a reasonable say in what was to be done, and so on, but of course before anything like that could be finalised a ratepayers' meeting would have to be called and the ratepayers would have to agree to what was proposed.

The Act provides that if at any time the fund created reaches a certain figure and the work is not proceeded with, the ratepayers can be called together to decide the fate of that money. It would therefore never get beyond their control. At present the farmers generally have a fair amount of money to spend and would be willing to contribute to a reserve fund, as I have said. The contributions would be a deduction from taxation. Such a fund would help those concerned to secure amenities to which they are entitled, whereas if the project is postponed for six or seven years they might not be able to go on with it. I appeal to members to support the Bill.

On motion by Hon. H. Hearn, debate adjourned.

BILL—FAUNA PROTECTION.

Second Reading.

THE HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE (Hon. G. B. Wood—Central) [5.55] in moving the second reading said: The purpose of this Bill is to repeal the Game Act of 1912-1913, and to replace it with a measure providing for the conservation and protection of fauna, based on the best legislation of that type in the other States of Australia. The Bill is the result of careful study, over a number of years, by an expert committee consisting of the Chief Guardian of Game, Mr. A. J. Fraser, as chairman, Mr. Glauert, Curator of the Museum, Dr. D. L. Serventy, of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Major H. M. Whittell, of the Royal Australian Ornithologists' Union, and the Acting Chief Inspector of Vermin, Mr. A. R. Tomlinson.

The committee to be set up under the Bill is to be known as the fauna protection advisory committee. Mr. Glauert's reputation as a naturalist will be familiar to all members, while Dr. Serventy and Major Whittell are Western Australian ornithologists of international repute. I do not think it would be possible to get a more highly qualified committee than this anywhere in Australia. Those gentlemen have given extensive consideration to the question of the preservation of fauna in this State. The Game Act of 1912-1913 is regarded as being by far the most backward statute of its kind in Australia. It must be remembered that the statute has remained since it was passed, without amendment, in spite of the great advances made by this State in the intervening period.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: The rabbits have also increased in number since then.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The whole picture has changed. Kangaroos have increased in number in the North-West. As Sir Charles has said, rabbits have become much more numerous, as have emus as well, and foxes have made their appearance in this State. In 1929, Mr. J. R. Kinghorn, zoologist to the Australian Museum, Sydney, stated, with reference to our Game Act, "I could not spare time to fathom this very puzzling Act, and I confess it had me confused." I might add that in all the other States the fauna protection legislation is of a modern nature, and those measures have

been scrutinised carefully by the Fauna Advisory Committee which has selected what it considers to be the provisions most applicable to this State.

The influx of migrants and the opening up of new territory makes this an appropriate time for the provision of adequate protection for our fauna. Members will note, on examining the Bill, that the term "fauna" has been preferred to "game," which is the term by which wild life is referred to in the existing legislation. The word "game" is regarded generally as denoting something available for hunting and killing. Modern lines of thought prefer "fauna" and consider that the emphasis should be on conservation and not on protection for game purposes. I do not refer to the conservation of rabbits, for instance.

Hon. A. L. Loton: What about emus?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: All that is covered by other statutes. This measure will not override the Vermin Act or any other similar legislation. Where this measure conflicts in any way with the Vermin Act, for instance, that statute will remain supreme, and, in my opinion, rightly so. The term "conservation" has a wider range and implies that all interests are being served. I refer to interests such as those of naturalists, bird fanciers, shops, farmers, hunters and traders, as well as the extensive national interest and pride in our native fauna.

Many persons, without being avowed naturalists or sportsmen, have a sentimental interest in our animals and birds which are, without doubt, an integral part of the Australian scene and which, while meeting other reasonable demands, should be preserved as far as possible for posterity. It is proposed that this measure should be brought into operation on a date to be fixed by proclamation, as a suitable date for it to become operative has to be chosen. It will be noted that where its provisions conflict with those of the Fisheries Act, the Vermin Act, the Whaling Act or the Zoological Gardens Act, the provisions of those Acts shall prevail. It will mean, for instance, that if a certain animal or bird is declared to be vermin under the Vermin Act, it will no longer have the protection of this measure.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Does that mean that local vermin boards will still be able to function?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Their powers under the Vermin Act will not be overridden by this measure. That is made plain in the Bill. "Fauna" is described in the Bill as the vertebrate fauna which is wild by nature and which is ordinarily to be found in a condition of natural liberty in the whole or a part, or parts, of the State, and which is indigenous or introduced. It includes any kind, species, sex and individual member of the fauna and also mammals, birds, reptiles and frogs, as well as the whole or any part of the skin, plumage, body, eggs, nests, young and offspring of the fauna.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: If you found a snake you would have to tie it up and then apply for permission to kill it.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: Frogs have been included as a safeguard because the Bill provides not only for the preservation of indigenous fauna, but also for the prohibition of the introduction of any fauna which might become a pest. Some time ago a species of frog or toad was introduced into Queensland as a deterrent to some of the pests infesting the canefields. I am given to understand that this frog has itself now become a serious nuisance. It is to prevent the introduction of such pests that frogs have been included in the definition of fauna.

A new provision in the Bill is for the establishment of sanctuaries, these being defined as "an area of land vested in the Crown and which the Governor, subject to such conditions and limitations as he thinks fit, reserves to His Majesty or disposes of in such a manner as for the public interest may seem fit for the conservation of fauna," or an area of land "which is the subject of an agreement made between the Minister and the owner of the land for its use as a sanctuary." Requests have been received from some landowners that sanctuaries be established on their properties in order that wild life there might be protected fully under the proposed statute. I have had such a request from a person at Toodyay who asked that wild duck be protected on his property on the river.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Are they included in vertebrate fauna?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: If this can be done the owners of the land or some other interested persons can be made honorary wardens to ensure that the protection given under the Act is not threatened. The Bill provides for the appointment, under the Public Service Act, of a chief warden of fauna, who will administer the Act, subject to the direction and control of the Minister. The Bill provides further that unless another person be appointed by the Governor, the position of chief warden shall be held by the Chief Inspector of Fisheries. This follows long-established procedure, as for many years the Chief Inspector of Fisheries has been Chief Guardian of Game, and the Fisheries Department has administered the Game Act. Provision is also made for the appointment of wardens and honorary wardens, and I will deal with that aspect later.

I have already mentioned that the Bill is the result of recommendations by the Fauna Advisory Committee, which was appointed in 1944 by the then Minister, Hon. A. A. M. Coverley, M.L.A. It is proposed in the Bill to give statutory authority to this committee and to delegate certain duties to it. These functions, broadly, will be to inquire into and report to the Minister upon any matters referred to the committee by the Minister or the Chief Warden, and to advise the Minister and make recommendations to him upon any aspect of fauna conservation or importation. The committee will have the title of the fauna protection advisory committee of Western Australia and there will be six members, including the chairman, who will be the chief warden. The other five members will be the Chief Inspector of Vermin, the Conservator of Forests and three other persons to be appointed by the Governor. At least one of the latter three shall be a person who is not a civil servant, and who has a wide practical knowledge of the fauna of this State.

Members, other than the three Government officers I have mentioned, will be appointed for three years and will be eligible for re-election. It is considered advisable to have the Chief Inspector of Vermin on the committee in order that that body shall have close access to the advice and views on vermin of officers of the Department of Agriculture. The appointment of the Conservator of Forests is the result of an amendment made in another place by the Minister in charge of the Bill, who has arranged for the Conservator to join the committee as it is anticipated that large sections of forest land may be used as sanctuaries for wild life. As a result of this amendment, certain errors have crept into Clause 10 of the Bill, which I propose to rectify in Committee.

Meetings of the fauna protection committee will be held at the wish of members or of the Minister and the chairman will not have a casting vote. The Bill provides that, except in instances where the Governor proclaims otherwise, all fauna shall be wholly protected throughout the State. Under the Game Act, before any animal or bird can receive any measure of protection, it has first to be included by proclamation in one of the schedules to the Act, and the specific degree of protection to be provided has to be detailed by proclamation.

Hon. H. K. Watson: Why proclamation?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It could not be brought up by a separate Act of Parliament.

Hon. H. L. Roche: Would not regulations do?

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: I did not think members would care for regulations.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Proclamations are worse than regulations.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: It seems to me that whatever one may introduce in this House, someone wants something different. I suppose a better way to do it would be by Act of Parliament.

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Let us have regulations, anyhow.

The HONORARY MINISTER FOR AGRICULTURE: The proposal in the Bill will alleviate much of the detailed work of this nature and will ensure a considerable simplification of procedure. It will also be much clearer and easier to understand by the general public. The Governor will have power to declare close and open seasons, and to indicate the maximum number of fauna any person can take during a specified time. Licenses may be granted by the Minister for the taking of protected fauna for sale, food or scientific purposes, or for its destruction when likely to cause damage. This latter provision will apply where fauna has not been declared under the Vermin Act.

The Bill provides for the prohibition, except under license, of the breeding for sale or otherwise of any type of indigenous fauna, protected or not protected. The sale or taking for such purpose without license of any fauna, except that declared as vermin, is also prohibited, as is the export or import of fauna. It is most important to control the importation of fauna in order to prevent the possible establishment of pests in this State. It is a great pity we did not do that many years ago. At present there is no such control over the importation of animals and birds, except by Commonwealth quarantine restrictions, and the prohibition of certain defined species under the Vermin Act. The Bill will serve to plug any loopholes in these restrictions and will enable the prevention, where necessary, of the entry of any potentially harmful fauna.

Provision is made for royalties to be charged on the skins of indigenous fauna. This is an amplification of the Game Act, under which royalties are payable on marsupial skins only. The amount of royalty to be paid will be prescribed by regulation, and will apply, unless exemption is provided, where fauna is killed for sale. Any person who buys or sells skins, whether principal or agent, will be liable to pay royalty, unless the skins are exempted from payment, or royalty has been paid previously. On payment of royalty, the skin must be branded by the responsible officer as evidence of payment. Authorised officers may seize and retain unbranded skins until royalty is paid. Skins exempted from royalty have also to be branded.

Then again, the Bill provides for the appointment of wardens, these being police, forestry officers, fisheries inspectors, and other persons appointed by the

Governor, who may also appoint honorary wardens. Any warden—this does not include any honorary warden—may, if not a police officer, take possession, without a warrant, of any weapon, instrument, illegal device, or anything which the warden has reasonable grounds to believe is being used to commit an offence under the Act. The warden may also seize any fauna he reasonably believes to be involved in the commission of the offence and deliver the articles and fauna to a police officer.

Power is also given to wardens to stop and search any vehicle, vessel or conveyance, in which he reasonably believes there may be illegally-taken fauna or weapons, etc., to commit an offence. All wardens will be equipped with a certificate of authority signed by the Minister. If a person reasonably suspected of having committed or of committing an offence against the Act refuses to give a warden his name and address, or gives a false name and address, the warden may detain the offender and hand him over to a police officer. Where a justice of the peace is satisfied that an offence has been committed and the proceeds concealed in a house, vessel, etc., he may issue a search warrant to a warden.

Honorary wardens can only exercise such authority as is specifically stated on a certificate issued by the Minister. Provision is made in the Bill for natives to take fauna for food, except in sanctuaries. Such fauna may be taken on Crown land or on private property with the owner's consent. In the event of any abuse by natives the Governor has power to curtail the privilege in any area. The maximum penalty provided in the Bill is £50 and the cancellation of any license held, and all proceedings are to be heard before a court of petty sessions. Regulations may be made for the proper administration of the Act. That covers the main points contained in the provisions of the Bill and I think it is a step far in advance of the Act under which fauna is protected at present. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

HON. H. L. ROCHE (South) [6.8]: I am quite prepared to support this legislation introduced by the Honorary Minister for Agriculture. The question of preservation of native fauna in the State is of some importance. At the same time, I hope, when the Minister replies to the debate, which I anticipate will take place following his introductory remarks, that he will keep in mind that the Bill is rather difficult for the ordinary individual to understand, because of some of the expressions used; for instance, "vertebrate fauna." What does that cover? What fauna does the Minister anticipate will come within the scope of the Bill?

Hon. Sir Charles Latham: Reptiles and other animals with feet.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: I hope the Minister will explain that particular part of the Bill. Sir Charles may know exactly what is meant by those words; quite frankly, I do not. I am always somewhat averse to granting greater control to departments over some of these matters because while we have indigenous fauna in this State, and whilst, under certain circumstances, we would like to see them protected, there are also certain conditions under which such fauna becomes a pest.

The Honorary Minister for Agriculture: That is provided for.

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: In view of the reply of the Honorary Minister by way of interjection, I will accept his word that it is. I would not like to see this Bill overriding the provisions in the regulations or bylaws of a local vermin board by which, at certain times of the year it can declare kangaroos pests. I have in mind an instance that occurred in the Great Southern when, at certain times of last year the Fisheries and Game Department withdrew all the licenses and permits issued for the shooting of kangaroos, with the result—although none of us would like to see the kangaroo exterminated—

Hon. R. M. Forrest: I would!

Hon. H. L. ROCHE: Frankly, I would not. The result was that during that particular period the kangaroos bred to such an extent that today they are a definite nuisance. It is rather difficult to obtain people who will set about reducing their numbers because kangaroo shooting has not the attraction it had for people in past years. Whilst agreeing with the Minister in his extremely laudable desire to protect fauna indigenous to the country, I hope that nothing will be done under this measure that will make it more difficult for people who, as a result of the provisions of the Game Act, are prevented on occasions—apparently permanently, in certain quarters, following a remark just made by one member—from taking steps to ensure that these animals do not become a pest.

I do not like legislation that is going to be further implemented by proclamation. I do not like regulations either, but they do leave some control to Parliament; proclamations leave very little. When the Minister is choosing the members for his fauna protection committee, I hope he will not confine the selection of such members to people who may have extremely laudable ideas on these matters, but mighty little practical experience. If he will set himself out to obtain at least some members on the committee—I should hope the majority—who have had practical experience in these matters and realise that certain forms of indigenous fauna are all right in some circumstances, but in other circumstances can constitute a definite nuisance, I think the committee will function satisfactorily.

On motion by Hon. A. L. Loton, debate adjourned.

BILL—STATE HOUSING ACT AMENDMENT.

Second Reading.

THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT (Hon. C. H. Simpson—Midland) [6.13] in moving the second reading said: The amendments in this Bill are designed mainly for the purpose of recommencing the building of what are familiarly known as "workers' homes." The State Housing Commission considers that the time is opportune now for the gradual reduction of its rental building programme and for the commencement of building under the leasehold and freehold sections of the Act. It is proposed under these provisions to give special attention to applications from country areas, and to develop a pre-cut timber-framed home at reasonable cost which would be suitable for construction in country districts.

The first amendment affects the interpretation of "worker," which term defines persons who are eligible to apply for workers' homes. When the original Workers' Homes Act was passed in 1912, a worker was defined as a person in receipt of a maximum income of £300. In those days the basic wage did not exist, but the minimum adult wage was about £140 per annum. It will be seen therefore that the income limit allowed under the Act was £160 or 114 per cent. more than the then minimum wage.

Sitting suspended from 6.15 to 7.30 p.m.

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: In 1929 the income limit under the Act was increased to £400—I am speaking now about the average wage back in 1929 as compared with the present time—the basic wage then being about £226 per annum, the margin between basic wage and income limit under the Act being £174 or 77 per cent. When the Workers' Homes Act was repealed in 1946 by the principal Act, the income limit was increased to £500, plus £25 for each child under 16 years of age. By that time the basic wage was £263 per annum, the difference between the income limit for a family of four and the basic wage being £287 or 110 per cent. Any overtime earned by the worker is not assessed in his income.

As the House is aware, the basic wage is now £7 3s. 6d. per week or £373 per year, and margins for skilled workers have increased proportionately. It therefore became necessary to examine the position of the income limit specified in the Act. It did not take much reflection to realise that this, too, must increase, and the proposal in the Bill therefore is that it be raised to £750 per annum plus £25 for each child under 16. To continue the comparisons I have given the House this, in a family of four, is a margin of £427 per annum or 114 per cent. It will be seen then that the margin of income limit under the Act over basic wage has been in 1912, 114 per cent.; 1929, 77 per cent.; 1946, 110 per cent.; and now a proposed difference of 114 per cent., the same as in 1912.

For the benefit of members, I would like to point out that many tradesmen are earning more than the maximum allowed in the Act. Carpenters' rates are now £550 per annum, bricklayers and plasterers get £545, tilefixers £480, and labourers from £430 to £475 per annum. A State civil servant on the maximum of the automatic range receives £559, so it will be seen that a large section of the working community are either beyond the scope of the Bill, if they have a small family, or almost beyond it, and if the basic wage rises again, their numbers will be increased. It is obvious therefore that an increase is warranted in the maximum allowable under the Act.

In view of the increased cost of building generally, it became necessary also to review the maximum amount of advance made under the Act. This is at present £1,500 and it is proposed to increase this to £2,000, the same as the maximum sum payable under the War Service Homes Act. Where possible it is intended to keep advances within the present maximum of £1,500, but there will be occasions when this sum will prove insufficient, particularly, to quote a few examples, where houses are built in remote districts, which necessitates higher labour and transport charges, or where expensive imported materials are used. The size and slope of a block also contributes towards a higher cost of building.

Houses built to the wishes of individuals invariably are more expensive than those erected by group construction. The two-bedroom brick homes built by the State Housing Commission cost from £1,260 to £1,654, the average cost being £1,365. The three-bedroom brick type costs from £1,467 to £1,814, the average being £1,546. These figures do not include the price of the land, architectural fees, administration costs or development charges for utility services to the site, all of which might total about £200, and bring the entire cost of building a group home perilously near £2,000. The Commission proposes to extend generous terms to persons wishing to obtain assistance to build a worker's home. In a genuine case, a deposit as low as £5 might be accepted.

Hon. H. K. Watson: On a £2,000 property?

The MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT: If it were a genuine case. The balance can be repaid over a period of 40 years at an interest rate of 4¼ per cent. At present the Commission has 392 leasehold and

391 freehold securities on its books. In recent years with the exception of a small number of homes at Fremantle and on the Goldfields, it has not undertaken work of this nature, being fully occupied with the erection of houses under the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement and the War Service Homes Act.

Another amendment refers to the payment of rates by the State Housing Commission. At present the Act provides that the Commission may make payments to local authorities in special cases approved by the Minister in respect of vacant subdivided land, the amounts payable being no more than that paid in each instance to the local authority in the year prior to acquisition by the Commission. In no case, however, is any payment made to the local authority until the land is held for two years. Local authorities have approached the Housing Commission in regard to this matter and the Commission realises the justice of their arguments. Where the Commission acquires large tracts of land for building purposes, the local authorities are required to provide roads and generally service the areas.

These are expensive projects and to assist local authorities the Bill makes it mandatory for the Commission to pay rates on vacant land as from the date of acquisition. Where vacant unsubdivided land is concerned, no payment will be made for two years from the date of acquisition. I hope that the House will approve of the Bill as it is designed to enable workers to own their homes and is a further step forward in the post-war building programme. I move—

That the Bill be now read a second time.

On motion by Hon. E. H. Gray, debate adjourned.

House adjourned at 7.40 p.m.

Legislative Assembly.

Wednesday, 11th October, 1950.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Chandler Alunite Works, papers tabled	1143
Questions : Railways, (a) as to tradesmen at Midland Junction workshops	1144
(b) as to migrant tradesmen and housing	1144
(c) as to wholemilk freight to Kalgoorlie	1144
Footwear, as to crepe-soled shoes	1144
Noxious Weeds, as to incidence of Cape tulip	1144
Timber, as to intake of sawmills	1145
Leave of absence	1145
Assent to Bill	1158
Motions : Wholemilk industry, to inquire by Royal Commission	1146
Workers' Compensation Act, as to monopoly for State Government Insurance Office	1153
Housing, as to Commonwealth-State homes, maximum rentals, passed	1156
Papers : Industrial development director, as to resignation of Mr. Fernie, discharged	1156
Bills : Medical Act Amendment, 1r.	1145
Acts Amendment (Increase in Number of Ministers of the Crown), 3r.	1145
Licensing Act Amendment, 2r.	1158
Electoral Act Amendment, 2r., Com.	1159

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

PAPERS—CHANDLER ALUNITE WORKS.

THE MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT (Hon. A. F. Watts—Stirling) [4.34]: I have here the Department of Industrial Development File No. 2758/49 dealing with the State (Western Australia) alunite-gypsum leases; the Department of Industrial Development, File No. 1306/42, Volumes 2 and 3, together with minutes of the meetings of the board of management of the State (W.A.) Alunite Industry and notes of the meeting of the Council for the Development of Industries on the 16th November, 1949. I propose to move that these papers do lie upon the Table of the House. With the indulgence of the House, I would like to advise members with respect to the last mentioned papers that there are no other notes of that meeting. With regard to the agreement with Australian Plaster Industries, while agreement has been reached the document cannot be produced as it has not been completed and has not been signed.

Hon. J. T. Tonkin: Was it not signed last Friday week?

The MINISTER FOR INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT: No, it was not. The expectation was that it would be signed then but difficulty arose once more with regard